



Meeting of the Full Governing Body
Western Road Community Primary School
Monday 25th November 2019 at 6pm

M I N U T E S

Governor members present:	Tom Jeffery (Chair), Holly Atkins, Stephen Doherty, Rosie Gloster, Rea Hamilton, Christine McCarney, Eleanor Murphy, Luke Palmer, Hilary Turner, Irena Wooler (Head Teacher)
Associate Members:	Louisa Adams
Officers present:	Jane Roche (bursar)
Others present:	Sonya Baksi, Sami Howard, Suzy Bennett (for Item 3), Jane Roche (for Item 4)

	Agenda Item	Action
1	<p>1. Apologies for absence - apologies were received and accepted from Roy Watkinson. Nicky Gibson, the Clerk, had been taken ill earlier in the day and could not attend. The minutes were taken by Rosie Gloster.</p> <p>2. Declarations of Interest – There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>3. Welcome to, & introduction of prospective governors - TJ welcomed Sonya Baksi and Sami Howard to the meeting. Each had shown an interest in joining the FGB and had spoken to TJ before the meeting. They had been invited to attend the meeting better to understand how the FGB worked. Sonya was a retired community paediatrician, with a particular interest in child development and mental health. Sami worked for a voluntary sector organisation for disabled children and was currently concentrating on fund raising. TJ had also spoken to another prospective governor, Toby Meanwell, who was interested in joining the FGB but was unable to attend the meeting. Toby, a former assistant head teacher in a London secondary school, worked for Jamie’s Farm, a voluntary organisation which supported children at risk of exclusion. TJ would speak to all three prospective governors after the meeting to understand whether they wanted to pursue their interest in joining the FGB.</p> <p>Parent governor: TJ reported that, in a ballot in the previous week, Antonia Jewels had been elected to fill a vacancy for a parent governor. Her appointment would be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and a DBS check. IW would announce the provisional result in the school newsletter.</p>	
2	<p>Last FGB Minutes dated 14th October 2019</p> <p>1. Acceptance of Minutes - subject to one change of date, the minutes were approved.</p> <p>2. Matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda – there were no matters arising.</p>	
3	<p>Pupil Premium presentation - Suzy Bennett, the Pupil Premium (PP) Coordinator, spoke to the FGB about her work with PP children. She explained that PP children’s attainment and progress was assessed each term and that, consulting class teachers, she worked with PP children individually and in small groups every week to strengthen their skills and confidence, in particular in maths and English.</p>	

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	<p>In discussion, the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were currently twelve PP children. While in a school of 203 children, this was a relatively low number, the school was determined that they should make excellent progress and should play a full part in all the school's activities; • Six PP children also had special educational needs. SB worked closely with the Special Needs Coordinator, Val Bradshaw, to assess their needs and plan interventions. Three such children also saw the play therapist, Janet Wilde; • Many PP children did not receive a great deal of help at home. Liaison with and support for parents was, therefore, all the more important. Their class teachers and Val Bradshaw were in close touch with parents, who were also strongly encouraged to attend parent evenings; • Despite encouragement from the school, for example through letters home in children's book bags, some parents were reluctant to declare their children's eligibility for Pupil Premium Grant. This applied particularly in the early years and KS1, where all children received free meals. While understandable, the school should do all it could to counter this reluctance, in the interests of the children themselves and of securing the resources otherwise foregone; • In a pupil population from home backgrounds which were often rich in cultural capital, it was vital that PP children made good progress in all aspects of the curriculum and took a full part in clubs. The school used the PP Grant to ensure that PP children were always able to take part in school visits and was making a particular effort to ensure that all PP children were engaged in clubs. <p>PP children's attainment and progress would be assessed through the school year. The FGB, in thanking SB for her work and her presentation, agreed that it would be essential to return to the issue later in the year to review progress and plan further action.</p>	
4	<p>Preliminary Budget presentation & update - the Bursar, Jane Roche, set out the school's financial position two-thirds of the way through the financial year. JR explained that the most significant factor in managing the budget was the profile of and changes in the school's staffing structure. Planned developments over the remainder of the year meant that the school was on track to live within its budget, with some prospect of a carry-over into the 2020-21 financial year, thus creating a budget for that year very similar to that of the current year.</p> <p>In discussion, the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IW would consider the use to be made of the PE and Sport Grant in 2019-20, taking account of the school health profile and discussions with Southover about the case for and cost of building a permanent running track around the field. IW would report to the next FGB meeting; • IW would, in consultation with the Lead Governor, Finance, develop a costed staffing profile for the coming financial year in the interests of effective budget management and of the implementation of the school's curriculum review (Item 6 below); • The Long Run Contingency Fund remained in place and provided important cover in the event, for example, of a child with special educational needs joining the school. The Short Term Contingency Fund contained money contributed by the Friends of Western Road (FoWR) and was assigned to the appropriate ledger codes as those funds were used; • FoWR made an invaluable contribution to the school. It was important, however, to consider how sources of funding for the school might be further diversified. To that end, a number of governors had attended training courses provided by the County Council. The FGB should return to this issue in the New Year; • The FGB would consider the budget further at the 27 January meeting, assessing the probable 2019-20 outturn and looking forward to the 2020-21 budget. <p>The FGB formally noted the report from the Lead Governor, Finance which described the action of the Strategy Group in approving the virement of £10,500 from support staff costs (Ledger Code 10110 Education Support) to Agency support staff costs (Ledger Code 13000 Agency Support) in respect of the use of an agency HLTA in place of a permanent HLTA in the current term.</p>	

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	<p>The FGB also noted that the Scheme of Delegation had been finalised and that the school's Local Financial Procedures had been updated and included in the papers for the present meeting. Also in those papers was a note from the internal audit service, Orbis, outlining the risks of fraud to which schools might be subject in the absence of careful scrutiny by their governing bodies.</p> <p>In conclusion, TJ said that Jane Roche would be stepping down from her role as Bursar. She had made a most valuable contribution to the effective management of the school. The FGB thanked Jane warmly and wished her well for the future. IW had plans in place to appoint a new Bursar for the next school term.</p>	
5	<p>Head Teacher's Report - the following points were noted in IW's presentation of her Head Teacher's report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IW had completed lesson observations and the performance management of teachers. Val Bradshaw had completed the performance management of Teaching Assistants. Targets had been set in line with those in the School Improvement Plan; • LA had been working on marking policy and practice with all staff. She had created a set of codes with a view to securing consistency, improving children's understanding of marking and managing teachers' time and workloads; • IW was giving particular attention to the engagement of Pupil Premium and SEND children in club activities. A new 'stacking club', run by Lily Doone and held at lunchtimes, was proving particularly popular, not least with PP children. A new orchestra club was getting under way; • At 97%, Term 1 attendance had been encouraging. At 98.5% compared to 93% at the same time last year, the attendance of PP children was particularly noteworthy; • In line with the school's priorities, IW had been keeping a close eye on punctuality. Children who came to school unaccompanied and SEND and PP children were consistently punctual. A small group of children who came to school with their carers were often late. IW was talking to those carers, emphasizing the collective responsibility for the disciplined ethos of the school; • Val Bradshaw, the SENCO, would be taking sabbatical leave in Terms 3 and 4. IW had plans in place to provide cover for this period; • Head Teachers in some Lewes schools were increasingly concerned about the disparity between places available in Reception classes and the numbers of children in the town. While future admissions projections for Western Road were healthy, some other schools were already significantly undersubscribed and were asking for large reductions in their Pupil Admission Number (PAN). A meeting of Heads and Chairs with the County Council had been arranged for 13 December. TJ and IW would attend and would report back to Governors. They would seek to protect Western Road's interests whilst also recognizing the considerable difficulties faced by some partner schools; • IW was meeting the school's Health and Safety consultant, had arranged a meeting with Southover and the car park company and was giving careful consideration to the extension of the cleaning contract. 	
6	<p>SDP Priority – Curriculum Review & Subject Leadership update including Harmony Curriculum meeting update - in presenting her Head Teacher's report, IW had explained that the school's top priority for 2019-20 was to review the curriculum to ensure it provided breadth, depth and progression in the acquisition of knowledge and skills for all pupils through their time at school.</p> <p>Enlarging on that ambition, EM spoke to a paper which was tabled at the meeting and is attached to these minutes. EM said that the aim of the review was to have an updated curriculum in place by July 2020. That would build on the school's current good practice and involve producing a revised curriculum plan with strong linkages between subjects; developing knowledge and skills ladders which ensured progression across year groups; providing activities which enhanced learning and enriched children's cultural capital; and ensuring that, at all stages, the needs of all children, including both the disadvantaged and the notably talented, were met.</p>	

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	<p>Continuing, EM said that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject leadership and the development of Subject Leaders' skills and confidence would be central to the successful delivery of the review. Collaboration with partner schools, for example through local learning hubs and through joint training with Southover, was an important means of developing Subject Leadership; • The involvement in the review of both pupils and the full range of staff (whose support had already been forthcoming) would provide opportunities to explore new ways of working, including for example linking the cross-cutting elements of the curriculum to the themes of the school's vision, term by term across the year; • Consistency in teaching practice would be key to the delivery of the curriculum. The recent governor learning visit, which focused on the humanities and science, had found much excellent practice but also some inconsistencies, for example in the quantity and quality of work in pupils' books and the extent of marking. LA's current work on marking would thus contribute directly to the review; • Current work among Lewes schools on a 'Harmony Curriculum', exploring how working in closer harmony with nature could enhance teaching and learning, might helpfully inform the review but could not substitute for Western Road's own work. <p>In conclusion, the meeting noted that, as next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EM and TJ would work with IW to develop a project plan, with milestones, for the review and its full implementation over the next two years; • RH and IW would seek to develop, by the start of the next term, an exemplar curriculum map and learning ladder for the humanities, drawing on work from other local schools; • CPD would focus on the development of Subject Leaders' knowledge and capability in curriculum design and delivery; • Throughout the year, the school would continue to focus on the quality and consistency of teaching, particularly in maths and in vulnerable pupils' learning outcomes. <p>The FGB endorsed the priority attached to the review, thanked EM and IW for their work to date and committed to supporting them throughout the year to ensure the successful delivery and implementation of the review.</p>	
7	<p>SDP Priority – Behaviour & Attitudes/Staff Welfare - HA, the Lead Governor, Behaviour and Attitudes, had, in the past week, conducted an in-depth pupil voice survey in all year groups exploring children's views on behaviour policy and practice. She had paid particular attention to those children who were less forthcoming in class and had found them very ready to contribute to her survey. HA and IW were currently analysing the results which would be circulated to the FGB and discussed at a future meeting. One emerging finding was of some variation across year groups, for example in the use of additional rewards. A next step might be to make an unstructured observational survey of playground behaviour.</p> <p>The meeting noted the potential two-way connection between pupil behavior and staff wellbeing. A previous attempt to assess staff wellbeing through a largely quantitative survey had suffered from a low response rate among teachers. As with pupil voice, there was a case for conducting both quantitative and qualitative surveys if attitudes were to be fully understood and acted upon. It was agreed, therefore, that RH, HT and RG would explore the most effective means of establishing staff views on their wellbeing and the range of measures which might be used. They would report to the January FGB with a view to undertaking an appropriate exercise in the coming months.</p>	
8	<p>Safeguarding Report presentation - IW's Head Teacher's report and HT's report as Lead Governor, Safeguarding showed that there had been no serious incidents since the last meeting. Minor injuries had been recorded. IW reported that the behaviour of three children was giving cause for concern but was being successfully managed, with appropriate referrals made to Children's Services. TJ, recognizing the challenges raised by</p>	

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	<p>this behaviour, thanked IW and LA for the care with which they were dealing with the issue.</p> <p>IW reported that, following consideration by the Lead Governor, Finance as requested at the last meeting and his conclusion that it represented value for money, the CPOMS software had been purchased and training would follow. HT said that relevant policies were up-to-date, the Single Central Record had been checked and on-line safety incidents monitored.</p>	
9	<p>Preparing for Ofsted - IW and TJ reported that the school continued to expect an Ofsted visit. While preparatory work was in hand, it was important that all such work should continue to serve the school's wider objectives and priorities. IW was ensuring that school staff were ready for but not unduly anxious about the visit. TJ had revised and re-circulated the overarching narrative for governors. HA's paper on behaviour and attitudes, EM's paper on the curriculum review and HT's paper on safeguarding would serve as subject-specific narratives for those issues. LP was to meet IW and would aim to develop a mental health and wellbeing narrative by the start of the next term.</p> <p>TJ asked governors to let him know if there were other areas for which they would find subject-specific governor narratives helpful. He undertook to circulate to governors a list of questions, prepared by the County Council's consultant, covering areas on which Ofsted inspectors might probe governors. TJ asked governors to let him know if they were uneasy about the answers to any of those questions. That list is attached to these minutes.</p>	
10	<p>LCLP/EIP update - IW and TJ reported that there had been a number of discussions amongst Lewes schools following the September LCLP meeting. The Strategy Group was to hold an informal meeting in December to discuss Western Road's views on those discussions and the approach which the school might take at the next LCLP meeting in February. The Strategy Group would report back to and seek the views of FGB in January.</p>	
11	<p>AOB - There was no other business. The meeting closed at 7.50.</p>	

Papers to accompany this meeting: Agenda, Attendance Register, Minutes of last FGB meeting, Budget papers, Scheme of Delegation, Virement Report, Head Teacher's Report, Triangulation Report, Behaviour & Attitudes Notes, Safeguarding Report, Safeguarding Narrative, Governor's Narrative, Orbis Bulletins

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