



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 March 23rd 2017 at 6.30 pm at the school

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

Present: Chair -Sally Sycamore (SS), HT - Cheryl Boulton (CB), Vice Chair - Jonathan Brook (JB)
Esther Apsy (EA), Dot Bioletti (DB), Hilary Eade (HE), Ian Heard (IH), Debbie Hudson (DH),
Jenny Meredith (JM), Danny Murphy (DM), Sue Tovey (ST),

Clerk: Margaret Whitlock (MW)

PART 1

1. Introduction:

Apologies – Matt Fripp, Chris Webster - sanctioned unanimously

- a) **Declaration of Interests/ check RBI** – There were no declarations of interest.
- b) **Governor Code of Conduct:** SS reminded Governors of the Code of Conduct
- c) **Associates** – Following his resignation as Governor, the GB voted on Chris Webster as an Associate and welcomed his continued input on the GB. Proposed SS, seconded DB.
It was noted that the GB had received notice of resignations, as Associates, from Dave Underwood and Steve Wray. Steve Wray had agreed to remain as a key holder, but Dave Underwood had agreed only to continue as a key holder until a replacement had been found. It was noted that following people are currently responders to the burglar alarm – DU, SW and JB

2. Confirmation of Minutes of meeting 23.2.17 (Part 1):

Matters arising from minutes:

JM questioned if the record of how many children were on a DAF at WHPS (Part 1 Minutes - Section 11) was sensitive information that should not be included in the Part 1 Minutes. After discussion, the GB agreed that this information was not sensitive as there was no way that individual pupils could be identified from the information given in the minutes.
IH brought a question to the GB: In the light of shrinking budgets (Para 7 of the 23 February minutes) should a small sub-committee be established to explore all means of containing expenditure without impinging on front line staffing costs? I suggest that this exercise could include validation of the perceived cost benefits of joining a MAT, as a means of removing 'back office' costs to a centralised function and freeing up more time for teachers to concentrate on their prime role. SS responded that, following advice from Babcock, this was considered a

beneficial proposal. It was agreed that the GB would set up a Finance Sub-Committee to prepare a three year forecast, analyse the present and future financial position of the school, identify the likely shortfall and look for ways to cut costs and increase expenditure. Babcock had emphasised that this should be done with the HT and it was agreed that a Finance Sub-Committee of: MF (Chair), CB, LD, IH & JB would meet after Easter. It was suggested that the three year financial forecast produced by Lara should be circulated to the Finance Sub-Committee first and then a meeting arranged. **(Action – CB to check with Lara that she can send the 3 Year Budget Forecast to the Finance Sub-Committee.) (Action – The Finance Sub-Committee is to arrange to meet by mid April to consider the future financial position at WHPS.)** It was noted that the meeting needs to take place before the budget is submitted in May. CB reported that the Budget - setting training that she had attended with LD had focused on ways that schools could increase their income and reduce their costs, in the light of the current limited budgets and future financial constraints. CB outlined how higher pupil numbers in classes could be a way to increase income, giving the example of each KS 2 class having an additional two pupils over PAN and noting that:

- Remaining with current numbers in KS 2 would give a rollover of £6,489.00 in 2018/19
- An extra six pupils in KS 2 would give a rollover of £26,364.00 in 2018/19
- Remaining with current numbers in KS 2 would give a rollover of £199.00 in 2019/20
- An extra six pupils in KS 2 would give a rollover of £27,321.00 in 2019/20

Governors agreed that there would be a substantial financial impact generated by higher pupil numbers and CB noted that other local schools have already exceeded class sizes of 30 in key Stage 2 (Ottery and Feniton). *SS questioned what the impact would be should a SEN pupil need a place at the school, which CB confirmed, in that instance, would take a class to 33 pupils as a place has to be given by the school for SEND pupils.* The implications for this issue will be considered by the Finance Sub-Committee and other options considered; though it was recognised that the school did not want to lose staff. It was noted that if a decision was made to take more pupils in KS 2 this would not affect PAN.

Outstanding actions from the FGB meeting – 23.2.17:

- a. CB to approach Mark Gilronan personally to see if OSMPS will take over the accounts for the SMILE Learning Trust – **done. CB reported that it had been agreed with Mark Gilronan that he would speak to his Business Manager and a meeting arranged with Cheryl Haddy, when she visited WHPS to complete the figures for the SMILE LT.**
- b. (6) CB to ask teachers to gather ideas from their pupils for WHPS values, with words collected that describe what they envisage for their school; setting a deadline of Easter – **once all the information is collected, CB will share ideas for Visions and Values with SS.**
- c. (6) CB has requested for a governor to collect feedback from parents after Easter, rating the suggested value words on a grading of 1 – 5 – **this will take place once the above information had been collected and a questionnaire generated for the Parent Survey.**
- d. (7) CB to circulate the Final Audit Report to the GB following discussion – **done, discussion deferred to the FGB meeting, 27.4.17**

The minutes were agreed unanimously and signed by the Chair. Proposed ST and seconded JB

3. Date of Next FGB Meeting:

Thursday April 27th 2017 at 6.30 pm

4. Head teacher's Report (CB):

CB informed the GB that another incident of exclusion was to be added to the HT Report for this term. The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and questions and challenges were invited:

JB observed that the incidents of exclusion had been handled well; noting that these had not impacted on the smooth running of the school or appeared to have affected other pupils. CB agreed and informed the GB that outcomes had shown that these actions had been effective for all concerned.

CB also noted that she had very much appreciated the time that Sue Nield had spent with her giving her training on School Pupil Tracker. CB advised the GB that the figures in the report are for February 2017 for KS 1 & 2, while the EYFS data is from December 2016.

SS questioned the discrepancy for data shown in Whole School Progress for Year 3, which CB explained had been addressed and was due to a problem that a teacher had in understanding how to input data. DB thanked CB for the informative meeting she had had around Pupil Premium, in which she had investigated the data related to SEND pupils. *The increased rate of progress since Christmas in Year 5 was also noted by the GB.* The quality of teaching was recognised as being a decisive factor, as well as the need for all pupils to settle back into school life after the holidays causing a slower rate of progress initially. *The variation in strengths of different cohorts was observed by the GB and EA raised the question about the higher number of SEND pupils in KS 1, with JM asking how resources were allocated to meet those needs.* CB reported that Clare Bennett is in the process of reassessing the SEND register and had reduced the number of SEND pupils in line with the national percentages and levels of attainment of SEND pupils. It had been agreed that some SEND pupils only required additional support in class and that there would now be two lists held at WHPS – SEND Pupils and another for Pupils of Concern. ST added that in Year 6 many pupils ceased to be considered SEND as they were judged as above average nationally and also in comparison with local pupils, whom they would be joining at their secondary school. *SS asked about the impact the teacher assigned to work with PP pupils had had thus far.* CB reported that she would be receiving data at the end of this term and would feedback to the GB. She noted that the teacher worked with pupils for variable amounts of time, according to their age and levels of concentration. DB will follow up on this item in her role as SEND Lead and report back to the GB in June.

DM asked how success could be defined in assessing PP and SEND pupils. CB explained that Ofsted are looking for all pupils to make 3 point's progress in terms of tracking data, from the point at which they start and that this aspiration for all pupils at WHPS was recorded in the SDP. *The GB agreed that this was a difficult target for SEND pupils to attain as they may have multiple issues that can impede their rate of learning.* *JB observed that this data could be reviewed in September using School Pupil Tracker.* *JM enquired about the information relating to the "Good Level of Development" (GLD) required for EYFS pupils, noting that there was a concern that the target of 80% of EYFS pupils reaching GLD might not be achieved this year.* CB outlined the 17 areas of GLD and raised a concern that though most areas would be met, for some children the areas of social interaction and self-care may be a problem. Governors discussed reasons for these issues and were reassured that additional support is being given. The GB agreed that the data provided in the report had been very useful and gave them a clear picture through the whole school summary. The GB thanked CB for her report and agreed that all were happy with the content and information provided.

5. Safeguarding and Child Protection:

CB reported that a new Safeguarding Policy had been sent out by Babcock, which the school will now adopt as it has a large number of important additions and updates. This has been sent to the GB and will be circulated to staff for all to read. *EA questioned whether Babcock can be relied upon to be compliant and current, which the GB after discussion believed they are; noting that it*

is the main provider for the LA and there are unlikely to be many other compliant and LA approved agencies providing training and information in county.

CB informed the GB that Jonathan Galling will be making a follow up visit to check the Single Central Record and related Safeguarding actions, noted in his original Safeguarding Report. The fence required for security is planned to be erected, as well as the new higher gate on the field, during the Easter holidays.

JM and IH had nothing extra to report, but were pleased that much had been achieved over the last month. JM noted that she had received responses to the Safeguarding question in EA's report and asked that Governors remember to include the question when encountering pupils in their visits.

6. School Improvement (SS):

The School Improvement Report had been circulated prior to the meeting and questions and observations were invited:

JM raised a question about benchmarking outcomes at WHPS, comparing them with other schools. JM asked whether the geographical location or the similarity of the cohort of pupils was of greater importance for effective comparisons. It was agreed that the most effective comparisons would be made when measured against a cluster of schools of a similar background and cohort, so that figures could be compared over time regardless of changes that might occur in the other schools.

SS noted that the data she had received showed outstanding results and informed the GB that her report on EYFS standards would be sent round after the meeting, as the visit had only occurred on March 22nd.

In her verbal report, SS reiterated that within this year's intake, many of the children had found it tricky to adapt their behaviour to the expectations of the setting (PSED - managing feelings and behaviour). With a target of 80% achieving GLD having been set earlier in the year, the teachers reported that a more realistic (though still challenging) figure of 75% was more likely to be achieved this year. It was noted that the national average is 67%.

Governors questioned whether girls achieving above national average for exceeding in Maths is being addressed. SS reported that the potential figures look on track and a "push" for more able pupils in Maths is planned, following the now embedded "push" for more able writers. It was also noted that PP children were making good progress with the designated support.

7. Financial Monitoring (MF):

a. Budget Monitor – the GB had reviewed the Budget Monitor and accompanying report produced by MF. The GB questioned the variable figures for the carry forward and noted the evident decline in funds available over time. Although it was agreed that funds available appeared fine at present, there is a strong concern for funding in the future. *JB questioned the figures for Educational Visits and this query will be addressed in the Finance Sub-Committee in April. (Action – CB to check the Educational Visits figures with LD and report back to the GB.) JB observed that it is hard to predict how finances will develop over the next three years with unknowns such as PTFA funding not included in the budget. DB also questioned whether the depreciation of assets was being accounted for, an example being the school's oven, which had recently had problems.*

The cost of Investors in People (IIP) was also raised with DB enquiring whether the fee of £3,500.00 could be justified as it did not directly benefit pupils. The GB agreed it was a useful audit tool, but agreed that other cost efficient options were probably available. This item will be discussed in the next FGB, with a view to making a decision as to whether to continue. EA questioned whether other schools used IIP, which DB stated was used more now in businesses and not often in schools. HE questioned whether the values would be upheld without IIP. SS suggested that this could be discussed and voted on in the next meeting. (Action – MW is to include IIP on the agenda for the FGB – 27.4.17.)

CB informed the GB that, due to the closure of the West Hill Residents Association a sum of £817.00 had been donated to the PTFA for use in the school. The GB expressed their thanks for the money and this will be communicated to the Residents Association.

- b. SFVS – It was noted that the deadline for submission of the SFVS is March 31st. This had been circulated to the GB and a few amendments were made, with the GB authorising approval for the Chair to sign, once the amendments have been completed:

- Paragraph 2 – due to a Finance Committee no longer meeting on a regular basis, reference should be made to all Governors being aware of financial information and decision making, noting that a finance sub-committee has been appointed to review budget planning for the next three years. This committee will meet when the need occurs.
- Paragraph 10 – alter the word “viaments” to “virement”
- Paragraph 17 – alter “will review” to “reviews” to show premises inspections are happening regularly

(Action – MW to make changes to the SFVS and send to SS for signing.)

The GB agreed unanimously that the SFVS could be signed once the amendments have been made. Proposed DM, seconded ST

- c. Report on LA Buyback, Service Contracts and Insurance - CB outlined the services bought in by the school using the information provided to the GB by LD. It was noted that the cost for the H&S Advisor was higher due to the increased guidance required and the inclusion of an earlier review, which would help support CB and LD, who is new to the role. DH questioned the omission of computing subject leader network meetings, which CB informed DH were either not available for 2017/18 or the cost had yet to be confirmed. CB explained that all the services being bought in were required by the school and had been considered carefully, noting that these are the minimum needed. There were no further questions and the LA Buyback, services and insurance were approved by the GB. Proposed SS. Seconded HE.
- d. The Village Hall lease is currently with the school’s solicitors as the Land Registry has raised a number of queries. It was noted that this process might take a time, particularly as there had been changes to staff at the solicitors. It was suggested that this matter be followed up by CB and LD. **(Action – CB to ask LD to check with DWF, the solicitors, to gauge how the Village Hall lease is progressing.)**

8. Personnel (DB):

DB gave a verbal report for the Pay and Performance Committee, which had met that day, prior to the FGB meeting on March 23rd. Once completed, the minutes will be sent out to the GB. DB reported that all the mid-term appraisals had been done and that there had been no concerns. All three targets were in the process of being met by teachers and staff with no additional cpd required for teachers, to enable them to meet their objectives. The GB was informed that the two new members of staff had been set two attainable objectives for the remaining part of the year. DB noted that the staff had given positive feedback about the process of mid-year appraisals and DH reported that the TAs, whom she had appraised, were all happy and that training on one issue that had arisen, was being given in the next meeting of TAs, to support them with their target.

9. Building and Premises (IH):

The Building and Premises Report, monitoring progress related to the SDP, had been circulated prior to the meeting and questions and observations were invited:

IH had inspected the Asset Management Plan, which is available for Governors to view in the office as a hard copy.

The GB approved the quotes for the fire door, identified in the Year 4 class room as needing replacing and also for the fencing, which it is hoped will be erected over the Easter holidays.

(Action – CB to contact Countrywide to instruct them to proceed with the fencing.)

10. Parent and Community Links (EA):

The report, monitoring processes to promote community cohesion and agree Governor's input at future parents evenings, had been circulated prior to the meeting and questions and observations were invited:

It was noted by EA that the Cohesion Policy needs updating and had been removed from the website as it is not statutory. EA stated that the links forged by SMILE are in the process of being further developed between the schools involved. She had also considered ways that links with parents could be forged and various ideas had been put forward in the report. *DM asked how the GB could ensure that parents' views would be used effectively to encourage a sense that their contributions are worthwhile and are seen to bring about change.* The GB agreed that the way forward lay with encouraging input from parents on focused issues such as the development of the school's values and vision. It was agreed that this would take place through communications such as a parent survey, with the emphasis being placed on parents being listened to in a constructive way; demonstrating their input would be used and valued. Where appropriate parent representatives may be appointed for each class or meetings held to consider important issues requiring parental feedback.

EA also outlined the idea of a link, which could be made with another school from a contrasting catchment area. CB suggested this could be discussed further with Abi Spence, who already has links with a school in Jamaica.

11. Inclusion (JM & DB):

The report of the visit made by JM and DB, monitoring procedures for looked after children, Gifted and Talented pupils and the issue of attendance, had been circulated prior to the meeting and questions and observations were invited:

JM reported that there are currently no looked after children. Looked after children training is available in October through the Virtual School, which CB and DM plan to attend. *The concern over the number of policies requiring review by the HT and GB had been noted in the report. In conjunction with this concern, SS had informed the GB, by email that the school intended to buy in Babcock support with policies to save HT time and to enable the Clerk to acquire model policies that would be compliant and require little or no input from the HT.* It had also been agreed that the Clerk would take a greater role in amending and updating policies, while teaching staff would have responsibility for curriculum policies, thereby lessening the workload of the HT. CB thanked JM and DB for the challenging questions they had raised in their meeting.

12. SEND Lead (DB):

DB had checked the Policy for Pupils with Medical Conditions and found it was being followed by school staff.

DB had sought advice from Babcock about whether The Road Safety Policy was statutory, which it apparently is not. Governors questioned the value of the policy if it was not available to parents on the website and asked whether it was the responsibility of parents to ensure their children's safety outside school. It was noted that Year 4 children have tuition on bike safety at school, which includes road safety. **(Action – MW is to email to the GB the WHPS Road Safety Policy and Dropping off and Collecting Policy for their information.)** These two policies will be added to the agenda for the next FGB meeting to consider whether to remove or keep them as WHPS policies and to clarify the school's responsibilities in these areas.

13. Pupil Absences:

The GB, after discussion, agreed that in the first instance of a request for a child's absence from the school, which the HT deemed unauthorised, CB would send the appropriate letter informing parents of the school's policy on absences. On a second occasion that a request was made for an absence, which was considered unauthorised, it was agreed that the Chair of the GB would send

a letter outlining the GB's line on unauthorised absences, the educational impact on the pupil involved and the implications for school attendance figures. **(Action – SS to write a letter for use by the school, in the case of a parent making two requests for a pupil absence within a year.)**

JM was pleased that this communicated the significance of the issue for the GB to parents. JB suggested that a standard letter could be created for the Chair to use as a basis for responding to parents. This strategy was agreed unanimously by the GB.

14. Governor Visit Reports:

- SS – The Arts
- HE – Maths and English
- EA - PSHE Multi Cultural Visit PP Report
- DB – Pupil Premium Report

These had been reports had been circulated to the GB and read. There were no comments or questions from the GB. It was agreed that the safeguarding question would remain the same for next term and would be asked if Governors encountered children during their visit.

Governor Training Reports:

- EA – L2 Safeguarding Training
- DB – SEND Training
- DB, HE & SS – Governance & School Improvement Training
- DM – New Governor Training

SS noted the value of the Governance & School Improvement Training, which focused Governors on the common sense issues and meant that she wanted to ensure that time would be spent on developing the GB SDP priorities for the next academic year during FGB meetings next term.

It was noted that there had been an increase in both Governor training and Governor visits, which was beneficial for the work of the GB and supported its strategic role in the school.

15. Policies, Statements & Provisions for review in the spring term 2017:

Statutory Policies:

- Asset Management Plan – (Statutory & Website) (IH):** IH had reviewed this document and Governors had been given the opportunity to see the hard copy of this document, due to the size of the file, in the school office. It was brought for ratification by the GB and agreed. Proposed IH, seconded ST
- Equal Opportunities Policy - (Website):** Deferred as further amendment is required to this model policy for use at WHPS.
- Financial Management Policy (Statutory):** Although no feedback had been received from MF, the following amendments were agreed by the GB. The term “Resources Committee” will be altered to FGB in the grids and statements and the “delegated to the FGB” will be removed. IH is listed as H&S Lead instead of SS and the P & P Terms of Reference included in the policy instead of the Resources Committee Terms of Reference. With the agreed amendments to be made to the policy, it was ratified by the GB. Proposed SS, seconded DM.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Statutory & Website):** Following the instigation of a new update Safeguarding Policy by Babcock, the GB ratified this policy unanimously, noting that the four agreed personnel listed in the policy would be listed as contactable on the school phone or school administration email before putting the policy on the website. **(Action – CB to amend the Safeguarding Policy to include the school office email address for contacting the key personnel listed in the policy.)**

Non –statutory policies:

- Business Continuity Plan- 2016/2017:** Agreed as an appendix to the Emergency Management Plan

- f. **Emergency Management Plan- 2016/2017:** DB asked for clarification as to whether the offsite kitchen and the cooking equipment were included in this plan. CB responded that this was the responsibility of Devon Norse and the any necessary arrangements required in an emergency would be their responsibility so as to ensure the children received their meals.
- g. **Code of Practice for GB members** – agreed by the GB
The non –statutory policies circulated for the information of the GB were agreed. It was acknowledged that as the policies were updated, page numbers and the review grid were added to each. In addition the text heading has been amended to include a comma in the SMILE attributes listed.

16. Matters brought forward at the Chair’s discretion :

SS informed the GB that she had met informally with the Chair of the King’s School Governing Board to discuss their plans with regard to MATs. Following this, the topic of MATs will be included in the next (April’s) FGB meeting to allow for a full strategic discussion. JM noted that she had shared her presentation on MATs with EA and DM, though no OSMPS Governors had responded to her invitation to attend.

17. Impact of meeting:

- There has been an increase in the training attended by Governors, which has fed back valuable learning for the GB
- Governors have begun to use more in-depth and challenging questioning in their monitoring roles
- There have been more visits taking place and these have collected valuable evidence, which has supported the GB’s strategic role of monitoring and will feed into planning for the next set of Governor SDP priorities
- The GB now feel more confident in their analysis of data and found the data included in the HT report useful in gaining a picture of how the children are progressing across the school.
- Governors valued the on-going process of monitoring progress of all children so that they can build a picture over time, focusing on areas of concern and recognising where strengths lie in the school
- The meeting proceeded at a better pace, with Governors utilising the fact that reports had been read ahead of the meeting to focus on asking pertinent and challenging questions, as minuted.
- The strategy for dealing with unauthorised absences had been agreed, setting a clear message to parents from the GB
- There had been positive feedback on the mid-year appraisals for all staff, with the GB being reassured that all staff members are on track to meet most of their objectives by the end of the year.
- The creation of a Finance Sub-Committee to work on a three year budget plan was recognised as an important way for the GB to be involved in strategic financial planning with the HT. The aim is to investigate possible ways to maximise income and keep costs low in the current and future economic climate
- The proposal to devise a parent questionnaire with the focus on the Values and Vision for the school is a positive way for the GB to liaise with parents

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm