

# WEST CROFT SCHOOL

## MINUTES FOR FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Summer Term 2025

24<sup>th</sup> June 2025 – 5pm – 7pm – SLT Office

### NOTES TO MEMBERS:

Chair- James Ebsworthy

**Please note: This is a 2 hour meeting.** Governors cannot leave early as it may affect quorum  
Please send apologies at least the day before as if the group is not quorate the meeting cannot go ahead.

Standing items:	Notes:	Actions:
Present	James Ebsworthy – Chair in absence of MM Michelle Chappell – MC Sam McGregor – SM Christina Baldock - CB Dawn Ashford – DA  Lisa Johnston – LJ Emily Paine – Acting Clerk Rachel Paxford – new Clerk Dawn Wright – Finance Manager	
A. Apologies for absence	Martha Mills – Sanctioned	
B. Declaration of Conflict of Interests	None	
C. Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes of the last meeting on 13.05.2025 Agreed as a true record	
D. Matters arising	N/A	
E. Any actions completed/not completed/next steps	New Clerk recruited effective 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025. Introductions made.	
	<b>1. Budget</b>	
	<b>1.1 Overview of 5-year budget from 2025/2026 to 2029/2030</b> Budget forecast circulated prior to meeting and presented during meeting by Finance Manager. Of particular note is the County requirement for Years 1-3 to break even; the projected <i>decrease</i> in overall children numbers; the projected <i>increase</i> in the number of children from families in receipt of UC and the projected 23% increase in water costs as advised by County. <b>Q: are there sufficient funds to continue to make progress with school’s Development Plan?</b>	<b>DW</b>

	<p><b>A: LJ</b> - Yes – progress will <b>not</b> be impeded by this budget with sufficient funds to meet staffing and project needs and the inclusion of a £30K buffer for school improvements.</p> <p><b>1.2 Detailed I&amp;E report for 2025/2026 to 2029/2030</b> Report including detailed breakdown by cost centre and supporting explanatory notes circulated prior to meeting and presented during meeting by Finance Manager.</p> <p><b>Q: Does Education Support Staff refer only to TAs?</b> A: Yes</p> <p><b>Q: The average cost per teacher increases by approx. £2K-£3K per year which seems low – why?</b> A: Government grant income is projected to off-set some of teacher pay costs</p> <p><b>Q: How will the agreed teachers’ pay rise of 5.5% be met?</b> A: 2.8% covered by Government, remainder by school. Note that school will have to pick up all non-teacher support staff costs.</p> <p><b>1.3 WESTA coffee shop forecast &amp; detailed I&amp;E for 2025/2026 to 2029/2030</b> Detailed reports shared prior to and during meeting. WESTA generates av. £55 income per day and ingredient costs are approx. £75 per week. Overall, generates £6K profit annually excluding staff support costs, although primary purpose remains the engagement of parents.</p> <p><b>1.4 WRAP forecast and detailed I&amp;E for 2025/2026 – 2029/2030</b> Detailed reports shared prior to and during meeting. Of particular note is the year on year increase in staff costs which means provision is not currently sustainable in medium term based on existing uptake and charging levels. The following options were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review current staffing levels and grades by completing a job evaluation which could result in reduced staff costs.</li> <li>➤ Consider offering a reduced rate for siblings.</li> <li>➤ Increase uptake ie the number of children using breakfast and after school clubs by making them more exciting and appealing</li> <li>➤ Increase the price.</li> <li>➤ Increase parent awareness regards child vouchers</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision/next steps:</b> Review in September 2025 after a marketing campaign.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Bromcom move is going well, but combination of County moving to new system too has been problematic. Some reports are delayed for that reason.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> DW to submit all budgets to County on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 with grateful thanks of Board for all her hard work.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DW</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DW</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DW</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DW</b></p>
	<p><b>2. Headteacher update</b></p>	
	<p>Headteacher report circulated prior to meeting. Key highlights from report:</p> <p><b>2.1 EYFS:</b> Staff resignations &amp; subsequent recruitment outcome shared (refer to report for further details)</p> <p><b>Q: are there any concerns or common reasons that they are leaving at similar time</b></p>	

A: No – both leaving for different reasons. EYSF provision has historically been a strength of the school but data from the last few years shows a decline in results. Recruitment of new team member ML and deployment of MH and KP as assistant heads to team, with new ideas and experiences and the ability to adapt to challenges and needs is an exciting opportunity.

## **2.2 TA update**

All Teaching Assistants on temporary contracts have now been interviewed, and successful candidates appointed. New vacancies have since arisen and will be recruited to externally to ensure school gets TAs with requisite skills and experience.

## **2.3 Phonics**

69% of children successfully passed the recent assessment. While this figure is lower than in the previous two years, it reflects the increased level of need within this particular cohort, with only 47% of children entering Year 1 having achieved the Early Learning Goal in literacy. Pupils taught 'West Croft phonics' in full made average score 70+%. New pupils and increase in EAL pupils have reduced overall average slightly.

### **Q: are children getting the extra help needed and what are the plans to address the gap?**

**A:** Exploring the potential benefits of adopting a new structured and accredited phonics scheme called Read-Write Inc that provides training and resources and a cohesive approach to phonics, reading, and writing—tailored to meet the specific needs of West Croft pupils (particularly to suit those who are not yet at age related expectations) with est. cost of £3.7K per year. We have visited East-the-Water school that observed a significant positive impact after implementing this scheme and are now considering how the approach could be effectively implemented at West Croft. Note too that OFSTED prefers accredited schemes like this to schools implementing their own schemes.

**ACTION:** LJ suggested that one of the Governors assumed a Link role for this project and SM indicated that she would be happy to assume this role.

## **2.4 Forest School**

Sarah Tawse has given notice on her Forest School contract and will leave at the end of this term. From next term, the Forest School slot will be used to deliver Music and French. Options to offer the Forest School experience on a reduced basis are being explored incl. ad hoc sessions delivered by Sarah and teacher-led sessions more directly linked to curriculum.

## **2.5 Place2be**

The Place2Be concludes at the end of this term and will not be renewed (due to cost vs impact). Instead, referrals will be made to the NHS Mental Health Support Team and Young Devon will provide a clinician (via Exeter University) to deliver cognitive behavioural therapy to selected pupils. In addition, a member of staff who will shortly complete their THRIVE training will begin working with small groups, while also sharing their expertise with colleagues.

## **2.6 CAIRB**

School continues to work closely with the LA to secure suitable placements in its CAIRB for pupils with communication and

	<p>interaction needs with only two placements remaining. Staff are working closely with the C&amp;I team to ensure the provision develops to meet the needs of the diverse range of learners</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> CAIRB will be a standing agenda item in future meetings</p> <p><b>2.6 Behaviour &amp; Safety incident update</b> There has been a significant reduction in overall behaviour incidents compared to the Spring term term and the same period last year. However, racist incidents have increased. Whole school assemblies have been used to reinforce the school’s zero-tolerance policy to racism and any child who uses racial slurs will have an internal exclusion.</p> <p><b>2.7 Attendance</b> Figures remain broadly consistent with the same period last year and are in line with national averages for the current academic year. However, rate of persistent absence is slightly higher and the number of pupils classified as severely absent has risen to nine. <b>Q: what are the reasons for this?</b> <b>A:</b> three children have left the area but not yet registered with a new school; two pupils experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); one pupil attending alternative provision on a reduced timetable; one Reception pupil has significant needs with plan in place to gradually increase his time in school; and one Year 5 pupil with high needs and anxiety (working closely with parents). A teacher is being trained in how to deliver anxiety training to colleagues.</p> <p><b>2.8 SDP &amp; Monitoring Calendar</b> LJ highlighted the importance of aligning visit objectives and subsequent reports to corresponding priorities in the school’s SDP. <b>ACTION:</b> Governors to add SDP priority number to relevant section of their visit reports.</p>	
<b>3. Governor visits</b>		
	<p><b>Two reports provided by JE at meeting.</b> Health and Safety February report slightly out of date now – boiler issue noted. Only replacing 1 heater to save cost based on knowing 2 sites can be moved on to 1 site eventually. Path replaced near Nursery, new grounds contract successfully implemented – real positive change.</p> <p>Maths visit May report – overall very positive experience. Enjoyed meeting MH and IF – passionate about roles. Calculation policy will set out structure for securing foundations on what is supposed to be known.</p>	
<b>4. Policies &amp; Protocols</b>		
	<p><b>4.1 Menopause Policy</b> <b>Unanimously agreed.</b> Governors noted that this is a well-rounded, comprehensive, sensitive document. <b>Q: who will be the Lead person responsible for this policy?</b> <b>A:</b> LJ</p> <p><b>4.2 Parent Code of Conduct</b></p>	

	<p><b>Ratified</b> <i>subject</i> to the language in section pertaining to barring being amended to indicate that only the head teacher (or deputy head acting in their absence) can bar a parent AND that the role of the Governors should be the same as that described in the Managing Exclusion policy.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Amend policy to say delegated to Headteacher and Deputy in absence of Headteacher. Amend Chair to Committee of Governors for appeal.</p> <p>CB asked to bring question regarding Maternity Policy to table after a query from staff.  CB questioned if a separate miscarriage policy was needed, including specific reference to fathers.  EP suggested revisiting maternity policy which includes miscarriage and reviewing maternity and adoption support leave policy alongside which is more specific to partners.  Miscarriage policy to be brought to next meeting if appropriate.</p>	
	<b>5. Governor recruitment</b>	
	<p><b>5.1 Parent Election</b></p> <p>Two applications received with responses to both still pending. LJ advised that one other person has also directly expressed to her an interest in being a governor.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Clerk to liaise with MM and JE, confirm their availability to meet with Parent Governor applicants and then invite applicants to a meeting before the end of the school year.</p>	
	<b>6. AOB</b>	
	The school will be taking part in the Bideford Water festival on 20 <sup>th</sup> July and Governors were invited to help staff the stall and collect donations. JE has already agreed to support.	
	<b>7. Next meeting</b>	
	Agreed that next meeting will be on Tuesday, <b>9<sup>th</sup> September 2025.</b>	