

Approved Minutes
Meeting of the Governing Body (GB) of
WEST JESMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL (WJPS)
Tuesday 10 October 2017

Present:

Jane Edminson (Chair)
Arlene Ainsley, Ishy Bruce, Clare Byatt, Laura Cordy, Julia De Soyza,
Adam Goldwater, David Griffiths, Jill Hetherington, Cathy Hogan, Dominic Martin,
Xanthe Mills, Laura Robb, Paul Simpson, Freda Summerfield and Gary Wallis-Clarke
(Executive Headteacher)

Governors in post - **19**; quorum - **10**; governors present – **16**

The meeting was quorate

In attendance:

Claire Hepple ~ Governor Services

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed governors to the first GB meeting of the academic year at 6.05pm. This was the first meeting of the GB since the sudden death of Deborah Hainsworth, Co-opted Staff Governor, and a tribute to Deb written by the Executive Headteacher was included at the beginning of the agenda. The Chair noted that all members of the school community continued to think about Deb and that her role on the GB would remain unfilled for the moment. Dominic Martin added that members of the Curriculum Committee had discussed the possibility of an annual award to be made to two pupils for their contribution to the local community in memory of Deb. He reported that all of Deb's children had been in favour of this and governors **agreed** that this should be arranged.

The Executive Headteacher thanked the GB and everyone else involved in hosting a flower decked reception held at the school after the funeral. He noted that the gathering had been good for staff and was appreciated by Deb's family.

Dominic Martin observed that that it had been a very difficult time for members of staff though they had been very resilient; there had been no staff absence and staff had kept pupils in focus, as Deb would have done. **Governors asked if support was still available**; Dominic Martin confirmed this and noted that support would continue to be available for some time into the future.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received and were **accepted** from Lee Cranston and Nicky Wise.

3. Declaration of Interests

Register of Interests 2017 – 2018 forms had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were asked to return their completed forms to the Clerk. Data supplied on the forms would be used to update information held about governors on the school's website.

Jane Edminson declared that she was now Co-Chair of Heaton Manor School.

4. **Appointments / membership update**

Parent Governor

Freda Summerfield's term of office as a Parent Governor would end on 8 December 2017. A Parent Governor election would be arranged at the beginning of the spring term 2018.

Staff Governor

Clare Byatt's term of office as Staff Governor would end on 9 December 2017 and she had indicated that she would like to continue in the role. The Executive Headteacher would arrange a Staff Governor election in December.

Action: Executive Headteacher

5. **Identification of additional items not on the agenda**

There were no additional items identified.

6. **Election of Chair and Vice-Chairs**

The term of office for both Chair and Vice-Chairs had expired and governors were requested to make new appointments for these positions.

Election of Chair

An expression of interest in the role of Chair had been received from Jane Edminson; there were no other expressions of interest or nominations for this position. Governors unanimously **agreed** to elect Jane Edminson as Chair of governors. Jane stated that it was likely that she may need to delegate some work to other members of the GB as her new role as Co-Chair of Heaton Manor School may be quite demanding.

Election of Vice-Chairs

Laura Robb and Nicky Wise had expressed their interest in roles as joint Vice-Chairs; no further expressions of interest or nominations for the positions had been received. Governors unanimously **agreed** to elect Laura Robb and Nicky Wise as joint Vice-Chairs.

7. **Review of:**

a. Governing Body Procedures 2017 – 2018

A draft version of the GB Procedures 2017 – 2018 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The GB Procedures 2017 – 2018 were **approved** subject to an amendment to clerking arrangements; Hannah Hale would clerk all committees except the Finance Committee which would be clerked by Wendy Mar.

b. National Governance Association (NGA) Code of Conduct

A 2017 – 2018 version of the National Governance Association (NGA)'s Code of Conduct had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair drew governors' attention to the fact that requirements which related to confidentiality would continue to apply after a governor had left office. Governors **approved** use of the GB Code of Conduct and signed a copy confirming their agreement to abide by it.

c. Governing Body Committees

Committee membership 2017 – 2018 had been circulated prior to the meeting; governors **agreed** the committee memberships.

d. Plan for monitoring / Links 2017 – 2018

Governor Monitoring / Information Gathering Plan 2017 – 2018 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Looked after children would be added to the groups of Vulnerable pupils to be monitored. Year Group links identified on the Plan would be reviewed and any required changes would be made before the next GB meeting.

Action: Chair

The Executive Headteacher encouraged governors to look at the 'Take One Object' project when they visited the school in the autumn term.

Governors would attend Parents' Evenings on 6 February 2018 and 8 February 2018 for Parent Voice. The Executive Headteacher noted that a parent of a prospective pupil at the school had asked about the last Parent Voice.

e. Delegation Arrangements

Delegation Planner 2017 – 2018 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were advised that there had been no revisions to the planner since it had been approved for use in 2016 – 2017 and the same delegation arrangements were **agreed** for 2017 – 2108.

f. Governing Body Training Needs

Governors were referred to the September 2017 issue of GoverNews for details of the Governor Training Programme and were encouraged to book onto any training courses they felt would be beneficial.

Paul Simpson would attend Update on admissions and fair access on 17 October 2017.

The GB Handbook would be updated with arrangements agreed at this meeting and would be circulated via email for review ahead of the next GB meeting.

Action: Governor Services and Chair

8. Draft minutes of previous governing body meeting

The draft minutes of the GB meeting held on 4 July 2017 were attached and **approved** with no confidential items declared.

9. Matters arising from the above minutes

Matters arising from the above minutes (page 3)

- The monitoring of Looked after children had been discussed earlier in the meeting, (Item 7d). Julia De Soyza would monitor the achievements of this vulnerable group, should any LAC pupils join the school during 2017 – 2018.

Action: Julia De Soyza

- The Finance Committee would review the report with tracked Pupil Premium spending in 2017 – 2018.

Action: Paul Simpson, Chair of Finance Committee

- Services to Schools Governors' Module would be available soon and may obviate the need for governors to share information via Office 365.

Action: Governor Services

- The Executive Headteacher awaited validated data to include in the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and would email the updated SEF to governors before Christmas.

Action: Executive Headteacher

In a further update on safeguarding training issues, Dominic Martin advised that at a recent Ofsted inspection elsewhere, inspectors had wanted to review the role of Newcastle Safeguarding Children's Board in delivering safeguarding advice and not see sole reliance upon the service offered by Clennell Education Solutions.

Poverty Proofing feedback (page 4)

Dominic Martin would continue to edit the Poverty Proofing Action Plan and assured governors that it would be ready in the near future.

Action: Dominic Martin

School Improvement (page 5)

It was noted that results data outlined at the GB meeting on 4 July 2017 continued to stand at this point in time.

In response to a query as to the number of pupils on the school roll, the Executive Headteacher replied that there had been 610 pupils on census day, four more pupils than on census day in 2016.

The Executive Headteacher, only representative from the North East of England and only representative of primary education, would attend another meeting of the Northern Powerhouse before December 2017. He advised governors that the report produced was sent to George Osborne, former Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Trust Update (page 9)

A governor queried recent correspondence from Heaton Manor School which indicated continued membership of the Ouseburn Learning Trust. It was noted that Heaton Manor School wished to continue to work with the Trust and could become an Associate member of the Trust.

A governor questioned whether the Trust would face ongoing financial liability as a consequence of Heaton Manor School's departure and was informed that Heaton Manor's liability would run until the end of the financial year 2017 – 2018. Karen Blackburn, Acting Headteacher, would attend a Trust Board meeting the following day. Academisation of Heaton Manor School was expected to take place in September 2018.

The Chair noted that the Trust's liability extended to two members of staff, the Trust

Manager and the Administrative Assistant, whose current premises of work was Chillingham Road Primary School. The Chair confirmed that Trust Board members were currently working on a resolution for their future working arrangements.

A governor queried the percentage of financial contribution the Trust received from Heaton Manor School and was informed that this had been approximately 50%. It was noted that any legal costs to extract Heaton Manor School from the Trust should be covered by the academisation process.

Governing Body Review (page 12)

Feedback from the End of Year GB review appeared later in the agenda for this meeting, (Item 13).

Policy Review (page 12)

Work on the Managing Medication in School Policy was ongoing.

Action: Dominic Martin

10. School Improvement

School Development Plan (SDP) 2017 – 2018, Key Priorities had been circulated prior to the meeting.

West Jesmond Teaching School, Update October 2017 was tabled.

Staff had been informed of the school's key priorities at the first staff training day of the academic year and the priorities had also been shared with the members of the Trust.

The key priorities, all of which were backed up by a detailed action plan, were:

1. Mastery across the curriculum

Where appropriate, the principles of Maths Mastery would be applied to other areas of the curriculum.

2. Time to Talk

Circle time and other methods which allowed pupils time to talk about feelings, opinions and beliefs would be developed.

A governor queried where this idea had originated. Dominic Martin replied that monitoring of the Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) had highlighted a need to provide more time for pupils to talk. He further explained that a pupil who had recently joined the school had experienced difficulties in becoming accepted within established friendship groups. Pupils needed the opportunity to talk when they required it rather than when the school allocated time. **A governor asked whether staff were well equipped to deal with feelings and opinions expressed by pupils** and this was confirmed by Clare Byatt, Staff Governor. Clare also observed that, in common with pupils, staff may not wish to talk at allotted times.

Time to talk would also be facilitated during PE sessions as the competitive element of winning and losing could be very emotional.

3. Accurately monitoring and improving pupil progress

This key priority particularly related to pupils from Reception to Year 2.

4. Narrowing the gap

Any identified gaps, for example, Writing at greater depth for boys and girls and Reading, especially for English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils against national standards, were to be narrowed. In common with most schools, progress of SEND pupils in Key Stage (KS) 2 was not as great as the progress made by other pupils; SEND needs had increased in severity and testing had asked more of them. Some Free School Meal (FSM) pupils in Year 6 had made more progress than non-FSM pupils.

5. National Teaching School Year 2

A wider range of support would be offered this year and the Quayside Teaching Alliance was on its way to becoming fully established by the end of the academic year.

6. Following the three key priorities of the Ouseburn Learning Trust Strategic Plan which were:

- **The Whole Child – Curriculum Entitlement**
- **School Improvement – Attainment and School Sharing**
- **Monitoring and Impact**

It was noted that the priorities of primary schools in the Trust had not necessarily been an easy fit with those of Heaton Manor School.

Asked if this would be the first time data had been shared with other members in the Trust, the Executive Headteacher replied that it had been the first time data had been considered in depth.

The SDP was a working document and would be subject to change. **A governor asked if it would be used by Ofsted**; this was confirmed. It was also noted that the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) was accepted as a valid source of data. A new dashboard, Inspection Dashboard Summary Report (IDSR), would be available later this term.

The West Jesmond Teaching School Update, October 2017, provided FFT Dashboard for KS2 2017.

The Executive Headteacher highlighted the following:

- The FFT Dashboard data was incorrect because it included disapplied pupils. It could, nevertheless, be used as an indicator and governors should be mindful that it represented a worst case scenario. Five pupils would certainly be disapplied and a query remained over the possible disapplication of another pupil.
- The FFT indicated that 76% of KS2 pupils had achieved the expected standard in Reading Writing and Maths. The Executive Headteacher stated that the figure was actually 82%.
- The average scaled score of progress in Reading and Maths indicated +3.1 which was significantly above the national average. The Executive Headteacher was currently unable to verify this result. The school had been ranked 11th. It was



noted that this figure may remain the same because the disapplied pupils did not have KS1 data and therefore progress could not be measured.

- The FFT indicated +13% of KS2 pupils' progress in the expected standard of Reading, Writing and Maths; the Executive Headteacher stated that this was actually +18%.
- A downward trend was indicated for 7 SEND pupils in KS2 Reading.
- All pupil groups (except SEND) had results which were significantly above the national average.

A governor queried why seven Pakistani pupils had attained better results for KS2 Maths than five Bangladeshi pupils had for KS2 Writing. The Executive Headteacher replied that this depended upon starting points.

It was noted that as the number of SEND pupils reduced, the complexity of their needs increased.

Dominic Martin commented that it had previously been easier for SEND pupils to achieve a lower Level 2 during assessment with levels. Currently, a pupil with SEND who found Maths easier yet struggled with Writing, would be pushed into a higher attaining group on the strength of the Maths result.

A new Attendance Officer was on site three mornings a week. A number of pupils had not yet returned to school; many of the reasons for their delayed attendance was due to issues with Visas. It was confirmed that these pupils, whilst absent from school on census day, had been counted in the census.

11. Teaching School Update

Governors were referred to the West Jesmond Teaching School Update, October 2017, tabled at the previous item.

The following update was provided:

- There were five School Direct trainees across the Trust in 2017 – 2018 and there would be ten trainees in 2018 – 2019. Dominic Martin and Rebecca McVittie would attend a recruitment drive at Northumbria University with merchandise which would advertise the Quayside Teaching Alliance as a brand.
- Six Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)s had registered with the Teaching School. This had necessitated much paperwork and mentor training on the part of Dominic Martin.
- Schools had been slow to purchase the Continuous Professional Development and Learning (CPDL) on offer; this was attributed to funding issues experienced by a number of schools.
- Expressions of interest had been received in connection with Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE)s.
- A local primary school had become a Teaching School. It was noted that if more Teaching Schools were accredited, the school may consider becoming a Specialist School. The Chair, on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE), was writing a letter to other schools asking them to become Teaching Schools.

Action: Chair

The Chair asked if it would be better to form an alliance with schools outside the Newcastle area. Dominic Martin stated that schools could simply say they were part of an alliance and then this was the case.

The Executive Headteacher drew an analogy between the Teaching School and an onion with the Teaching School as the heart of the onion, surrounded by many layers which included Trust Schools, partners of the Alliance and other organisations with the skin of the onion being those who attended courses.

Paul Simpson, Chair of the Finance Committee, advised that the finances of the Teaching School would be kept under close scrutiny.

12. Trust Update

A Trust Update had been provided earlier in the meeting, (Item 9). A further brief update was provided:

- A board meeting would take place the following day.
- An annual event to be attended by Foundation Trust Governors would be organised.
- A Headteacher Training Day led by the Executive Headteacher had taken place. The day had been very positive and had established the school's presence among this group of equals. It was noted that the LA had advocated School to School support as the model.

13. Reports from committees / individual and link governors / governor visits

The following reports were circulated prior to the meeting:

- Minutes of Finance Committee meeting, 27 June 2017
- Minutes of Curriculum Committee meeting, 4 July 2017
- Minutes of Personnel Committee meeting, 21 September 2017
- Feedback from End of Year GB evaluation

The school's Achievement Partner, Margaret Armstrong, had met the Chair and Xanthe Mills to complete performance management reviews for the Executive Headteacher and Head of School.

End of Year GB evaluation

Eight governors had completed and returned End of year GB evaluations to the Chair.

In response to the question 'Do you think the year group links have been effective?', a number of governors had indicated some dissatisfaction with their links to year groups, noting a lack of connection and that it afforded only a snapshot of their year group. The Chair agreed that more work was required to ensure this element of monitoring worked well. **A governor asked whether teachers regarded their link to a governor as a chore.** Clare Byatt, Staff Governor, responded that staff would be happy to meet with governors and visits would be planned in.

In response to the question 'Do you think our collective monitoring has resulted in more challenge?' it was generally felt that 'visits were more celebratory and informative' and could not always be construed as monitoring.

A Parent Governor commented that she had liked the new teacher information sheets which had been designed by an NQT. The information sheets were likened to 'top trumps cards' for teaching staff.

The Chair felt that in general, governors had not been good at following things up quickly and emphasised the importance that visit reports were produced and circulated quickly. A governor asked if other governors were happy with the report template. It was agreed that the format of the report would be discussed with Nicky Wise in order to facilitate speedier report production.

Action: Chair and Nicky Wise

Chair's update on Heaton Manor School

- The Chair at Heaton Manor School felt positive that there did not appear to be the levels of problems which Ofsted Inspectors had led governors to believe.
- GB meetings would be held each month; there would be no committees.
- Academisation would probably take place in September 2018 at which point a Local Governing Board would be formed comprised of nine governors; the Chair confirmed that she was unlikely to remain as a governor beyond academisation.
- A model of 80% commonality and 20% individuality was likely.
- Karen Blackburn, Acting Headteacher, would visit feeder primary schools to meet parents.
- An open evening would take place on 17 October 2017.

Arlene Ainsley, Julia De Soyza and Paul Simpson had given advance apologies for their early departure from the meeting and left during this item, between 7.30pm and 7.32pm.

A governor queried whether the school risked pupils leaving in Year 5. The Executive Headteacher noted that it was not yet known how the Gosforth Multi-academy Trust would develop and how admissions would work within the Academy Trust.

14. Financial Items

Schedule of Approved Levels of Authority

A draft version of the Schedule of approved levels of authority had been emailed to governors in advance of the meeting; governors **approved** use of the Schedule.

Best Value statement

The Best Value statement which had been emailed to governors prior to the meeting was **approved**.

LA Financial Regulations

The LA Financial Regulations were **approved** by governors.

Terms of Reference and delegation of financial responsibilities

The terms of reference and delegation of financial responsibilities were **approved** by governors.

15. Safeguarding / health and safety / risk management items

Jill Hetherington would review governor training offered by Clennell Education Solutions.

Action: Jill Hetherington

16. Dates and times of future GB and Committee meetings

The following dates for GB meetings had been agreed previously:

- 5 December 2017
- 30 January 2018
- 27 March 2018
- 22 May 2018
- 10 July 2018

All GB meetings would begin at 5.45pm for 6pm.

17. Local Authority reports – autumn term 2017

The following reports had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- School Admissions Update
- Resources to assist schools in their statutory duties and safeguarding responsibilities in relation to children missing from or missing out on education
- High Needs Review for Vulnerable Learners 2017/18
- High Needs Review for SEND 2017/18
- School Funding Update
- Newcastle Virtual School
- Update on HR Issues

School Admissions Update

Governors' attention was drawn to the School Admissions Code 2014 which used the words 'must' and 'must not' to signify mandatory requirements. The report also covered the determining of admission arrangements for 2019 – 2020, consultation on the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme, co-ordination of the Admissions Round and how admission authorities should handle In Year Admissions.

A governor asked whether these regulations applied to Multi-academy trust (MAT)s. The Chair responded that MATs were able to have their own Admissions Policy but had to remain within the legal framework of the Code. Schools had to ensure that an audit trail was maintained when considering In year admissions. All governors should be copied into emails issued and decisions should be transparent.

Resources to assist schools in their statutory duties and safeguarding responsibilities in relation to children missing from or missing out on education

Governors were advised of a new resources website: www.servicestoschools.org.uk/Page/3331 which would provide information and assistance to schools with regard to alternative provision, non-attendance, children missing education, home education, exclusions, fair access, managed moves, children on reduced timetables, licences and permits for children taking part in performances or paid employment.

The Executive Headteacher advised that licences for performances were required occasionally. There were no pupils on reduced timetables at the moment. There had not been any pupils leaving the school to be home educated for two or three years. Home educated pupils would be subject to safeguarding monitoring and the quality of teaching they received would be monitored.

High Needs Review for Vulnerable Learners 2017 – 2018

The review would look at how to support pupils to remain in mainstream schools and to reduce the number of children moving from school to school. The aim of the review would be to develop a co-ordinated, effective and financially sustainable pattern of support provision and services for vulnerable learners.

High Needs Review for SEND 2017 – 2018

Newcastle was the third highest LA in the country to place pupils in special schools or colleges and there was a correspondingly less inclusive approach in mainstream schools. A balance of provision had to be achieved between mainstream and special schools with greater capacity, skills and confidence to be developed in mainstream schools.

The Executive Headteacher noted that this represented a massive shift in Newcastle. The school was unique in that it had not sent any pupils to Special Schools for seven years. The Executive Headteacher took issue with the implication that schools in Newcastle were not inclusive although accepted that Newcastle was out of kilter with the majority of other LAs in the country. He noted that sending pupils to special schools had resulted in an overspend of £2m.

School Funding Update

LAs would continue to run a local formula until at least 2020 – 2021. It was likely that there would be higher gains for primary schools in general. The Funding Reform Sub Group of the Schools Forum had been reconvened to work on the local formula for 2018 – 2019. Governors were asked to check that their School Improvement Plan (SIP) was linked to the budget, that the school had a Financial Sustainability Plan and had examined DfE's financial benchmarking, procurement advice and tools.

It was noted that primary schools would be likely to gain funding through the National Funding Formula (NFF) as funding had previously been skewed towards secondary education. The Executive Headteacher noted that if the NFF had been introduced in 2017 – 2018, the school would have gained £200k and would have been the second highest school to gain in the city.

A governor asked if Heaton Manor School would be likely to suffer through the introduction of the NFF. The Executive Headteacher replied that funding for all secondary schools was likely to decrease and that being in special measures would not result in any extra money.

Newcastle Virtual School

A dedicated team of staff worked for the Newcastle Virtual School to support all Looked After Children (LAC). The new Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed

new duties on LAs and schools in relation to previously LAC, i.e. adopted children and those on Special Guardianship Orders. The recommendations for governors included ensuring that there was a lead governor for LAC, a Designated Teacher for LAC and that GBs received an annual report on outcomes of LAC which included attendance, exclusions, attainment, progress and trends.

It was noted that Looked after children should, if possible, attend either good or outstanding schools.

Update on HR Issues

Governors were informed of the pay award for teaching staff 2017, the school teachers pay and conditions document 2017, a refresh to the School Pay Policy, the Annual Salary Review and about payment of the Newcastle Living Wage. The annual HR conference for schools had been held on 28 September 2017.

Governors **approved** payment of 2% to all interim reference points.

The LA model Pay Policy was **approved** by governors.

The practical application of payment of the Newcastle Living Wage was discussed. Governors were advised that Lunchtime Supervisors would benefit from the increase and that, for example, a new Teaching Assistant on an L2 starting point would receive a slightly higher rate of pay. Payment of the Newcastle Living Wage had already affected the cleaning Chargehand. Governors **approved, in principle**, payment of the Newcastle Living Wage to relevant staff.

Governors were advised to follow the recommendations made in the reports.

There was no further business; the Chair thanked governors for attending and closed the meeting at 7.58pm.

Signed
Chair of Governors

Date 5/12/17