

**WEST CROFT SCHOOL**  
**MINUTES FOR FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**  
**Autumn Term 2025**  
**10<sup>th</sup> December, 2025, 5pm – 7pm (SLT office)**

Item	Notes	Lead
<b>1. Present &amp; apologies</b>	<p><b>Present:</b>  James Ebsworthy (Acting Chair)- JE  Sam McGregor - SMC  Christina Geeson - CG  Doug Bushby - DB  Lisa Johnston -LJ</p> <p>Rachel Paxford (Clerk) - RP  Kyle Paine (Subject Lead) – KP</p> <p><b>Apologies (sanctioned):</b>  Dawn Ashford</p> <p><b>Apologies (unsanctioned):</b>  Michelle Chappell</p>	JE
<b>2. Declaration of conflict of interests</b>	None	JE
<b>3. Subject Lead Update</b>	<p><b>Kyle Paine – Writing</b>  Refer to report shared and also uploaded to Governor Hub prior to meeting for full details.</p> <p>Questions from Governors:</p> <p><b>Q1: Does the English curriculum at West Croft require a full review or overhaul in light of the lower attainment outcomes for pupils?</b>  <b>A:</b> The curriculum was relaunched two years with the aim of strengthening consistency in teaching approach, further supported more recently by the introduction of Read, Write, Inc. This academic year has seen a focus on every teacher accurately assessing the strengths and weakness of their children after completing the writing fundamentals unit at the start of the year and then planning and adapting future sessions in response to these assessments.</p> <p><b>Q2: is the approach therefore ever-evolving?</b>  <b>A:</b> time to embed changes and adaptations is needed but we are laying the foundations now for results we expect to see in a few years.</p> <p><b>Q3: how do you balance that with the need for rapid improvement in writing results at the school?</b>  <b>A:</b> we conduct regular pupil progress meetings as well as 1:1 writing interventions which are making a difference, although these are costly and limited to a few children each time. <i>(Refer to Strengths and Areas for Development section of report for more details)</i></p> <p><b>Q4: are the children who struggle with reading the same children who struggle with writing?</b>  <b>A:</b> typically yes, but sometimes even children who may do well in their grammar assessments may struggle to apply grammar in context in their writing.</p> <p><b>Q5: is there a role for parents in improving writing?</b></p>	KP

	<p><b>A:</b> the school has prioritised and encouraged increased parent involvement in reading as the key that ultimately unlocks the rest of the curriculum. We need to be mindful that some parents struggle with writing themselves and that a certain level of knowledge, skills and understanding are required to deliver the Read, Write, Inc approach, deviation from which could be detrimental. However, there have been and continue to be parental workshops to support parents with home learning in this area.</p> <p><b>Q6: is the rise of phone texting affecting children’s ability to write?</b>  <b>A:</b> Yes – but this is wider societal challenge not just a West Croft one.</p> <p><b>Q7: How were staff able to submit baseline data showing 0% attainment, given that this was clearly inaccurate? Was this challenged at the time? What measures are now in place to ensure assessment data is accurate moving forward?</b>  <b>A:</b> Teachers mistakenly submitted assessment data based on current not projected levels. This was addressed in Assessment PDMs two weeks ago.</p> <p><b>Q8: Is pupil data reviewed regularly by SLT and challenged where necessary?</b>  <b>A:</b> Yes, and with the data issue addressed, SLT can now effectively challenge teachers where progress is lacking. In addition, pupil progress sheets that spotlight children working below standard are used with associated progress against action plans being tracked. Note too that data is only part of the picture – looking in children’s books, class drop-ins and lesson observations also help SLT to understand what progress is being made and where challenges may remain. Acknowledge that West Croft serves a different demographic to some other local schools but exploring how best to ensure educational equity and encourage aspirations remains a fundamental priority.</p> <p><b>Q9: who conducts the Writing drop-ins and observations?</b>  <b>A:</b> Kyle as Subject Lead and also sometimes the Head Teacher. In the latest observations, it was noted that all teachers were following the reading and writing structure, but in some cases, children were not sufficiently engaged and some passive rather than proactive learning observed.</p> <p><b>Q10: we have heard a lot of focus on communicating expectations to teachers, but are they also communicated to children?</b>  <b>A:</b> yes – children are given the model, achievements are acknowledged in the publishing book and a stellar writing wall has been set up for all to view.</p> <p><b>Next subject update will be Read Write Inc.</b></p>	
<p><b>4. Minutes of last meeting</b>  <b>21/10/2025</b></p>	<p>Agreed as a true record</p>	<p>JE</p>
<p><b>5. Matters arising:</b></p>	<p><b>5.1 WRAP</b> - LJ has coordinated with Wilhelmina, Magic and DW in the development and implementation of action plan. Wilhelmina has a programme of activities for children incl. sport and crafts and Magic is taking photos and uploading to FB to promote the WRAP service. He has also published a poster reminding parent they may be entitled to financial support with childcare costs.</p> <p><b>5.2 HT behaviour report</b> – LJ has analysed the staff hurt data in more detail and noticed that some incidents were incorrectly tagged. She also observed that all incidents involved a child with a special educational need but there has been a significant reduction in incidents for all children in the second half of the term following support. Analysis of all behaviour incidents reported identified that ten children were involved in ten or more incidents and accounted for 37% of incidents. Conversations have taken place with parents of all children.</p> <p><b>5.3 School visits</b> - Governors were again invited to schedule visits for January to March and add them to Monitoring Calendar. Sam will schedule Read, Write, Inc, KS2 Reading and Personal Development Provision visits. James will schedule a Maths visit and Doug will schedule a Writing visit.</p>	<p>LJ</p> <p>LJ</p> <p>RP</p> <p>JE</p>

	<p><b>5.4 School vision</b> - RP has collated and shared examples from other schools for review by the Board. <i>Refer to section 12 below.</i></p> <p><b>5.5 Skills audit</b> - RP circulated audit form for each Governor to complete with intention of collating and sharing results at today's meeting. <i>Refer to section 10 below.</i></p> <p><b>5.6 New books</b> – at the previous meeting, SMC advised that the RNIB will convert any book into dyslexic friendly formats. JL to ensure this is taken forward.</p> <p><b>5.7 Governor Hub</b> – Governors had been invited to contact RP directly if they would like any support using Governor Hub and accessing the Key. No requests received but RP is following up with Dough regards email and Hub access support.</p>	<p>RP</p> <p>RP</p> <p>RP</p>
<p><b>6. Any actions completed/not completed/next steps</b></p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>JE</p>
<p><b>7. Head Teacher update</b></p>	<p>Refer to report circulated prior to meeting and uploaded on to Governor Hub for full details.</p> <p>Of particular note:</p> <p><b>7.1 Staffing:</b> sickness absence has been a particular challenge this term placing significant pressure on teaching and learning. Since September, 166 days have been lost to staff sickness, with a further 15 days attributed to medical absence. All absences are covered in-house initially by existing staff, with external supply used only when all internal options have been exhausted. This in-house approach, while cost effective, places considerable strain on the support available for many children and can result in classes having reduced additional adult support or non-qualified teachers delivering learning. Fifteen members of staff have reached triggers in the absence policy, and meetings are being held to support them, address ongoing issues, and reduce absence rates moving forward</p> <p><b>Q1: what is the self-certification threshold?</b>  <b>A:</b> Staff can self-certificate up to five days.</p> <p><b>Q2: what is the cost of providing cover for sickness absence?</b>  <b>A:</b> in financial terms, just under £3K, not all of which is reimbursed by the Mutual Fund.</p> <p><b>Q3: what is the impact on the school and pupils?</b>  <b>A:</b> moving staff around to cover gaps is disruptive for children, some pupils are left without additional support and there is a higher risk of dysregulation.</p> <p><b>Q4: is a staff communication strategy in place?</b>  <b>A:</b> SLT are leading by example and sickness absence will be an agenda item for the first PDM of the year when data will be shared with all staff.</p> <p><b>7.2 Staff changes:</b> Year 6 teacher KW will be moving to a smaller school in Instow in January. Kyle will assume some of her class teaching responsibilities as an experienced and effective teacher of year 6 and some teachers on UPS will be given additional responsibilities as more experienced teachers. MH will be responsible for Early Years and KS1 and Kyle for KS2.</p>	<p>LJ</p>

	<p><b>Q1: Governors requested an updated SLT and staff organogram as well as a list of vacancies.</b>  <b>A:</b> LJ will share ahead of next meeting.</p> <p><b>Q2: What actions have been implemented to further strengthen the quality of teaching following recent monitoring activities?</b>  <b>A:</b> Feedback is shared in PDMS and with individual teachers on a 1:1 basis with Phase lead in copy as well as coaches so they can focus on what has been noted. HT and CG are quality assuring Phase Lead assessments and monitoring next steps progress.</p> <p><b>3. Behaviour</b> - as well as a whole school drive in consistency of behaviour expectations, adaptations have been made to lunch-time support through sports leaders, playground mentors and additional provisions enhanced (lunch club KS1, quiet room, 1:1 support or small lunch clubs).</p> <p><b>Q1: Autumn 2025 behaviour figures appear inaccurate—should these be recorded as 610?</b>  <b>A:</b> Yes. Noted and corrected in email prior to meeting.</p> <p><b>Q2: How many additional weeks of Autumn 2025 data are still outstanding?</b>  <b>A:</b> a total of 156 incidents at time of report with a further 98 in the subsequent two and half weeks.</p> <p><b>Q3: The current Autumn 2025 figures appear to show a sharp increase in behaviour incidents. What measures have been put in place to address this?</b>  <b>A:</b> The Year 6 cohort seems to be showing unhealthy and culturally unacceptable behaviour particularly bad language. An Educational Psychologist has been brought in to support enhanced reflective practice with new TAs working with high needs pupils; a questionnaire has been shared with children; the Mental Health Team is coming to school to support children to regulate themselves; Y6 playground mentors have recently been selected and trained and given jackets so they can be easily identified by other children.</p> <p><b>4. Safeguarding – refer to report shared prior to meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Q1: Could you give a general overview of the team’s current safeguarding workload compared to previous years?</b>  <b>A:</b> the workload is similar in terms of the number of children but the level of responsibility held by the school team has increased with school staff increasingly playing the coordination role previously played by Social Services.</p> <p><b>Q2: Has there been any change in the volume or nature of safeguarding concerns or incidents being managed?</b>  <b>A:</b> See previous response above.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> LJ to share an updated organogram and vacancies list ahead of next meeting.</p>	
<p><b>8. Pupil Premium Update</b></p>	<p>Refer to report shared prior to meeting and also uploaded to Governor Hub and to Appendix 1 for detailed response to questions.</p> <p><b>Q1: End-of-key-stage data indicates that disadvantaged pupils are not making expected progress by the end of Key Stage 2. What actions are being taken across the school to close this gap?</b>  <b>A:</b> All teachers have a clear understanding of which pupils are disadvantaged with regular pupil performance review meetings with SLT, where progress,</p>	<p>CG</p>

	<p>attainment and next steps for PP pupils are closely monitored; bespoke interventions are in place to address identified gaps in learning; improving early reading and phonic with introduction of Read Write Inc. to narrow the gap in phonics attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils; strengthening teaching in reading and maths; ongoing monitoring and evaluation and adapting provision where necessary to accelerate progress for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p><b>Q2: Similarly, what is being done to address the gap in attendance for disadvantaged pupils?</b>  <b>A:</b> Attendance incentives are used consistently to promote positive attendance and reinforce high expectations for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils; attendance team meets on a bi-weekly basis to review attendance data enabling early identification of concerns and swift intervention; parents are invited to meetings in a supportive and non-judgemental manner to identify barriers to attendance and agree practical solutions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; teachers receive regular updates identifying pupils whose attendance is declining and are asked to carry out wellbeing checks and address underlying issues that may be affecting attendance.</p> <p><b>Q3: Are EYFS pupils being prioritised to ensure the attainment gap does not widen throughout their time at West Croft?</b>  <b>A:</b> Yes. A new phonics programme and Mastering Number have been introduced this year to strengthen early reading and mathematics; the EYFS curriculum is carefully adapted in response to ongoing assessment and data analysis; continuous provision is adapted and closely aligned to the Early Learning Goals; EYFS benefits from a highly experienced team, including the Assistant Headteacher, ensuring strong leadership, consistent practice and high expectations; leaders closely track progress from entry, enabling early identification of gaps and timely intervention to prevent them from widening as pupils move through the school.</p> <p><b>Q4: is section 4 missing some information?</b>  <b>A:</b> Yes – sentence appears to be missing and will be added</p> <p><b>Q5: what is Nessy?</b>  <b>A:</b> Online programme for spelling</p> <p><b>Q6: The report includes reference to the Forest school – hasn't this been discontinued?</b>  <b>A:</b> No – only the former provider has been discontinued.</p>	
<p><b>9. Ratification of renewed policies</b></p>	<p>Policies for ratification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternity &amp; Adoption Support Leave Policy</li> <li>• Maternity Policy</li> <li>• Staff Leave &amp; Absence Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcome:</b> all are based on DCC policies and are ratified.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In future, all renewed policies should include a summary table at the end of the document summarising any changes. LJ to notify HR and any other relevant team members.</li> <li>➤ Governors agreed that RP should assign specific policies to specific Board members to review prior to FGB meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>LJ</p> <p>LJ</p> <p>RP</p>
<p><b>10. Skills audit update</b></p>	<p>Governors were asked to complete Skills Audit that was first shared by email on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. As only three audits were received (with insufficient time to</p>	<p>RP</p>

	<p>collate) and with one still pending, this item is deferred to the next FGB meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> DB to complete and return skills audit to RP by Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026.</p>	
<b>11. Election of new Chair</b>	<p>Following the recent decision of MM to step down as Chair and resign from the Board in order to focus on family commitments, Governors were invited to nominate themselves if interested in the role.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Only one nomination was received and after a brief presentation outlining the reasons for his interest, JE was duly elected as the new Chair.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ RP to update Governor Hub accordingly.</li> <li>➤ Election of new Vice Chair to be tabled for next FGB meeting</li> </ul>	RP
<b>12. Vision Statement</b>	<p>RP shared examples from other schools for review by the Board prior to the meeting. However, item deferred to next year for consideration as part of a wider strategic session facilitated by DCC.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> RP to liaise with DCC about potential dates.</p>	JE
<b>13. Governor Recruitment update</b>	<p><b>Parent Governors (total 4 positions):</b> Levi Tucker will be joining the Board as Parent Governor in 2026 and subject to DBS completion, will be invited to the next FGB meeting. Another parent who also expressed an interest in becoming a Parent Governor has not yet submitted all her DBS documents and it is possible they may no longer be interested in the role. LJ to talk with her to determine if this is the case. Two parents have submitted applications following the recent recruitment drive via Dojo and follow up meetings will be arranged with JE &amp; LJ in January.</p> <p><b>Co-opted Governors (total 6 positions, 3 of which are vacant):</b> Letters and emails have been sent to local GPs, dentists, midwife and public health teams and mental health services as well as local Police and Fire departments with aim of identifying potential new co-opted members. Further update to be provided at next FGB meeting.</p>	RP
<b>14. Renewal of Associate Member</b>	<p>Board approved the proposal to renew CG's membership of the Board by a further year.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> RP to update Governor Hub</p>	RP
<b>15. Term Dates</b>	<p>Proposed term dates for 2026/2027 &amp; 2027/2028 shared prior to meeting and approved by the Board.</p>	LJ
<b>16. AOB</b>	<p><b>IT equipment</b> – Governors noted that the costs of the new ICT equipment will be met from the general revenue budget with a transfer made to the capital budget as items are considered capital assets.</p> <p><b>Governor Training</b> – DCC Effective Governance online training dates were shared prior to meeting and uploaded to Governor Hub.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Governors to review options and let RP know what sessions they are able to attend.</p>	RP  RP
<b>Next meeting: 5pm Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>		

