



FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2023: 6.00PM AT THE SCHOOL

<u>Present:</u>	Jo Blunden (JB), Bridget Ditcham (BD), Rachel Farris (RF), Keith Hay (KH), Ben Hockley (BHo), Phillipa Irving (PI), Michelle Law (ML), Belinda Rowland (BR) and Heather Williams (HW).
<u>Also present:</u>	Vanessa Neale (VN- Deputy Headteacher), Carol Simpson (CS – Business Manager) and Rebecca Marr (Clerk)
<u>Circulation:</u>	All Governors, Vanessa Neale and Carol Simpson.

Item No.	Agenda items/Discussions	Action
1.	<p><u>Apologies</u> Apologies were received and accepted from Bethany Caunter, Bryony Harding and Lucy Hill.</p> <p>JB was congratulated on Little Acorns outstanding Ofsted inspection.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Declaration of interests</u> No declaration of interests was made.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Approve the minutes of 30th November 2022</u> PI proposed the minutes of 30th November 2022 as a correct record. This was seconded by BR. The minutes were approved with one abstention.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Matters arising</u> <u>To consider the governor structure going forward</u> - The FGB noted that they had received, in advance of the meeting, information on a flat governing structure and a draft plan of how this would look for our school.</p> <p>The rationale behind the change is to enable the Governing Body to focus on strategy and give governors a holistic overview of the school. It will also mean fewer meetings although they may last a little longer. Many other Primary schools in Wokingham already operate using this system and their feedback has been positive.</p>	

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

It is hoped one of the annual FGB meetings will take place in school hours, as governors can also meet with staff and see the school in action. Governors were reminded that they are entitled to time off work to fulfil governor obligations.

The Chair will discuss with Vicky Lewendon at WBC Governor Services the flat structure further and will ask to be put in contact with other schools who already operate this for any guidance.

Q: Will we still have subject presentations from members of staff?

A: Yes, these will be scheduled when the FGB's focus is on teaching and learning and the nature of the presentation will be driven by the SDP.

Q: The Sites and Buildings Committee used to carry out a site walk. Will this still be done but by the full FGB?

A: Most of the walkaround is operational. We are planning that the site walk is carried out by the Headteacher, Business Manager and the Health and Safety Governor with any issues fed back to the wider FGB.

Q: With staff and governor workload in mind, can we carry out less frequent reviews of the policies?

A: Yes definitely. We have already started to do this where we can.

Q: Can we operate a flat governing structure for a trial period?

A: Yes, I feel an annual cycle is needed to fully review whether the system is working.

The Governing Body agreed to trial this system for a year and noted the potential benefits.

Amend the scheme of delegation – Done. Item closed.

Review the exclusion policy – Done and is on the agenda for approval. Item closed.

Ensure the policies all refer to families and not parents – Done. A reference to parents was noted at the end of the accessibility policy. Clerk to change.

Amend the policies and share with staff and place them on the school website – Done. Item closed.

Reconsider the wording of the accessibility policy in relation to parental surveys and bring back to the next FGB meeting for approval – on the agenda. Item closed.

5.

Governing Body organisational matters

5.1 Appoint JB as a parent governor – The FGB unanimously appointed JB as a parent governor on the basis that an election had been held very recently and both candidates have now been appointed as parent governors.

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

5.2 Appoint BC as the link governor for PPG – The FGB unanimously appointed BC as the link governor for PPG.

5.3 Link governor vacancies including health and safety – The FGB unanimously appointed JB as the health and safety governor.

ML, BD and VN attended a meeting with WBC recently to discuss the support the school needs from WBC. The first part of the support will be a learning walk by ML and the School Improvement Officer. Additional support from WBC and other sources will be planned, assessed and evaluated.

6. Reports

6.1 Head's report -The Headteacher's report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The FGB noted that there was no safeguarding, bullying or prevent issues but there had been two fixed term exclusions.

The FGB were delighted to learn that a Site Controller has been found and will be available to start as soon as possible subject to the usual HR checks.

Q: Why has the persistent absence rate not lowered?

A: We are working very closely with our families to support them. Covid has had a long-lasting emotional impact for some of our pupils.

Q: What is the staff absence rate like?

A: We have spates of illness like you see across other schools. It is not a concern and is not linked to wellbeing.

Q: Is there anything more governors can do to support the school in relation to the pupil at risk of permanent exclusion?

A: No but thank you. The Chair of Governors and Clerk have been providing assistance.

Q: How are the staff agencies working out?

A: We have had varying degrees of quality and experience.

The updated SDP had been circulated prior to the meeting and staff were thanked for their involvement. We can see the path of improvement. Staff have been asked to complete a SDP survey to ensure staff have ownership of the document and the key priorities.

The FGB noted that the SDP shows evidently how much work is happening across the school.

Q: History was picked up by Ofsted, but do other subjects need focus?

A: We need to ensure consistency across all subjects and record all the steps of learning. In the summer term, Subject Leaders will be monitoring to ensure this is happening. A lot of work has been done on the website to demonstrate teaching and learning in school.

Q: How is the safeguarding reporting developments going?

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

A: Arbor is a good tool that we have just switched to. This enables safeguarding to be recorded electronically. There is still some customisation to do and familiarisation that you would expect with a new system.

Q: How are you ensuring confidentiality and access to Arbor?

A: Only the DSL's have access to the safeguarding information. The teachers have access only to limited parts relating to the pupils in their class.

Q: Is Arbor similar to CPOMS?

A: We were advised to look at Arbor and ascertain if it had all the functionality we need before considering CPOMS further.

Q: If pupils transfer schools is it easy to transfer the records?

A: Not currently on Arbor but Arbor will listen to feedback from schools and if they receive enough interest they will add that functionality to the system.

HW arrived at the meeting 6.40pm.

6.2 Staff & Finance – It was agreed that the last set of budget monitoring documents would be circulated to the wider FGB in preparation of finance moving into FGB meetings.

The Chair of the Committee gave a short verbal report; the highlights of which were:

- The Committee reviewed the 9-month update and it looks like we will end the year very close to what was forecasted.
- We will end with a surplus of circa £15,000. There have been variances to many lines in the budget due to increases in income from a variety of sources, higher than expected expenditure, particularly staff pay rises, and unfortunately carrying some staff vacancies.
- The Committee approved the capital expenditure on the gates.
- Pay Panel matters were reported to the Committee. No issues or matters need to be reported to the FGB.

7. School Development Plan

Already covered as part of the headteacher's report.

The FGB were advised that the SDP is a document owned by all and should be challenged and monitored by all stakeholders including governors.

8. Policies

For approval: accessibility, core values, equality, exclusion, governor training (incorporating governor induction policy), grievance, safeguarding, teacher appraisal and teacher pay.

It was agreed to defer the safeguarding policy to the next meeting.

The policies had been circulated before the meeting.

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

The following policies were approved unanimously: core values, equality, governor training, grievance, and teacher appraisal.

The following policies were unanimously approved with minor editorial changes:

Accessibility – change the reference to families from parents

Exclusion – minor edits to ensure the policy flows (no change to the content)

Teacher pay – remove reference to assistant headteachers.

The FGB decided to review the school's equality objectives at the next meeting.

9. National issues

The FGB were advised of the NEU strike action that took place today with the possibility of three further strike dates in March.

Parent governors were asked if they were satisfied with the communication from school on this issue. The Parent Governors advised that knowing a few days in advance was helpful to enable them to plan, contrary to some other schools, and that the communication was appreciated.

10. Training/School visits

10.1 Governor training attended –The FGB were referred to the two training reports circulated before the meeting (Clerks forum and Prevent training).

10.2 Link governor visits – HW had visited Older Team recently and will circulate a report form.

4 governors have arranged to visit the school on 9th February.

It was noted that once the subject action plans were updated that would be a good time for the link governors to visit their respective areas.

11. Health and safety

Nothing to report.

12. Staff wellbeing

Staff wellbeing initiatives are continuing. A sharing table has been introduced with a view to easing financial burdens on staff as well as promoting wellbeing. Subject leaders being given time to focus on their role is also beneficial for staff.

13. AOB

A draft SFVS had been circulated prior to the meeting. The FGB were asked to approve the SFVS with an amendment to the part relating to the inventory. The new wording was outlined as 'An inventory check was carried out on 8th March 2022. Another inventory check is planned for March 2023'. **The FGB unanimously approved the SFVS and the Chair signed the document.**

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

2 WBC training courses were recommended for governors: school improvement planning and understanding the primary curriculum.

Q: Under the flat structure will the Headteacher's report be abolished?
A: No.

Linking governors to members of the SLT and/or the key priorities under the SDP was mooted as something for consideration under the flat structure.

CS kindly offered to meet with governors to talk through the school's finances if they wished.

14.

CPTA

The CPTA are pleased that school discos can resume again. An annual calendar of events has been planned, including early discussions on celebrating the school's 50th birthday.

15.

Date of next meeting

Next meeting to be arranged in March with a teaching and learning focus.

The FGB meeting with a finance focus and to approve the budget will also be arranged probably around the week of 24th April.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm.

Next steps:

1: To amend the scheme of delegation to reflect the flat structure

2: To change the accessibility policy

3: Circulate the last set of budget monitoring documents to the FGB members

4: To add a review of the safeguarding policy and the equality objectives to the next agenda

5: Where relevant, amend the policies, share with staff and publish on the school's website

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Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....