

Approved Minutes
Meeting of the Governing Body (GB) of
WEST JESMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL (WJPS)
Tuesday 23 May 2017

Present:

Jane Edminson (Chair)
Arlene Ainsley, Ishy Bruce, Clare Byatt, Henry Cave, Laura Cordy, Lee Cranston,
Julia De Soyza, Deborah Hainsworth, Jill Hetherington, Cathy Hogan,
Dominic Martin, Laura Robb, Freda Summerfield, Gary Wallis-Clarke (Executive
Headteacher) and Nicky Wise

Governors in post - **20**; quorum - **10**; governors present – **16**

The meeting was quorate

In attendance:

Claire Hepple ~ Governor Services

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting at 6.03pm. She articulated her disappointment that the Poverty Proofing speaker from Children North East had, once again, and at short notice, been unable to attend to provide a training session for governors. Governors vented their feelings of disquiet and dissatisfaction which they asked to be conveyed to Children North East. It was **agreed** that the training would be cancelled and a refund requested.

Action: Dominic Martin

Apologies for absence had been received and were **accepted** from Adam Goldwater, David Griffiths, Xanthe Mills and Paul Simpson.

2. Appointments / membership update

Governors were advised that the terms of office of two governors would end in the autumn term 2017: Clare Byatt, Staff Governor, on 9 December 2017 and Freda Summerfield, Parent Governor, on 8 December 2017. Arrangements for Staff Governor and Parent Governor elections would be discussed at the first meeting of the autumn term 2017.

3. Declaration of Interests / GB Code of Conduct

All governors had completed Register of Interests forms and had signed the GB Code of Conduct. There were no additional or revised pecuniary or personal interests declared.

4. Poverty Proofing briefing

In the absence of the Poverty Proofing speaker, Dominic Martin, Head of School, provided an account of his interactions with representatives from Children North East and his views of their findings. Dominic highlighted the following:

- The brief for the Poverty Proofing exercise had been discussed at an initial meeting.
- A representative from Children North East had spoken to each pupil from Year 1 – Year 6 and had spoken with small groups of pupils in Reception. She had also spoken to parents, governors and staff.



- A report, drawing upon these discussions, had been produced. The level of analysis presented in the report had been regarded as slightly crude and simplistic by Senior Leadership. Dominic noted that school was a complicated organisation with varying opinions of what poverty was. Some suggestions made by Children North East such as the replacement of thank you gifts for staff with donations to food banks were unlikely to be adopted.
- It was noted that the charity that delivered the audit had a political agenda.
- A clarification process had taken place with input from the Executive Headteacher and Dominic who had expressed opinions at variance with some aspects of the report. An Action Plan would be drawn up in due course.
- The school would develop increased consciousness about the number of times it asked for £1 donations and ensure that payment for trips was clearly and consistently communicated to parents as being voluntary. **Governors acknowledged that clarification with regard to trip letters to parents was required.**
- The school may review the frequency and type of trips undertaken and also evaluate trips more carefully. There may be a need to take trips less often and to find local solutions. The recent Year 3 trip to The Rising Sun Countryside Centre had been regarded as a fantastic experience. The Executive Headteacher advised that North Tyneside Council had cut all funding to the Centre and therefore their charges had increased. Forward planning for trips, perhaps with a National Trust pass, may be achieved. The school subsidised school trips by £2,200 and a range of parents had benefitted from this subsidy. The school needed to consider what was subsidised in the future. At the beginning of the academic year, Dominic Martin would provide parents with list of dates when contributions would be requested.

Action: Dominic Martin

- **The Chair observed that the report had not addressed the behaviour and attitudes of some pupils from more affluent families.**
- Dominic felt that there was a balance to be achieved between supporting people yet also expecting them to support themselves.
- It was reported that pupils had not wanted to use recorders provided by the school as they were unhygienic; Dominic noted that recorders were sterilized after use by each pupil.
- The importance of pupils developing resilience was noted.
- The Executive Headteacher noted that whilst he agreed with a lot of the content in the report he felt that it crossed a line. Governors were asked to read the report and find where their personal line was crossed. **A governor who had read the report commented that the suggestion that After School Clubs be abandoned marked the crossing of her line. Governors discussed how equipment for clubs may be shared by pupils.**
- A view expressed in the report that pupils judged birthday cakes brought in by other pupils was nonsensical in the opinion of the Executive Headteacher.
- Whilst there was no stigma attached to the purchase of second hand uniform, some parents regarded the provision of new uniform for their children as very important.
- Dominic had secured funding for Chimney Sweep Theatre School.
- There was a rolling allocation of free places for Breakfast and After School Clubs.

The Executive Headteacher would circulate the unedited version of the report to governors. Governors were asked to feedback their views and indicate which actions they would support.

Action: Executive Headteacher and governors

Henry Cave joined the meeting during this item, 6.25pm.

5. Pupil Premium update

Pupil Premium Policy, May 2017, V2.1, was tabled and had been emailed to governors ahead of the meeting. The Pupil Premium Strategic Plan 2017 – 2018 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The following points were made:

- The school would receive a predicted £66,260 in Pupil Premium funding in 2017 – 2018. The total strategic planned spend would be £124,911.
- There were 43 pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding out of a total of 605 pupils.
- In-school barriers to future attainment had been identified as: language acquisition, wider cultural development, social and cultural integration, mindset and resilience and personal, career and academic aspirations.
- External barriers included: attendance and parental support. Additional funding would be spent to improve attendance.
- The school would overspend on supporting vulnerable pupils.
- There were two Looked After Children (LAC) in school. Three previous LAC pupils had been adopted. It was a parental decision whether or not to inform the school about their children's status as adopted children.
- The additional provision of Raising Aspirations had been made to the four existing types of provision (Achievement and Standards, Learning Support, Pastoral work and Out of Hours and enrichment).
- Online tracking of provision, allocated hours and cost per pupil would be in place from September 2017. All pupils had been added to the tracker and interventions would be added. Cathy Hogan would operate 'Provision Mapping' for which she had received recent training.
- Termly 'vulnerable' pupil reviews had been conducted from 2017.
- The Pupil Premium Strategic Plan demonstrated how Pupil Premium pupils had been supported by additional funding from the main budget.
- Year 6 Pupil Premium pupils had achieved 38% in Maths and this required improvement.

A governor noted that some parents may not agree with the use of funding for an Attendance Officer (AO). Dominic Martin responded that the previous Service Level Agreement (SLA) had not included home visits by the AO only telephone calls; the school wanted the Attendance Officer to visit absent pupils in their homes. **Clare Byatt observed that the AO had a positive impact upon attendance of pupils in her class.** The school did not have any ability to fine parents as the threshold was set at 85%. Persistent Absence was 90%. There was a need to show that the school had taken measures to address poor attendance. The LA Report to be discussed later in the meeting focused on attendance.

A governor commented that names of members of staff should not be published alongside the salaries they received and advised that it would be prudent to publish only the total budgeted cost. Another governor suggested viewing the practice of GP surgeries in accounting for spend on their websites.

The Chair felt that it would be useful to view a report which tracked spending. The Executive Headteacher advised that this would be best reviewed at Finance Committee.

Action: Paul Simpson, Chair of Finance Committee

The Chair queried the data figures for showing comparison. Dominic Martin responded that sometimes there may be only two pupils in a cohort, sometimes there may be 10 pupils. He expressed a degree of frustration at the apparent inconsistency of PP data which showed variable success. Dominic observed that the school had a small number of PP pupils and that the needs of one PP pupil were very different to those of another PP pupil.

The Chair noted that the grant was largely for attainment and a sentence to summarise the impact on attainment would be helpful.

A governor queried attendance at primary level compared with attendance at secondary level. The Executive Headteacher noted that secondary school children were generally able to reach school themselves and that there were a number of support mechanisms in place to facilitate this whereas primary school age pupils tended to need support from parents to get to school. Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) recorded the number of occurrences of lateness and clear patterns had emerged. Many incidences of lateness could be attributed to travelling issues. Holidays during term time would be authorised only in exceptional circumstances and there was a lack of understanding among parents that long holidays during term time were inappropriate.

A governor asked if attendance was more of an issue for Pupil Premium pupils, to which Dominic Martin replied that it was, albeit in small numbers.

A governor noted that the next internal review would take place in April 2018 and whilst it was possible to purchase a review, this was not a statutory requirement.

A governor asked whether it was clear that £66,260 had been spent on targeted support which would benefit PP pupils. The Chair asked whether the new software would demonstrate this; this was confirmed.

A governor observed that the policy stated that funding would be spent to benefit all pupils.

Dominic Martin felt that the strategy provided a more robust evidence base of how PP money had been spent. The Executive Headteacher noted that use of the Pupil Premium Strategic Plan was almost a statutory format. The Chair queried the voluntary nature of its publication on a school's website; this was confirmed.

6. Identification of additional items not on the agenda

Visitors from the Netherlands

The school had received a postcard from visitors from the Netherlands. The visitors thanked the school for the fantastic time they had spent in school and for the great time they had spent at The Cycle Hub. They had loved the school, the choir, the string group performance and had marveled at silent pupils walking in lines. The Executive Headteacher thanked Jill Hetherington for use of The Cycle Hub. The Executive Headteacher would discuss a possible reciprocal visit with staff, perhaps during the October half term.

Monitoring of height and weight of Reception and Year 6 pupils

Reception and Year 6 pupils had recently had their height and weight measurements taken. 14.3% of pupils in Reception were overweight or obese; this was lower than other schools (national average was 22%; Newcastle average was 24%). 28.7% of pupils in Year 6 were overweight or obese; this was lower than in other schools (national average was 34%; Newcastle average was 38%).

A governor asked if parents had been informed. The Executive Headteacher stated that parents would receive letters advising them if their children were obese.
A governor noted that in the past, parents had objected to the tone of these letters.

Dominic Martin had consulted with kitchen staff about portion sizing. It was reported that a Facebook group of parents had protested against chocolate pudding being on the school menu. Dominic Martin felt that parents should discuss sensible menu choices with their children rather than have chocolate pudding removed from the menu.

A governor noted that the pupils in Year 6 would not necessarily be the same pupils in Reception class six years ago and it was confirmed that 56% of Year 6 pupils had not attended the school in Reception which rendered comparison impossible.

Food Waste Project

Deb Hainsworth and Arlene Ainsley had met to discuss a food waste project. The school would be part of a pilot and for 40 minutes each week would sell food from supermarkets which had passed the acceptable date for selling in supermarkets. Fruit and vegetables from wholesalers would also be sold. The school would receive money raised by this initiative. Deb informed governors that the scheme had been successfully run in Leeds and Birmingham. Two schools would be involved in the pilot in Newcastle, this school and Byker Primary School. Scope to reduce food waste at lunchtimes was also mentioned.

Northern Powerhouse Partnership

The Executive Headteacher had received an invitation to represent primary education in the North East at the Northern Powerhouse Partnership.

7. Draft minutes of previous governing body meeting

The draft minutes of the GB meeting held on 21 March 2017 were attached and **approved** with no confidential items declared.

8. Matters arising from the above minutes

Matters arising from the above minutes: Review of Delegation arrangements (page 3)

The Chair and Laura Robb had not located the written principles for the school behaviour policy and stated that this may not now be a requirement.

Matters arising from the above minutes: School Improvement – Pupil Premium funding (page 3)

Dominic Martin had emailed the new format of the Pupil Premium document to Nicky Wise. Pupil Premium funding had been added to the agenda of the Curriculum Committee.

Matters arising from the above minutes: Electronic sharing of governor information (page 3)

Governors were asked to contact Paul Simpson, IT and Website Link Governor, if they were interested in electronic sharing of information using Office 365.

Action: Governors

School Improvement (page 7)

The Chair and Ishy Bruce had met to discuss any stress levels experienced by members of staff.

School Improvement (page 7)

The Chair would follow up obtaining information from Ian Clennell, Clennell Education Solutions, about how his team were accredited / trained.

Action: Chair

School Improvement (page 8)

Dominic Martin provided the Pupil Support Committee with regular updates from CPOMS. Dominic added that he would attend Advanced CPOMS training on 25 May 2017.

Policy Review (page 9)

Governors had emailed their comments on policies listed in the GB minutes of 21 March 2017. Those policies were:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Class Reorganisation Policy
- Procedure for handling complaints about the school
- E-Safety Policy
- Managing Medication in School Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Sex and Relationships Policy

Reports from committees / individual and link governors / governor visits / governor development and training / GB self-evaluation (page 9)

Nicky Wise had written a report on her recent visit to the school and it had been circulated to governors with papers for this GB meeting.

A report on Julia De Soyza's meeting with Dominic Martin, Verity Groot and Cathy Hogan had not been required, however, Julia De Soyza would write a report on her recent meeting with Cathy Hogan.

Action: Julia De Soyza

The Chair outlined normal practice for governor visit reports: the author would email the report to the lead person involved and once their approval of the report had been received, would email the report to the Executive Headteacher and the Chair. Following approval of the report by the Executive Headteacher and Chair, the report would be circulated to governors by the Clerk in advance of the next GB meeting.

Jill Hetherington and Freda Summerfield's report about a school trip had been included in the papers for this GB meeting.

Financial Items: Premises (page 10)

Dominic Martin would add repairs to locks on toilet doors to the list of repairs.

Action: Dominic Martin

Dates and times of future governing body and committee meetings (page 11)

Dominic Martin had circulated documents in advance of a meeting of the Data Committee.

Car Parking

Jill Hetherington and Arlene Ainsley had discussed car parking issues and would provide an update for governors when necessary.

Arlene Ainsley had become Councillor for Transport and Air Quality on the cabinet and was congratulated on her appointment by the Chair.

It was noted that Cllr Nora Casey now had responsibility in Cabinet for Children and Young People.

9. Budget 2017 – 2018

Scenario 1, 2017 – 2018 Budget figures had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The budget was noted to be very strong. A surplus of £172,890 was envisaged which was more than the permitted 8% of the total budget. The Executive Headteacher noted that income from earnings and Teaching School funding amounting to approximately £90,000 would be removed thereby reducing the surplus. **The Chair noted that at a recent training session on Understanding School Finances delivered by Julie Cordiner, she had understood that all income should remain in the school budget.**

Governors **approved** the budget.

10. School term and holiday dates 2017 – 2018

The Executive Headteacher advised that schools within the Ouseburn Learning Trust would share the same non-teaching dates of 4 September 2017, 9 February 2018 and 29 June 2018. Governors had previously agreed these dates via email and they were **ratified** at this meeting.

11. School Development Plan Evaluation, Spring 2017

The Evaluation of Teaching and Learning, Spring Term 2017 had been circulated prior to the meeting and reviewed at the Curriculum Committee; governors noted the content.

12. Self Evaluation Form (SEF) update

The Executive Headteacher advised that the SEF was a key document in an Ofsted inspection and that updating the SEF was an ongoing process. February 2017 data had been added to the SEF and staffing changes and summer 2017 data would be added to it. The section on Early Years required some work. The Executive Headteacher would email the SEF to governors.

Action: Executive Headteacher

Data would not be available by the date of the next GB meeting (4 July 2017) however Year 2 data was moderated by school. A SATs Data meeting would be organised for July and all governors would be welcome to attend.

Action: Dominic Martin and Nicky Wise

13. Reports from committees / individual and link governors / governor visits / governor development and training / GB self-evaluation

The following reports were circulated prior to the meeting:

- Governor Visit Report from David Griffiths, 6 December 2016
- Governor Visit Report from Ishy Bruce and Freda Summerfield, December 2016 – January 2017
- Governor Monitoring Visit, 10 February 2017
- Minutes of Pupil Support Committee meeting, 13 March 2017
- Minutes of Curriculum Committee meeting, 15 March 2017
- Minutes of Personnel Committee meeting, 3 May 2017

The Chair commented that Hannah Hales who had produced the minutes for the Committee meetings was fantastic and enjoyed the role.

The next Governor Monitoring Visit would be held on 6 June 2017 and would look at Maths Mastery.

The Executive Headteacher provided an update on staffing:

- Two new class teachers had been appointed, one of whom was an experienced Year 6 teacher.
- Following interviews held the previous day, Helen Sykes, one of two Assistant Headteachers had been appointed.
- Interviews for the second Assistant Headteacher and Head of English would be



held the following day.

- Ishy Bruce and Julia De Soyza were thanked for their attendance on selection panels.

A governor queried the role of SENDCO for 2017 – 2018 and was advised that Cathy Hogan would take on this role.

Governor training

- Arlene Ainsley and the Chair had attended Inclusion in schools training.
- The Chair had attended Understanding School Finances on 22 May 2017.
- The Chair had attended a National Governance Association conference which had also been attended by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Chairs update

- There had been no further update on Heaton Manor School; the current political period of purdah ahead of the general election on 8 June 2017 had put activities on hold. It was noted that sponsors for the school would be required. The Chair advised that whilst all schools in the Trust had pledged their support to Heaton Manor School, they did not want to form a Multi-academy Trust with Heaton Manor School. Three potential sponsors would meet on 15 June 2017 and one recommendation to the Trust board would be made which would be accepted.
- The Trust had met recently to look at a strategic plan.
- Multi Academy Trust (MAT)s continued to be a topic for discussion although without any sense of urgency.

14. Policy Review

It was hoped that any policies which required attention before the end of the academic year would be discussed at committee level and brought for approval to the full GB in July.

15. Safeguarding / health and safety / risk management items

There were three ongoing personal injury claims, one of which was from a member of staff who felt that inadequate signage had led to a slip on a floor.

16. Local Authority reports – summer term 2017

The following reports had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- Attendance in Newcastle Schools and Academies
- Education Service Restructure – September 2017
- Monitoring School Finances
- Update on HR Issues

Attendance in Newcastle Schools and Academies

Whilst attendance in Newcastle's primary schools had improved over the last five years, it continued to be below the national average in each of the last ten years, with total absence stalling at 0.40% above the national average of 4.0% for 2015 and 2016. Attendance by pupils in Reception classes in Newcastle was also significantly below the national average suggesting that good attendance habits had not been instilled in parents. Headteachers and governors carried the responsibility for

ensuring good attendance. From March 2017, the Local Authority would no longer provide a traded attendance service for schools and would focus upon its statutory attendance related responsibilities. A number of questions which governors may ask of their schools was included in the report.

The Executive Headteacher advised that the situation with regard to pupils on reduced timetables was an issue of great concern and to an extent a hidden issue, particularly in secondary schools.

The year group with poorest attendance in school was Reception, however, it was noted that some of the pupils were not legally obliged to attend school as they were not yet five years old.

A governor suggested that the Admissions criteria be altered to exclude the admission of younger siblings where the older sibling in school had poor attendance; this was not regarded as feasible.

Questions posed by this report would be followed up at the next Pupil Support Committee.

Action: Arlene Ainsley, Chair of Pupil Support Committee

Education Service Restructure – September 2017

Significant reductions in funding to Local Authorities and changes in national education policy had resulted in a proposed restructure of the Education Service with the Local Authority concentrating only on statutory functions. Statutory functions included monitoring children missing education, elective home education and exclusions. In the proposed structure there would be six teams: Finance, Access Admissions and Attendance, School Services, Post-16 Apprenticeships and Skills, School Effectiveness and Vulnerable Pupils.

A governor queried what EEAST stood for and was informed that it was Early Education Additional Support Team. Cathy Hogan would contact EEAST with regard to Nursery pupils. The governor asked if the school accessed behavioural support and was informed that it did not.

Monitoring School Finances

Increased funding by government would be required to cover cost pressures and rising school rolls between now and 2020. The National Audit Office defined financial sustainability for schools as 'when they can manage activity, quality and financial pressures successfully within the income they receive'. The Local Authority had duties to ensure that each school had a sustainable budget and that monitoring arrangements were in place to identify signs of failure in this regard. The Governance Handbook had emphasised the link between performance and finance. Schools must comply with the Scheme for Financing Schools. Development of a RAG rated matrix of risk factors for schools was underway by the Local Authority. Governors were asked to consider the questions posed in the report.

The Chair advised all governors to pay particular attention to this report. The matrix of risk factors referred to in the report would be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance Committee

Action: Governors and Finance Committee

The Executive Headteacher informed governors that the half way move towards the National Funding Formula (NFF) had resulted in a small increase in funding for the school and that the full introduction of the NFF was likely to be more beneficial. It was noted that some schools were in deficit and this had triggered a new process from the LA who required identification of any budget deficit at an early stage in order that a recovery plan may be developed.

A governor queried the likelihood of the LA taking surplus budget above 8% of the total budget. The Executive Headteacher advised that this may happen if the school had no plans for the surplus and that approval for this action had to be sought from the Schools Forum.

Update on HR Issues

- Information about the cap on public sector exit payments was awaited.
- Public sector employers with more than 250 employees had to report gender pay gap data annually. This may apply to larger schools and Multi-academy Trusts.
- A new Intranet site for schools was under development by the Local Authority.
- Balloting requirements had increased with the Trade Union Act 2016.
- Local Authorities were required to publish facility time provided to Trade Union officials.
- A new Trade Union called the National Education Union (NEU) would be formed on 1 September 2017, with national rules effective from 1 January 2019. The new union was the result of a merger between the NUT and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).

Laura Robb would check the relevance of points made in this report for consideration by members of the Personnel Committee.

Action: Laura Robb

The final GB meeting of the academic year would be held on 4 July 2017 at 6pm. Jill Hetherington volunteered to organise a meal after the meeting and would email governors with further information.

Action: Jill Hetherington

Governors were invited to attend a 'Green Day' on 26 May 2017 beginning at 2pm.

There was no further business; the Chair thanked governors for attending and closed the meeting at 7.55pm.

Signed  _____
Chair of Governors

Date 4/7/17

