



West Hill Primary School
(a partner in the SMILE Learning Trust)
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West Hill Primary School

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting

held on Thursday November 3rd 2016 at 6.30 pm at the school

Actions (Bold) GB questions, decision making and challenges (*Italics*)

PART 1

Present: Cheryl Boulton, Dot Bioletti, Jonathan Brook, Hilary Eade, Matt Fripp, Kara Green, Ian Heard, Debbie Hudson, Sally Sycamore, Sue Tovey and Chris Webster

Clerk: Margaret Whitlock

1. Introduction:

Apologies: Jenny Meredith – sanctioned by the GB

- a. **Declaration of Interests/ check RBI:** Governors were reminded of the requirements to maintain up to date RBIs and declare any conflicts of interest during meetings.
- b. **Governor Code of Conduct:** Governors were reminded of the requirements
- c. **Website – Governor Information** – most Governors have submitted the information and the form will be sent out to those who did not receive one. (**Action – MW to re-send the form for website information, collate the data and send to SS.**)
- d. **Resignation of a Governor** – Kara Green informed the GB that after much consideration she had decided to resign in a month's time, allowing time for a handover to a new Governor, as agreed in the generation of the leaving document in the last FGB meeting. SS lead the GB in thanking her for the time and commitment she had given the GB in her time as Governor, with DB noting her readiness to ask challenging questions.
SS informed the GB that a draft time line for a Parent Governor election had been drawn up and would be implemented over the next few weeks. It was suggested that if there were two or more nominees who came forward, the GB may consider asking if one would be willing to fill the current vacancy for Foundation Governor. The GB was keen, however, to ensure that a candidate for that vacancy should have the necessary skills to enhance those already on the GB; with legal skills being one of the desired attributes. SS reported that a number of people have been approached to fill the Foundation Governor vacancy, but all have declined so far.

2. Date of the next FGB Meeting: November 24th 2016 at 6.30 pm

3. Collaborative Relationships:

a. **MATS Committee Presentation:**

IH presented the overview created by JM, thanking her for the considerable hard work and time she had devoted to the collation and presentation of this research. During the presentation he covered the key issues in discussion with the GB:



Background: Role of the sub-committee – IH noted the huge focus on the importance of school collaboration by the Government, noting the ongoing changes to this message in recent months. The Committee had therefore widened its research to consider not only MATs but Federations and Co-operative Trusts.

Our Research: An overview of our findings – the committee reported on the structure of the three collaborative models:

- **Cooperative Trust** – IH noted that a school would be more independent in this model as it would maintain its own HT and identity and would be linked by a shared ethos of Cooperative values and collaboration as well as mutual support for teaching and learning.
- **Federation** – IH highlighted that each school would have a Head of T&L with one GB and Executive HT overseeing the Federation.
- **MAT** – IH stated this was a single legal entity with either an Executive HT with each school overseen by a Head of T&L or a Chief Executive Officer and a HT per school.

IH examined each of these models under the following headings with the GB questioning or making the following comments:

- **Leadership**
- **Governance**
- **Finance** – *Governors discussed their concern that one school in a MAT could receive proportionally more money than another school as decided by the Executive HT and Trustees, depending on need or choice.*
- **Staffing; teaching and learning** – *Governors raised the issue of staff being moved between schools in a MAT*
- **Property and Land** – *JB stated that as WHPS is no longer part of the LA with the Land and Asset transfer considered done and almost completed, it would not have the option to join or form a Federation, which could only be part of the LA.*
- **Legal** – *Governors discussed the powers Directors have in a MAT compared with the Members and the impact on the individual schools.*
- **Local Geography** – *Governors considered how nearby schools had linked to form the Otter Valley Federation; noting their geographical proximity. They considered nearby MATs and the location of schools in the First Federation MAT and St Christopher's MAT.*
- **Outcomes** – *Governors discussed the Ofsted rating of schools within a MAT, Cooperative Trust and Federation, noting that the trend was for good or outstanding in the latter two and a broader mix, ranging from outstanding to inadequate and requires improvement in the two nearby MATs.*
- **A Summary of the Evidence** - *Governors questioned whether there was sufficient data available at this early stage to make an objective judgement in any decision that WHPS should make to be part of collaboration. IH highlighted the statements by Michael Wilshaw and Rebecca Clark as well as the statement about Federations (p6&7) and put these in the context of the large number of schools still in the LA (70%). He reported that those in Federations, to whom he had spoken at conferences, had been hesitant to move into a MAT. MF stated that there was no proven evidence or benefits for a MAT in their results and outcomes, though MATs had been reported to have a better structure and leadership. MF therefore cautioned that WHPS should be clear about how it would gain in joining a MAT. Governors agreed that it had proved wise to take time to consider options and recognised the considerable support the school received from the LA, a service that some other counties were no longer providing for maintained schools. Governors expressed concern about the possibility of the Government ending funding for*

LAs, as originally proposed for 2017 and questioned the impact for WHPS if the support network ceased to be available for WHPS should the number of schools who chose to join a MAT or Federation (currently 30%) increased.

- **Geography of Local MATs with more or less than 7 schools**- *Governors noted that those MATs with fewer than 7 schools tended to be geographically closer, while the spread of those that were over 7 schools appeared considerable. CB stated that it was helpful to see how the schools were placed on a map and was concerned that this spread could cause difficulties for staff cpd and the sharing of teachers and resources amongst schools in a MAT. KG reminded the GB that Paul Jones had stated that 35 minutes drive should be the maximum between schools and questioned whether these distances would require a longer journey. SS questioned how staff could commute to a new school if relocated to share their expertise. IH noted that he saw this geographical spread as a weakness of MATs. MF stated that a school will seek a MAT with the same ethos and standing and may therefore have to look out of the local area. JB observed that Church Schools had a common goal, which made it easier for them to set up a MAT. DB reminded the GB that Paul Jones had stressed the need for shared aims and ethos for schools considering joining a MAT. KG noted that city schools would be in closer proximity for selecting a suitable MAT to join, whereas the distances in Devon were greater. CW observed that a failing school is likely to be able to join a MAT. MF cautioned that once in a MAT it was very difficult to leave.*

- **Our Strategic Criteria** – IH outlined the initial strategic criteria for assessing partnership working:

An acceptable mix of school performance levels within the school community.

Ability to influence strategic direction (teaching and learning)

Geography – schools must be within the Local Authority boundary

Staffing structures – effective succession plan in place

Outward looking with a commitment to collaborative partnership working

Safeguarding – focus on good outcomes for all children

Sound financial status

Governors concluded that they will discuss and agree these criteria in the future; noting it is important not to compromise when the time for WHPS to look outwardly arises.

- **Conclusion and Suggested Next Steps** – The GB agreed that there is no optimum model for collaboration and will consider this matter further in later meetings. Governors thanked IH for stepping in to present the findings of the MATs Committee, which make a good reference point for further future action.

b. SMILE Learning Trust Update:

JB reported that the SMILE Learning Trust had last met in September, though discussions had been proceeding by email around the future of the Trust. The Land Transfer was still in progress, but he stated that once the SMILE learning Trust came into being in November 2013 the LA considered that WHPS was no longer part of the LA and would now not accept it back. JB stated that it would cost £1,500.00 in legal fees to reverse the process, so it had

been agreed with the Chair of Governors at OSM Primary School, Oliver Helm, that the Trust would continue as is and run as simply as possible with slimmed down meetings and administration and a greater focus on shared teaching and learning outcomes. The Trust would therefore meet to change the Articles. JB stated that WHPS would not be able to federate as it is part of the Cooperative Trust, leaving the option of a MAT or the Cooperative Trust. JB reminded the GB that the recent Government White Paper had stated that it would not force academisation. *IH was concerned that currently the children are not benefitting from WHPS being in the SMILE Learning Trust, but that if it was resourced well it could perhaps be built as a collaborative model.* SS questioned whether WHPS, as an outstanding school, was supporting OSMPS. ST reported that she had offered to go and support teachers at OSMPS and CB outlined how a meeting about CPOMs had enabled her to share good practice, noting that MG had been under huge pressure with the monitoring the school was receiving following the inspection and may not have been able to consider offers of support.

JB suggested that it would be good to get both GBs of the two schools to meet to discuss the matter further. JB reported that the partner in the SLT, The Otter Valley Federation, has chosen to build a teaching and learning partnership initially before moving to closer collaboration.

CW was keen for WHPS to remain in the Cooperative Trust structure to avoid the concern of WHPS being drawn into a MAT. MW reported her conversation with Julie Salt of the Cooperative College and their willingness to provide educational support for teaching and learning as well as their willingness to find a Cooperative College member who could attend the SMILE Board of Trustees to give direct support. JB suggested she could be contacted in the next year.

CB reported that she had met with Rob Gammon, HT of The King's School, who had outlined the proposal to form a horizontal and vertical MAT, which is in very early stages. A meeting has been planned for November 17th at 4.30 pm, to which the Chair of Governors and one other are invited. **(Action – CB to check the details of the meeting about MATs at the King's School and to communicate to the GB to see who is able and willing to attend.)** The GB agreed that it would be useful for two representatives to attend, gauge the views of other schools, see who was attending and learn more about the proposal. *DB suggested that as WHPS feeds into the King's School, it was worth considering. JB was concerned that a primary school may not be able to work collaboratively with a secondary school.* CB confirmed that as they had different curriculums and ages of children the benefit might only be financial, though other primary schools within the MAT would be able to work collaboratively with WHPS. *JB agreed that if all the schools in the local area were part of this MAT it would be of community benefit.*

CW will report back to the GB with feedback from discussions with staff at Rackenford C of E Primary School, which is part of the Tiverton Cooperative Learning Partnership.

CB thanked the MATs Committee for the work they had done and agreed that the GB should keep learning.

JB questioned whether the GB was happy for the Land transfer to continue. The GB agreed that there appeared to be no other option. The GB agreed unanimously for the Land Transfer to proceed. Proposed JB seconded CW.

(Action - MW to email the MATs Committee Presentation to all Governors.) Further feedback will occur in the next FGB meeting – 24.11.16. Following the meeting at the King's School, SS will produce a report for the GB. **(Action – SS to send a report to all Governors, following the meeting about MATs at the King's School.)**

4. School Development Plan and Governor School Improvement:

The GB agreed that the SDP is central to their role of strategic monitoring and that all related visits under their lead roles should be based on the SDP. It was agreed that this is a working document that will be regularly updated with information about progress and evidence which will allow Governors to measure outcomes.

CB outlined how Staff and Governors had worked effectively together at the start of term to brainstorm ideas under the five Ofsted Key Judgements, considering what was currently working well and what needed improving to move the school forward. CB had found this an invaluable foundation for the development of the SDP, noting she had only been in post for 7 weeks when she had produced the SDP, something, she explained, many new HTs chose not to do in their first year. CB stated that some points raised had been operational and had been easily dealt with, so were not in the SDP; but the majority had been included. *SS was pleased that Staff and Governors had worked collaboratively, building links and greater understanding of each other's roles.* In addition the School Profile from 2015/16 had been useful in highlighting areas that had not been achieved that could therefore be included in the SDP for this year.

A draft copy had been circulated to Governors and questions and challenges were invited by CB: *HE questioned the layout and the column labelled "Evaluation" as it recorded information about what had been done rather than measuring and evaluating the impact.* It was agreed that an additional column would be added labelled "evidence" into which the factual information would be placed with links to other sources of evidence such as reports. The outcome, evaluation and measure of the impact for each objective would then be placed in the "Evaluation" column. *Governors were keen that all evidence and the impact would be measurable for the GB to easily monitor outcomes and progress. DB noted that all Governor Visits would relate to the SDP and the reports generated would provide evidence that could be referred to in the SDP.*

Priority 1 – The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management:

- **(Action 3)** *MF questioned whether a reference to succession planning should be included for SLT. CB acknowledged this would be hard to plan for as time scales were unknown. MF and HE suggested nurturing current staff to take on SLT roles and MF asked if the GB was considering the risks of a member of the SLT leaving and the impact on the school. JB questioned whether succession planning was a task CB could do at this early stage and DH confirmed that there were emergency procedures already in place for such an event. SS asked if there was a clear middle management structure, which CB confirmed was now the case. Governors agreed that CB would establish a clear leadership team and build relationships for the benefit of the school.*
- **(Action 4)** *IH asked if the building of a robust programme of collaborative initiatives with local schools that benefitted pupils could be included. JB requested that the term "collaborative relationships" be used. This action could incorporate the MATs Committee input and an aim to agree possible trigger points that would instigate a move to collaboration should be added. The GB agreed that the time set for the agreement of trigger points would be the end of the year, with the meeting that night being evidence of that process beginning.*
- **(Action 5b)** *Governors agreed the importance of building strong and effective relationships between staff and governors, but were concerned to know how this would be measured and how the impact would be judged. MF was concerned that promoting closer relationships with staff could be an issue for parent governors. JB agreed but suggested that Governors should know the school better to enable them to perform their strategic role. CB confirmed the value of Governors having a recognised role that has a*

wider remit and is not perceived by staff to be judgmental. KG agreed that staff should have a clear understanding of what governors do and how the committees work. DB proposed the wording should be changed to a positive working relationship, which would be evaluated termly. SS requested that there be evidence collected to support any conclusion, which CB confirmed would be in the HT Report, submitted to the GB for discussion in the second FGB meeting of each term. In addition the altered SDP could be circulated as it is added to each term.

- **(Action 5e)** It was agreed that Governors have the responsibility to monitor the website to ensure it is up to date and holds all the statutory information. SS confirmed that monitoring should take place on monthly basis by a designated Governor. KG observed that the website is not easy to access, which CB agreed and confirmed this would be addressed soon. **(Action – The GB to agree a Governor who would have responsibility for monitoring the WHPS website on a monthly basis.)**
- **(Action 5f)** SS asked for agreement from the GB as to the number of courses a Governor would be expected to attend in a year to create a measureable target as this is a GB responsibility which Ofsted will monitor. DB stated that cpd was a personal responsibility for Governors. JB reminded Governors that training is available through Babcock and is also online and held at the school. It was agreed that two courses per year would be the minimum for each Governor, with an additional annual update on Safeguarding and Prevent. DB noted that a Governor Training Overview was kept by the Clerk and Training Reports circulated to share Governor Learning which would evidence the extent and effectiveness of GB training.
- **(Action 5)** JB requested that an additional action be included to ensure that the red and amber actions that had been highlighted during the Review of Governance Report (11.7.16) should be included in the SDP.
- **(Action 5)** – JB asked that an additional target should be added to address the Governor vacancies currently in the GB, particularly as Ofsted consider that an outstanding school's GB should have no vacancies.

Priority 2 – Quality of teaching, learning and assessment:

- The meaning of SPTO was requested and given as School Pupil Tracker Online. The GB agreed that the benefits of support for new teachers was invaluable and ensured high standards would be monitored and maintained.
- **(Action 5)** – *Governors questioned how the effectiveness of differentiation would be assessed and measured.* CB responded that lesson observations and learning walks would generate evidence and that the focus would be to ensure that pupils at the lower end would be given effective support. RAISEonLine had highlighted the high percentage of SEN pupils at WHPS and the GB agreed that these children should be monitored to ensure their needs were being fully met.
- **(Action 2)** – *MF enquired how mastery would be communicated to Parents to support their children.* DH confirmed that communications took place at Parents Evenings and that all staff members were on a learning journey together to understand how best to develop mastery. CB noted that many schools were not as ahead as WHPS in including mastery in their learning objectives.
- **(Action 8)** – Governors asked for the definition of MFL, which was confirmed as Modern Foreign Languages. CB informed the GB that a budget is in place for MFL to be taught in KS1 in addition to the current teaching in KS2. HE expressed the GB's agreed view that this would benefit KS1 pupils who were more open to language learning at an early age.

Priority 3 – Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare:

- **(Action 1)** Governors sought clarification as to whom the Online Safety objective was set for, which CB confirmed related to pupils.
- **(Action 2a)** – JB noted that Safeguarding was on every GB meeting agenda and *it was asked if the GB should be included in the Child Protection training*. CB stated that Governor training should be in section 1 – which she would update accordingly.
- **(Action 4)** – *JB questioned the focus on CPOMs as the only method of recording safeguarding incidents*. CB stated that this was the standard system used in Devon, which had been viewed at OSMPS.
- **(Action 7)** – *It was noted that sport was mentioned frequently in surveys and Governors requested that it should be included as a means of promoting social development*.
- **(Action 6)** – *SS questioned how improved emotional skills could be measured*. CB responded that evidence could be collected through observations, improved observed emotional skills, relationships in the playground, ability to participate in team work etc. *SS asked if a record was kept of these observations plotting pupils' social development*. *In addition SS enquired whether a measure of pupil happiness could be made to ensure effective learning could take place*. CB outlined how the PSHE Action Plan took account of the social well-being of pupils and reported that a scheme of work for PSHE was being considered.
- **(Action 8)** – *MF questioned whether 98% attendance was too high a target to set, particularly as all absences are counted including illness*. CB noted that if the figure dropped significantly an Ofsted inspection could be triggered and responded that this figure was based on the historical average. *MF raised the issue of the number of latecomers*. CB stated this had begun to improve and though illness was out of the school's control, they were working on lessening the number of holidays taken in term time.
- **(Action 9)** – KG asked about the SIMS register, which CB explained was the school Management System, in which staff needed training to use the electronic register.
- **(Action 7)** – CB outlined the addition of the introduction of playground markings to the EYFS playground for this objective in the SDP. It was suggested that markings could be added to the main school playground, though this would need to be discussed with the Village Hall and account taken of the other users of that space.

Priority 4 – Outcomes for pupils:

- **(Action 1)** - *SS was keen to ensure that Governors had a clear view of how and where this funding is being spent, which would be achieved through more regular monitoring*. CB reported that little funding remained from April as it had been allocated. *JB requested that a clear report be made available to the GB by the end of the year clarifying on what the funding had been spent and how it had specifically benefitted Pupil Premium children*. *SS asked that Governors be informed of how many PP children there were in each class and how each had progressed through PP funding*. CB stated that Cheryl Haddy was in the process of generating this information and reported that an overview of PP funding and outcomes was being prepared for the next Resources Committee meeting – 15.11.16. *Governors agreed there should be more effective monitoring through lesson observation, tracking children and measuring progress*.
- **(Action 6)** – *JB questioned the figures in this objective and clarification was given to the GB; explaining that the figures for expected and greater depth achievements should be added together*. The figure for greater depth in maths should however read as 37% not

90% - as that is the sum of the expected and greater depth totals together and will therefore be amended by CB. Governors were keen to see these figures benchmarked against national figures and local schools; though CB explained that local comparable schools would have to be found to make the comparison effective; which is not easy.

Priority 5 – The Effectiveness of Early Years Provision: quality and standards:

- **(Action 1)** – *Governors questioned the figure of 80% for children achieving a good level of development in Reception.* CB noted that the target set last year had been 90%, making a jump of 15% from the figure of 75% achieved in 2015. CB explained that she had reviewed the targets set for teachers and aimed for all to have attainable targets. *JB enquired how that figure compared with other similar schools.* CB stated she did not have comparable data and that national data, which was available, was not sufficiently challenging to make a sound comparison. She noted that there had been a structural change to EYFS assessment, giving the example of children being required to compose a sentence and write their own name to meet the standard by the end of the year. *KG asked how this was measured.* CB responded that she had put together a two page data sheet for the GB explaining this process.
- **(Action 2)** – *MF enquired why the focus was on girls in EYFS exceeding in Maths.* CB explained that only 13% were exceeding in Maths when the national average was 15%. DH added that historically the gap widened for girls at the end of KS1 and teachers wished to address this at an early stage in EYFS. CB described how Ofsted looks at assessment data and RAISEonLine, wanting to know what is being put in place to address any problems that may occur. DH added that confidence can often be a factor in Maths and not lack of ability, so identifying the problem and targeting it early is important.

It was agreed that the SDP will be updated by CB with the suggestions and amendments raised and discussed in the meeting by the GB. **(Action – CB to amend and update the SDP, as agreed in discussions during the meeting and will circulate it to the GB once completed.)** CB informed the GB that staff members were yet to review the SDP, so they may therefore add other objectives.

It was agreed that the SDP would be brought to the next meeting for final agreement by the GB when it would be proposed and seconded. **(Action – MW to add the SDP to the agenda of the FGB Meeting 24.11.16.)**

The Governor Visits Programme:

It was agreed that CB and SS would look at the Governor Visits Programme, check the roles and focus of visits related to the SDP. **(Action – CB and SS to revise the Visits programme and circulate for the GB to agree in the FGB Meeting – 24.11.16)** Visits will continue to be recorded on the programme and reports generated following visits. MW will be responsible for collecting, storing and circulating reports to the GB

5. School Evaluation Form:

It had been agreed in the T&L Committee Meeting – 10.10.16 that a group of Governors would meet to compile the SEF for 2016/17, as advised on the Effective Governance Course which CB had attended recently. Though not statutory, Ofsted will request to view this document before visiting, as an effective summary of the school. CB stated that the current one requires slimming down to become more focused. CB felt the GB should have ownership of the process of judging where the school is outstanding, good or otherwise; noting that it is preferable to grade lower rather than over estimate where the school stands. It was proposed that four governors would

take on the task, working a section at a time over the next few months. The Governors who are taking on this role are: DB, HE IH and SS. The first meeting will be on Thursday December 8th at 9.15 am. **(Action – DB, HE, IH and SS are to meet at 9.15 am on 8.12.16 to work on the SEF.)**(Action – CB to email the current SEF to Governors.)

6. Matters brought forward at the Chair's discretion: None

7. Impact of meeting:

- Governors have addressed and challenged the SDP
- All Governors are aligned behind the SDP and understand the content and process
- Governors agreed they are now more prepared for Ofsted
- The GB has a clearer understanding of the options for collaborative relationships
- A meeting with a group of designated governors has been agreed to begin work on the SEF.
- Agreement has been reached to continue with the SMILE Learning Trust and Land Transfer.
- Governors have agreed the stronger focus on a collaborative approach to teaching and learning for schools in the SMILE Learning Trust.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm