



**West Hill Primary School**  
(a partner in the SMILE Learning Trust)  
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**Headteacher: Cheryl Boulton**



## West Hill Primary School

### Final Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting

held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 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), Dot Bioletti (DB), Hilary Eade (HE), Danny Murphy (DM), Simon Pedrazzini (SP), Ashley Pocock (AP), Jenny Meredith (JM), Matt Fripp (MF)

Apologies: Debbie Hudson (DH)

**Clerk:** Sarah Woolfries (SW)

#### 1. Introduction (SS):

- a. **Apologies** – Debbie Hudson - sanctioned unanimously.
- b. **Declaration of Interests** – No new declarations stated.
- c. **Code of Conduct** – SS reminded governors of the duty noted in the agenda.
- d. **Changes to the Governing Board:**
  - SS advised that AT had regretfully had to step down from becoming a governor due to personal issues.
  - ES had been registered on the 'Inspiring Governance' website as wanting to become a governor, but after being offered the role at WHPS had subsequently been given a new job which caused a conflict of interest with the governor role.
  - Jonathan Brook confirmed he was stepping down as vice chair and as a governor after 7 years, but would remain as the SMILE representative until the next AGM (no requirement for this to be a separate post). Jonathan also confirmed he was willing to become an associate member of the governing board. **Agreed by all present.**
  - SS invited nominations for the post of Vice Chair. JM had already offered to take on the role temporarily if there were no other nominees, so **all agreed to appoint JM as Vice Chair with immediate effect. Clerk to update required documents.**
  - The committee discussed the vacancies arising within the Board over the coming months, and agreed that MF be moved to fill the Foundation Governor position left when IH stepped down. Once complete, this means that there will be a vacancy for a Local Authority Governor, a parent governor and a co-opted governor. SS advised that an article has gone out in 'The Messenger' asking if there is any local community interest in becoming a school governor, and that a succession planning meeting was to be arranged (see below). Further, SS had spoken to Babcock and proposed that once any new governors have joined the Board next term, Babcock come in prior to a FGB meeting to give an overview of governance and Ofsted expectations and answer any governor questions.



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## 2. Confirmation of Minutes of meeting 22.02.18 (SS) and EGM (Part 2) 8.3.18 (JM)

- a. **Matters arising from the minutes** – JM felt one reference in the minutes dated 22.03.18 was confidential and should be removed. **Agreed by all present. Clerk to amend minutes then arrange SS to sign and publish on website (done). The Part 2 minutes dated 8.3.18 were read and agreed by all, and signed by JM as Chair of the meeting. SW to pass minutes to CB for secure filing (done).**
- b. **Actions still pending from previous minutes:**

**Agree Approach to Penalty Notices** – JM felt that if WHPS were the only school in the LLC that were not penalty noticing, it was undermining the local learning community (LLC), and possibly DCC's ability to enforce them. DB noted that where parents had siblings in another school, they would experience inconsistency. CB confirmed parents at OSMPS had been advised that penalty notices were being implemented, and the other primary schools in the LLC had already implemented them. **MF asked how formulaic was the application of penalty notices? CB advised as HT she would need to be able to prove the correct process was followed if an absence was authorised/unauthorised, but the decision would be at her discretion, taking account of certain guidelines and questions to ask (protocol provided by JJ after the last meeting, and used by all HTs in the LLC).** SS explained that there was not a 'list' of reasons as such, it was more about the HT knowing the child/family and their situation. AP expressed concern that this put additional pressure on CB. SS said nothing CB currently does will change, other than reporting as necessary to DCC. JM outlined the current procedure as CB reviews the circumstances and if appropriate declines a request for absence, and if this happens a second time, a letter is sent from the Governing Board. DM also felt it would be challenging for CB, as she would receive any objections from unhappy parents. CB acknowledged this, but said parents will be made aware that the decision, if made, will be with the support of the governing board, and explain that we are taking the same approach as the rest of the LLC. CB suggested implementation should be in September 2018, when parents will have the new holiday year dates so would not get caught out by booking holidays when unaware of the school holidays. **MF noted if parents have a number of children in WHPS, there is a big impact for children, teachers and classmates, so what else can be done if penalty notices are not issued? CB said JJ could be approached for support.** JB noted that penalty noticing would still only impact those that chose to take 2 x 5 days in a 12 month period. DB felt it was the persistent offenders that were the real concern. CB said if Ofsted came in, she had a concern that they would look at the number of 'G' codes and ask why penalty notices are not being issued and question what the school has done to address it. DM felt WHPS was an outlier which was difficult to explain. **JB asked how many families would have received a court summons at WHPS in the last 12 months if penalty notices had been applied, as it's the second penalty notice (rather than the fines) that has big implications.** AP felt as an outlier, there appeared to be no good reason not to support penalty noticing. MF felt strongly in support. JB had strong reservations about the principle of penalty noticing and how effective it was, as did SS who didn't feel schools should be dictating to families. However, both recognised the difficulty and implications of WHPS standing alone in the LCC. **JM asked if the first penalty notice made it clear that the second stage lead to a court summons?** CB noted it was the school's duty to report +10 sessions of absence (1/2 day = 1 session) to DCC, who then decide whether to fine/summons. CB felt it was important to note the school has no further involvement, nor benefits from any money collected in fines.

The proposal to implement penalty noticing from September 2018 was put to the vote, on the basis that the rest of the LLC would also all be doing it from this date. Proposal was agreed by all present.

**Actions:**

Governing Board to agree wording of letter to be sent to all parents/carers notifying them of this decision.

Notification to go to all parents/carers annually in September, giving prior notification and reminding them of the process for requesting authorised absence and the consequences of not doing so. This will ensure even if absence is not pre-requested on the appropriate form, penalty notices can still be issued by DCC if required.

#### **Explain use of Office 365 'group' functionality(JB)**

SW confirmed school email addresses had been created for all governors, and governor groups now needed to be set up. JB offered to meet with SW and LD if required (any Friday morning) to help set the groups up. **SW to circulate new email addresses (done). SW to review functionality and arrange meeting if required.**

#### **FISH update(CB)**

CB advised that she had again been in contact with FISH and given the owner an ultimatum to provide an update demonstrating what progress had been made towards setting up a breakfast club for September 2018. A response had been received, stating FISH were still keen but had concerns about getting staff, so they were now looking into creating a franchise where someone else would run the club on their behalf. **Governors felt this was simply delaying matters again, and asked CB to contact FISH and say that the board of governors had requested to see an action plan of what is happening, with dates leading up to launching for September 2018 by the next governors meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April. Otherwise with regret the governing board would need to consider other options.**

**Review quotes for staff absence insurance – carried forward to April meeting.**

### **3. Dates of Next Meetings (SS)**

- 27 March 18 at 9am at School – Pay & Performance interim appraisals
- 26<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30pm at School – FGB Meeting - apologies from DM and HE
- 10<sup>th</sup> May at 6.30pm at School – Governing Board Succession Planning

### **4. Policies, Statements and Provisions for Review**

- **Policy Header** - CB and SW confirmed the new policy header including the SHINE Logo and vision had been agreed that day, and would be added to all new policies now.

- **Revised 2017 Fair Access Protocol** – JM noted this had been circulated from DCC yesterday, and had significant implications for schools having to take pupils as directed by DCC. Governors noted that some of the classrooms at WHPS were already very tight for space, and asked if this was pertinent? He believed there were guidelines to the maximum children in a given space, so MF recommended ascertaining the square footage to each classroom (less storage space) to support any future discussions. **Action: Clerk to circulate to all governors and add to April agenda (done).**

**Action: JM to meet with AP to give overview of responsibilities of Admissions Panel. CB also arranged to meet AP to provide an overview of relevant documents to support him in his new governor position.**

**a. Attendance, Punctuality and Truancy Policy** - CB noted that the policy needs a big overhaul, and given the decision to implement penalty noticing from September 2018 this will need to be incorporated. CB confirmed there is no 'model policy' as such so will require a significant amount of work. **It was agreed to review this policy at the FGB meeting in May. Clerk to add to agenda.**

**b. Governor Allowances and Expenses Policy** – JM asked MF to check if the quoted Inland Revenue mileage rate of 40p is correct. MF thought it should be the DCC rate quoted but will review and update as necessary. **Subject to this amendment, policy agreed by all present. Action: MF to update policy and send to SW.**

**c. Health & Safety Policy** – CB completed the amendments today so the policy has been added to the April agenda for review and sign off.

**d. Updated TOR for P & P, Stage 1 and Appeals, Admissions Panel** – agreed by all present. **Clerk to arrange publication of website (done).**

**e. Updated Sports Premium Report** – carried forward to April agenda.

**f. Medicine Policy 2017** – DB confirmed she had reviewed the policy, and there are no new updates. All children bringing medicine can only have it administered at school following a doctor's prescription and instruction on the label. If a parent brings in medication for a child without said information they are asked to take it home.

## **5. Strategic – Head Teacher's Verbal Update**

**a.** The meeting moved to Part 2 at 7.40 and returned to Part One at 7.45

**b. Parent Questionnaire Feedback at whole school and per class level (circulated prior to the meeting)** – CB advised 100 responses were received (1 per child requested), out of 214 children at the school, a 47% response rate. CB produced a whole school summary and highlighted any boxes representing over 15% of the responses received for that question (green for strongly agree/agree and red for disagree/strongly disagree). There were three in the latter category:

Q14. The school makes good use of its grounds – 16 strongly agreed, 41 agreed, **32 disagreed** and 6 strongly. CB mentioned the ground gets very boggy so children's clothes and shoes would get extremely muddy if they used it at certain times of the year.

Q 18. WHPS provides a good range of after school clubs – 8 strongly agreed, 30 agreed, **42 disagreed**, 15 strongly. CB noted this was more of a concern in KS1, and had already set up a recorder club and computing club starting after Easter. AP noted they all seemed to be on the same day. CB said this was unfortunate but was based on the availability of those running the clubs. **Governors discussed and supported the idea of asking parents if they would be willing to run after school clubs. Action: CB to progress.**

Q19. I think the school's system of rewarding and praising children is effective – 20 strongly agreed, 60 agreed, **15 disagreed**, none strongly disagreed. **CB wondered if the response might be different now that the new behaviour policy has been brought in?** SS had read the individual survey responses to get a feel for the comments behind the figures and noted some parents didn't like the trophy assemblies just once a half term, and wanted more regular praise for children. CB felt this did happen but was not always seen or heard by parents, and mentioned the use of house points. **MF**

**asked can it be made more visible, perhaps an escalation of collecting house points, certificates etc. CB took the point but noted management of such a system can be very time consuming.**

SS also flagged some of the main comments related to parents wanting wrap around care, with some noting they didn't believe governors understood how important it was to parents; There were comments on the importance of providing mental and emotional support to children; Parents were not invited to be involved enough; **SP asked how the feedback compared to the last survey, were there consistent or new themes? JB said lack of sport had been a previous topic, and that use of the field and provision of after school clubs were new areas of concern. MF was concerned that if a parent/carer felt the need to tick 'strongly disagree' to any question, they should be encouraged to come in and talk about it.**

SS went on to highlight some of the many positives, including parents' satisfaction with teaching (many encouraging comments, which CB confirmed had been shared with the Teachers concerned); Forest School; very pleasing to note all responded with strongly agree or agree to Q25. My child feels safe at school. **Action: CB to prepare feedback to parents covering the main issues highlighted and to provide explanations wherever possible.**

**c. Updated SEF (circulated prior to the meeting) – DM asked why under the pupil premium numbers it referred to 8 children on free school meals, but in the free school meal box it referred to 4? CB advised if a child was entitled to free school meals and then is subsequently not entitled, the funding is still retained for 6 years, hence the variance in numbers.**

**d. GDPR – CB confirmed that the information and audit form promised by Dawn Stabb was due to be sent this week. CB met with the LLC on 20<sup>th</sup> March, and noted they were not keen to take the Babcock GDPR package. CB was concerned that the deadline was fast approaching (25 May 18), and unless a decision was made quickly regarding the DPO there would not be time or capacity to get things done in time. CB said £5K had been put in to the budget to cover GDPR, and Lara had until Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March to confirm whether we want to buy in Babcock's services. CB said this would only tie the school in for a year, and it was anticipated that the costs would do down in future years after the initial 'bedding down' period. Babcock's service included the appointment of a DPO that would work with the SLT, update policies and attend training courses. CB noted Michelmore's offered a cheaper service but did not provide the DPO. JM asked what were the consequences of having nothing in place? MF noted a school legally must have a DPO in place by the May deadline, and did not feel it was worth the risk of taking on and training our own DPO. Governors discussed delaying a decision until the next FGB meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April, but did not see any benefit in doing so, as the options open to them would not change. Therefore all governors agreed to buy-in Babcock's GDPR package with a DPO being provided. Governors also discussed the benefits of having a GDPR lead governor, which will be discussed at the succession planning meeting. In the meantime, MF offered to bridge the gap.**

The meeting moved into Part 2 at 8.30 and returned to Part 1 at 8.40.

**Appraisals** - CB confirmed all teacher appraisals had been completed, but TA appraisals had not taken place due to Mrs Bennett covering a class – rearranged for the following week. CB had completed 10 appraisals including the office staff, although LD will take over these 2 in future.

**Stanley Security** – CB had written a lengthy letter to Stanley Security flagging the issues and had now had confirmation that the doors (including fused spurs) would be fitted over Easter with no costs to the school. Subsequently an IT representative from The King's School would be required on site to

finalise everything, to be arranged straight after Easter. Governors thanked CB for pursuing and resolving this matter.

## 6. Safeguarding

**a. Meeting with WHPC** – JM advised she and SP had met with the Chair of WHPC and Jess Bailey to discuss their concerns surrounding the increase in traffic around Beech Park. They were advised that WHPC had contacted Claire Wright regarding having yellow lines and awaited an update. JM and SP had suggested a zebra crossing might be preferable, and SP showed governors where it might be sited. SP mentioned 40m of visibility would be required either side, and noted the zigzag lines either side could not be parked on. However, these would potentially be outside residents' houses, so there may be objections. WHPC were supportive of the idea. JM went on to say that the option of moving the steps from the small playground sideways and having a ramp had been supported by WHPC, who were willing to provide 50% of the costs. Since then, JM, SP & CB had carried out a risk assessment, and decided that the steps were low risk and had therefore asked the caretaker to install a grab rail to further reduce any safety concerns. JM also suggested to WHPC the idea of a footpath from West Hill Road alongside McColls to the top of the car park, which WHPC thought sensible and possible. Along with the zebra crossing, this would then provide a safe pathway for children to school. **Action: All governors supported the proposals and SS asked that they be taken forward with WHPC.** SP mentioned he had attended a public realm survey meeting, which is looking at all land between buildings in West Hill. The main points SP noted were that a site is being sought in West Hill for a football pitch for the village, and a proposal to open up a pathway from West Hill Road to join up with the pavement in front of WHVH (although this had not looked at the traffic implications of doing this).

CB noted there was another meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March at WHVH regarding the McColls site development, which CB was attending. **JM asked if the governing board should take a view on the planning application, given there was the potential to lose 16 parking spaces and the resultant impact this is likely to have on traffic. All noted the village hall car park was often full now. Governors asked CB to find out on Monday when the planning application is likely to be submitted and to clarify the process for formally raising a concern. JM offered to draft a reply on behalf of the governors.**

**b. Confirm procedure for absent children** – CB advised the office at WHPS had never had to use the third contact, but others in the LLC had done so, and ultimately gone round to the house when they could not get a reply. CB has confirmed that the office need to try and get a reply trying each of three contacts where necessary in turn, and flag if no response can be obtained. CB confirmed clarification had gone in that day's newsletter, so parents/carers are aware of the procedure and also what they are agreeing to by becoming a 'named contact'. **DM noted this should be flagged annually.**

**c. Safeguarding Forum** CB confirmed that there were a number of routine actions arising. CB noted the template for a recent safeguarding audit had been shared with her, which was very thorough and would be used by CB and JM in future for their safeguarding walks.

## 7. Financial Monitoring

**a. Sign off 2018/19 Budget (Income/Expenditure Analysis Report and notes circulated prior to the meeting)** - MF advised that he and LD had discussed a number of questions MF had raised. It was noted that going to 31 pupils in KS2 classes had made a significant difference to school funding, and

an in year surplus of £16,159 was budgeted for the next financial year. MF was happy to report that David Dominey had been pleased with the budgeting process and controls shown. **MF asked if governors had any additional targets they would like to see or additional interventions which could make a difference, given there was scope within the budget for some additional cost? CB felt the training budget was extremely tight so was pleased to note there was scope for a bit more flexibility.** MF flagged the importance of keeping the PTFA engaged to support the school with strategic projects, given the current anticipated deficit from Year 3 onwards. **The budget was agreed by all governors.**

**b. Sign off SFVS (circulated prior to the meeting) – Agreed by all governors.**

**c. Update on Financial Benchmarking (including community focus school funding) – carried forward to April meeting**

## **8. Lead Governor Reports: Questions arising**

**a. English (HE) – HE noted how proud and positive the children were about their work, which was an excellent reflection on the teachers. HE also noted it was pleasing that children didn't perceive reading as 'homework' but part of their routine. MF raised the fact that in the safeguarding question, Y4 pupils said they would take to friends rather than a teacher, and was this a concern? HE felt their response flagged to teachers the need to reinforce the message that they can talk to a teacher without getting into trouble. JM noted more evidence was required on children's responses to the question as this is the first time it had been asked.**

**b. Staff Development and CPD (DB) – No questions.**

## **9. Governor/Clerking Training Reports**

**a. Managing Formal Proceedings – No questions.**

**b. Head Teacher Appraisal – No questions**

## **10. Matters brought forward at the Chair's discretion – none**

**11. SMILE Learning Trust SP advised that when he met with WHPC, they had asked why there was a 'Private Property Keep Out' sign on the field gates, which is a shared community facility? JB explained that The SMILE Learning Trust owns the school land and buildings, which includes the field so are entitled to put the sign up. In fact, there could be liability issues for the schools if they don't point out that the land is private, so having the sign up indemnifies the school in case of accident outside of school use. JB did not think the land had ever been 'community' land. DM asked on what basis West Hill Wasps were allowed to use it? JB said the previous HT had permitted it some years ago. MF questioned if the arrangement should be on a more formal footing? Should the governors be cautious about encouraging use of the field outside the school? AP suggested a peppercorn rent could be charged? Governors considered whether the field could be sublet to WHPC as they have stated that they are looking for a football pitch for communal use, although there would need to be fencing erected to separate the school buildings. Action: JM & SP to clarify the situation regarding the field's ownership and raise the subject of subletting the field in principal with WHPC.**

## **12. Impact of meeting on teaching and learning for pupils:**

- Succession Planning meeting arranged to agree future governor roles
- Agreement reached on penalty noticing

- Discussed benefit of monitoring pupil performance data, therefore allowing any necessary teacher or pupil support to be put in
- Budget figures for 2018/19 and SFVS reviewed and approved
- Governors now have an understanding of ownership of the field and liability
- Procedure for contacting 3 named people when a child is absent from school was clarified
- Discussion of parent views from recent questionnaire and follow up actions agreed

Governors thanked JB for all his years of support and contribution to the governing board at WHPS and JB noted the big benefits he had personally taken from being involved.

**The meeting closed at 21:15**

APPROVED