

Approved Minutes
Meeting of the Governing Body (GB) of
WEST JESMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL (WJPS)
Tuesday 26 March 2019

Present:

Jane Edminson (Chair)
Arlene Ainsley, Ishy Bruce, Julia De Soyza, Adam Goldwater, Ayesha Hafiz,
Cathy Hogan, Rebecca McVittie (Associate member), Dominic Martin (Head of
School), Laura Robb and Paul Simpson

Governors in post - **17**; quorum - **9**; governors present – **10** (and 1 Associate
member)

The meeting was quorate

In attendance:

Claire Hepple ~ Clerk, Governor Services

Business

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 6.05pm.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received and were **accepted** from Laura Cordy,
Hannah Evans, David Griffiths, Jodie Leeson (maternity leave), Jill Maddison and
Laura Ward.

Gary Wallis-Clarke, Executive Headteacher, had taken rotational leave of absence
from the meeting which had been sanctioned by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interests / GB Code of Conduct

Governors were invited to declare any pecuniary or personal interests in the meeting;
none were declared.

4. GB Appointments / membership update

Co-opted Governor

Hannah Evans had been appointed a Co-opted Governor. It was noted that Hannah
had already attended Curriculum Committee and Inclusion Committee meetings.

Cathy Hogan's term of office as a Co-opted Staff Governor would end on 18 May
2019 and Cathy was asked by the Chair whether she wished to continue as a
governor. Cathy indicated her wish to remain on the GB and was asked to leave the
room to allow governors an opportunity to discuss her reappointment. Governors
recognised Cathy as a good staff governor with valuable experience of inclusion and
SEND and **approved** her re-appointment. Cathy rejoined the meeting and was
congratulated on her reappointment.

Foundation Trust Governor vacancy

The Chair would recontact the Ouseburn Learning Trust in an attempt to find a suitable person to fill this role.

Action: Chair

Parent Governors

Two new Parent Governors, Paul Catterson and Sally Watson, elected without contest, would begin their terms of office on the first day of the summer term. Julia De Soyza would mentor Sally Watson and Paul Simpson would mentor Paul Catterson.

5. Identification of additional items not on the agenda

Memorial Garden

A garden design was tabled.

Dominic Martin advised that ideas from pupils and parents had been collected for the memorial garden for Deborah Hainsworth, a most valued member of staff. A Change Request had been made to Robertsons and Aura for the redevelopment of a small section of the school grounds. Aura would contact manufacturers to obtain quotations. A programme of fundraising was underway and it was possible that the 'little extras' announced in the government's autumn budget may be used for the garden.

6. Draft minutes of previous governing body meeting

The draft minutes of the GB meeting held on 29 January 2019 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were **approved** with no confidential items declared.

7. Matters arising from the above minutes

Matters arising from the above minutes (page 2)


- The Chair had not been contacted by Jill Maddison about someone interested in a role as governor.

Action: Jill Maddison

- Governors would confirm their preferred email address for GB correspondence and give assurances that their email address was confidential and used only by themselves. The Chair would contact the School Business Manager to set up a new email group.

Action: Chair

- Dominic Martin confirmed that he had discussed the safeguarding monitoring plan with Jill Maddison.
- It was reported that the Executive Headteacher had been chosen by the Regional Teaching Schools Council to work with a school in Northumberland.
- The Executive Headteacher had a contract in Carlisle for two days each week.
- 14 pupils had expressed an interest in the proposed trip to Wuhan, China and a meeting with parents would be held early in the summer term. West Jesmond Primary School was now the only school involved and careful consideration would be given to the cost implications for the school.

- A meeting of the In-Year Admissions group had taken place to discuss an issue in Reception.
- Laura Robb confirmed that she had spoken with David Griffiths about PE,  however, further discussion was required.

Action: David Griffiths and Laura Robb

School Improvement: SEN Presentation (pages 5 and 7)

- Cathy Hogan confirmed that she would work with the Director of Music to ensure that SEN pupils became more involved in musical activities.
- Cathy Hogan would provide information about the participation of SEN pupils in sporting activities.

Action: Cathy Hogan

School Improvement: The 'smell' of the school (page 8)

The Chair advised that this exercise would be repeated with findings discussed immediately afterwards at a future meeting

School Improvement: Report from Margaret Armstrong, Achievement Partner (page 8)

A spring term report from Margaret Armstrong had been emailed to governors in advance of the meeting and would be discussed at Item 10.

Chair's Update (page 9)

- The Chair had attended a conference on academies on 31 January 2019.
- Dominic Martin informed governors that he had been proposed for a position as a Director of Tyne Community Learning Trust, a new Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

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

Laura Cordy would arrange a follow-up visit to the school.

Action: Laura Cordy

Dates and times of future governing body and committee meetings (page 9)

The Chair thanked Laura Robb, Vice-Chair, for organising the governors' monitoring visit on 12 March.

8. Policy Review

Curriculum Policy, version 1.0, and Curriculum overview 2018 – 2019, version 3.0, both of which had been emailed to governors prior to the meeting, were tabled. Governors had contributed comments through committees and at the monitoring visit. Both were **approved** subject to one minor amendment on page 17 of the Policy from 'Throughout the course of the year' to 'Throughout the course of **every** year'. It was noted that colleagues on the Newcastle Promise Board had appreciated the first page of the Policy as a strong statement of intent. Governors felt that the Policy was excellent.

Work was ongoing on the Policy Renewal schedule. Dominic Martin assured governors that all required policies were published on the school's website.

9. Financial Items

Revised Annex D

Work was in progress by the school to create a satisfactory equivalent to Annex D which would be approved by governors on a termly basis and returned to the LA.

Feedback from submission of Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) to Local Authority (LA)

Two items to be addressed had been identified by the LA Senior Auditor:

- The SFVS had stated that if the School Business Manager was absent, the school would be assisted by the LA. The LA Senior Auditor had pointed out that the LA no longer had capacity to provide such assistance. Assistance would therefore be sought from other schools in the Ouseburn Learning Trust.
- A three year budget had not been seen by the LA Senior Auditor. The School Business Manager had assured the LA that a budget for the next three years was in place.

Pupil Premium / SEND / Primary PE and Sports funding allocation, expenditure and impact

The Pupil Premium Strategy Statement had been published on the school's website and had been discussed by members of the Finance Committee. Dominic Martin advised that spend on Pupil Premium pupils exceeded funding provided.

SEND funding had been discussed at the GB meeting on 29 January 2019.

Achieving our Vision

10. School Improvement

Leadership Report

Leadership Team Report, Spring Term 2019, had been emailed to governors in advance of the meeting and was tabled.

Dominic Martin highlighted the following:

School Pupil Data Summary

- The number of pupils on roll was stable at 613.
- 41% of pupils had been identified as English as an Additional Language (EAL) by their parents. It was felt that this percentage should be higher and that some parents had not identified their children as EAL because they may feel a stigma attached. **A governor asked whether this had an impact on the support pupils received** and Rebecca McVittie, Deputy Headteacher, responded that it did not; pupils would receive the same support as those categorised as EAL. Cathy Hogan, SEND Co-ordinator, advised that there were pupils categorised as EAL who did not require any support.

- There had been one exclusion of two days duration.
- A discussion took place about the level of input from staff and other professionals to support pupils with challenging behaviour.
- There was 1 Looked after child (LAC) in school and **the Chair reminded governors of their responsibility to check the progress made by this pupil.** Julia De Soyza would follow this up.

Action: Julia De Soyza

Pupil Mobility Statistics

Governors were advised that the Admissions Committee had met a couple of weeks ago and had discussed possible courses of action to take with regard to a pupil in Reception who was not old enough to be in Reception. The pupil's date of birth had been recorded as 1 September, however, a Health Visitor had informed the school that the correct date of birth was 31 August. A decision had been made to keep the pupil in Reception for 2018 – 2019 and then to repeat Reception year in 2019 – 2020; this arrangement had been agreed by the parents.

School Attendance, Reception to Year 6

- The overall current level of attendance was 97.12%, an improvement upon the same time last year of 96.58%.
- Attendance of Free School Meal pupils was 97.01% which was above the national average.
- Attendance of SEN pupils was 95.84%; this would be investigated by the School Attendance Officer.
- Improvements in attendance were credited to Helen Jordan, the School Attendance Officer, for her proactive, persistent and tenacious approach.

The Chair queried 3 Leavers who were categorised as Persistent Absentees and was informed that these pupils could not be removed from the school roll until the school was informed that they had joined another school.

Quality of Teaching Lesson Observations, March 2019

Three senior staff had observed parts of 45 lessons across the school over two days which Dominic Martin equated to Ofsted inspection coverage at secondary school level. Strengths and Lines of Enquiry were documented for the four key areas covered: Planning and Preparation, Delivery, Learning and Behaviour. Dominic advised that it was important to recognise that perfect lessons could not be delivered all the time and opportunities for reflection and self-criticism led to high quality teaching. **The Chair suggested that if the exercise was repeated, one or two governors may be invited to attend.**

A governor asked how frequently this type of exercise would be carried out and was informed that general walks were conducted in the autumn term and the focus for summer would return to pupils' books.

Planning and Preparation

The purpose of assessing Planning and Preparation had been to find out to what extent teachers planned sequences of lessons to help pupils retain knowledge.

Strengths

- A wide variety of different colleagues had introduced complex vocabulary, checked retention of vocabulary and encouraged the independent use of vocabulary.
- Clear cohesion had been shown in planning.
- Time for reflection in lessons and a context for learning had been given.

Lines of Enquiry

- Transitions between lessons could be crisper; this was a collective responsibility for all staff.
- Resources such as batteries and iPads should be checked before lessons to ensure they worked properly.
- Available staff should be appropriately deployed with a focus on learning. It was noted that this would form the basis of a conversation during staff performance management. Rebecca McVittie advised that the majority of classes had a 'team teach' approach.

Delivery

A refocus on high quality models and scaffolds to ensure they were employed effectively across the school.

Strengths

- In books, there was embedding, timely reminders and use of full sentences.
- Use of a 'ping pong' style of discussion to deepen dialogue was recommended. There was recognition that whilst some pupils grasped concepts quickly, others took longer to understand and feel confident enough to join the conversation.
- Lessons were inclusive and avoided inappropriate differentiation; this was described as planning upwards.

Lines of Enquiry

- To find a way for pupils to demonstrate their understanding without necessarily providing a written explanation.
- To choose a strategy and assess how effective the strategy was in encouraging metacognitive thinking across the curriculum.

Learning

The importance of valuing contributions and acknowledging the thinking process behind them was important.

Strengths

- Open ended Maths tasks in Year 5 had challenged pupils and had created a tangible 'thinking buzz' which pupils had thoroughly enjoyed.
- The importance of continuing to try, described as resilience to pupils in Reception.
- Co-adventuring, the experience of excitedly encouraging pupils to explore side by side with a member of staff was very effective in Reception and Year 1.

Line of Enquiry

How to support pupils to make explicit links between different areas of the curriculum

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with particular focus on vocabulary which could have the same or different meanings in different contexts.

Behaviour

- Low level disruption was dealt with quickly in the most effective lessons. Pupils required a firm and clear reminder of expectations.
- Embedded routines had helped pupils to thrive.
- 'Dojo' points were awarded for specific reasons and provided clear expectations.

Rebecca McVittie advised that silence did not mean that pupils were learning.

Line of Enquiry

Teaching staff should consider where they positioned themselves in the classroom to confirm pupil engagement and address low level behaviours. **The Chair queried this** and was informed that staff needed to move about, take up different positions, check pupils' field of vision and identify any distractions from wall displays.

The observers had verified their thoughts for purposes of triangulation and at the end of the process, teaching staff had been given swift feedback on the lesson observations.

A governor asked if staff had been visibly anxious about the observations and was informed that some staff enjoyed performing and were very confident whilst others were more tentative.

Governors appreciated the reference to specific lessons for evidence and the level of detail furnished in the report. The Chair noted that it was great to see the quantity of evidence from across the school. Dominic Martin felt that it was more beneficial to conduct short lesson observations repeatedly and see different interactions than to see delivery of a 'showcase' lesson. He affirmed that it was the intention of senior leadership to improve the quality of teaching, not to simply make a judgement.

Best Practice observed in Book-look focused on written feedback

A Book Look conducted by Tom Jones, Assistant Headteacher for Science and Technology, Sarah Mathews, Assistant Headteacher for English, and Helen Sykes, Assistant Headteacher for Maths, had looked at pupils' Maths and English books.

Dominic Martin advised that there was less content in books as dialogue increased in classrooms.

Feedback from Visioning exercise, the 'smell' of the school

It had previously been noted that this exercise would be repeated, Item 7.

Spring term report from Margaret Armstrong, Achievement Partner

Note of Visit, Spring term 2019, from Margaret Armstrong, had been emailed to governors prior to the meeting. Margaret Armstrong had visited the school on 19 March 2019.

The Chair pointed out that it was unclear which parts of the report had been

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written by Margaret Armstrong; the same point had been made about the autumn term report at the GB meeting on 29 January 2019. She also queried the report's intended readership. Dominic Martin responded that Margaret Armstrong had been very complimentary about the curriculum and referred governors to page 4 of the report which gave a short account of a presentation made by the Head of School and leaders for History and Geography at the South Tyneside Primary Forum. Dominic advised that the teachers had given a confident presentation.

Laura Robb asked if Margaret Armstrong had challenged staff. Dominic responded that Margaret had asked the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) many questions although she had not looked at first hand evidence. **Laura Robb queried whether this had been valuable for the SLT;** this was confirmed by Dominic who stated that it had confirmed that the school was addressing the right issues. **A governor noted that he was unable to see evidence of challenge within the report. The Chair added that it would be useful to know the origins of information referred to in the report.** Dominic recommended that Margaret attend a GB meeting where she may be asked about the process of challenge. **Governors requested that clearer reports be written;** the Chair would speak with the Executive Headteacher on the matter.

Action: Chair

North of Tyne Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) Project 2018 – 2020

North of Tyne SSIF Project 2018 – 2020 had been emailed to governor in advance of the meeting.

Rebecca McVittie explained that she was Project Leader of SSIF for one day each week and provided governors with the following update:

- The Project had launched in December 2018 and would conclude in March 2020.
- There were 21 schools involved including West Jesmond Primary School and, as Project Leader, Rebecca had had visited all the schools and had appreciated being able to build relationships with them.
- £250,000 in funding had been received from Department for Education (DfE) for the Project.
- There was ringfenced time for the Project, specific targets and a real network.
- The Project aimed to improve outcomes of Key Stage 4 pupils and involved work with Year 6, 7 and 8 pupils, with particular, although not exclusive, focus on girls and disadvantaged pupils. It aimed to address early onset misconceptions.
- Every school had a Project Lead who could deliver an Increasing Confidence and Competence in Algebra and Multiplicative Structures (ICAMS) lesson; in this school the Project Lead was Laura Ward. There was high quality sustained CPD for those involved. The Project Leads had worked hard to ensure the continued engagement of their schools.
- Pupils had been given questionnaires to obtain their attitudes towards Maths. It was noted that many parents felt that people were either good or not good at Maths.
- Rebecca drew governors' attention to the Teacher Research Grouping (TRG)s within the Report. Four lessons had been delivered over two days for Years 5, 6, 7 and 8. It had been the same lesson but the delivery had been very different.
- Laura Tullock from the Great North Maths Hub had delivered TRG training to

Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE). The method focused on talking to pupils rather than reliance upon SMART boards.

- Half of the schools involved had been represented at three Governor Information Sessions. Rebecca noted that it would be useful to have a Link Governor for the SSIF Project.
- Feedback from staff involved had been very positive.

The Chair asked who received the report and was informed that it was circulated to the Strategic Board which comprised Durham University, Headteacher of Sacred Heart Catholic High School, the Executive Headteacher of West Jesmond Primary School and Rachel Mayes, Department for Education.

Laura Robb commented that there had been an amazing impact at this early stage of the Project. Dominic Martin observed that it had been good to see the Project come to fruition. He declared that Rebecca was a huge asset to the Project who had delivered localised knowledge and had juggled the strong personalities involved very well.

School Effectiveness SEN Team Note of Visit

School Effectiveness SEN Team Note of Visit had been circulated prior to the meeting. **The Chair highlighted a response she particularly liked from a SEN pupil who had stated 'West Jesmond is an open school, you don't have to "be" a certain kind of person you can just be yourself'.**

Adam Goldwater and Paul Simpson left the meeting during this item, 7.32pm.

For Information

11. Safeguarding / health and safety / risk management items

There were no items identified.

12. Ouseburn Learning Trust Update

The Chair informed governors that the Executive group had met recently and there had been general acknowledgement that the Trust needed to think about future direction. Schools continued to collaborate, however, there was an issue with Partner participation.

13. Chair's Update

The Chair informed governors that Heaton Manor School would not become an academy on 1 April 2019 because of a technical hitch related to Private Finance Initiative (PFI). No further date for academisation had been given.

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

The following reports had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- Curriculum Committee meeting minutes, 15 January 2019
- Inclusion Committee meeting minutes, 4 February 2019
- Personnel Committee meeting minutes, 27 February 2019

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- Inclusion Committee meeting minutes, 11 March 2019
- Finance Committee meeting minutes, 14 March 2019

Finance Committee meeting minutes, 14 March 2019

The following points were made:

- There would normally be three versions of the budget produced, however, this year, it had been unnecessary as the current level of staffing would be retained. Dominic Martin advised that some roles were paid for by other budgets.
- The budget was reported as healthy; the school benefitted from high pupil numbers.
- The SSIF Project had contributed a substantial amount of money.
- The Chair advised that there were split budgets and it would be possible to see the Teaching School budget, the School's budget and the After School budget.
- Dominic advised that staffing appointments for 2019 – 2020 would be made on a single year basis. Laura Robb advised that this was common practice and that the school did not usually employ new teachers for more than one year initially.

The Chair cautioned that whilst the budget looked healthy, there was a lot of uncertainty about the future of Teaching Schools.

15. Dates and times of future governing body and committee meetings

GB meetings, beginning at 6pm, would be held on the following dates:

- 21 May 2019
- 16 July 2019

The next Governor Monitoring visit day would take place on 6 June 2019.

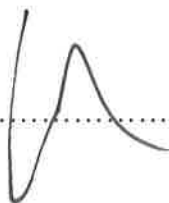
The Inclusion Committee would organise Pupil Voice. Rebecca McVittie observed that Claire Fox, director of Academy of Ideas, had asked at a conference whether pupils had something valid to say and had referred to their developing sense of entitlement.

Action: Inclusion Committee

The choir would give a performance at the City Hall on Monday 1 April 2019.

There was no further business; the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.05pm.

Signed
Chair of Governors



Date 16-7-19 .