

WEST CROFT SCHOOL

Full Governing Board (FGB) Minutes

Date/Time	7 th March 2023 5.00pm				
Present	Initials	Category of Governor			
James Ebsworthy	JE	Parent – Vice Chair			
Carol Ley	CL	Co-opted			
Martha Mills	MM	Chair			
Tom Page	TP	Headteacher			
Charlotte Pengilly	CP	Parent			
Apologies	Initials	Reason for Absence Sanctioned / Not Sanctioned			
Morgan Taylor	MT	No apologies (unsanctioned)			
In attendance	Initials	Capacity	Guests	Initials	Capacity
Fiona Lowe	FL	Clerk	Charlene Marston	CM	Deputy Head
			Dawn Wright	DW	Finance Manager

The meeting started at 5.00pm

	Agenda	Led by
1.	Present & Apologies	FL
2.	Declaration of Interests	FL
3.	Minutes of FGB meeting of 24 th January 2023, approval and matters arising	MM
4.	Financial Reports	DW
5.	SFVS & Benchmarking	DW
6.	HT Written Report	TP
7.	SEN Report	TP
8.	Skills Audit	FL/MM
9.	Paperwork for Governors	FL
10.	Terms of Reference & Lead Governor	MT/MM/CL/JE
11.	Governor visits and training undertaken	all
12.	Policies	JE/MM/MT/CP/CL
13.	Items brought forward by the Chair	MM
14.	Impact Statement	all
	Date of next meeting	FL

No	Item	Action
1.	Present and Apologies as above.	
2.	Declarations of Interest - None were declared for this meeting beyond that which has already been declared.	
3.	<p>Minutes of FGB of 24th January 2023. They were agreed as a true and correct record and signed as such.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign governors to school priorities – it was agreed to carry this forward to the September meeting and address once more governors are recruited. • Audit Report – the outstanding actions are being addressed by the HT and Clerk and the SDP is linked to Finance • H&S Report – There are still some outstanding RAs and JE will liaise with Darren Ford to address these • Ground Maintenance provider – discussed in item 4 	<p>c/f TP/FL</p> <p>JE</p>

4.	<p>Financial Reports –</p> <p>FRS – the figures for the end of the financial year are as predicted, there have been savings in some with overspend in others. There has been additional nursery, PP and Covid-19 grants and DfE grant for teacher led nursery. Catering has been in profit. Some children with EHCPs have left and we are waiting for further EHCPs to be approved. In the meantime, WC is funding provision and EHCPs will not be backdated to cover this. CPD costs are up and advertising is higher than expected. First Aid training has been heavy this year with certificates expiring. Salaries have increased and energy prices have risen. The cost of consumables has increased along with the cost of providing swimming. Q. Do the Bridge Trust still pay for swimming? A. They pay a proportion of the coach cost, but these have increased also. There has been a saving in teacher costs as SLT have returned to class. There are some items which have been carried forward such as library as we are coming out of the School Library Services and setting up our own. There was an underspend in repairs/ maintenance but it is possible that we will need to replace some gates which are not working correctly. IT and school improvement has not yet been completed. There has been a big saving of £14k in printing costs since the default has been set to black & white from colour. Q. Why is there an underspend in computing? A. We had a big chunk for infrastructure and while we upgraded Magic's equipment and brought chrome books and cabinets, the chrome books were much cheaper than budgeted for. We have purchased 45 which is a whole year group when shared 2to1. Q. What is being used in KS1? A. They have laptops with flip over touch screens. We have disposed of the learning pads and reallocated the laptops within school. We need to buy laptops for staff. There has not been a rolling programme and staff have standalones in classes which no longer work. There has not been much update or investment in laptops. Magic has trialled a £30 hard drive which has worked well so will be rolling this out across school as an interim measure in the PCs, and we will buy new laptops for staff and some dedicated for PPA use. Staff will be able to take laptops home and the tower PCs will be disposed of. There is an anticipated spend for the next month, which will be c/f if not used. The c/f is expected to be in the region of £300K.</p> <p>LEA Services – Most are DCC as there are no alternatives. The Ed Phy only carried out ½ the visits and the service has been withdrawn. We received a refund on the unused portion. The other services were briefly explained. Medigold is DCC recommended and is the best cost but there are other, possibly better providers available. We have used £475 to buy mentoring and safeguarding packages to support staff as the Ed Phy package is not available. Q. Is it a problem to not have an Ed Phy? A. Yes as EHCPs should have a report included. We are currently submitting without the report which causes delays and therefore a lack of support. Q. What is the Apprentice Levy? A. DCC have an obligation to pay and share the cost between all schools – we don't have a choice. LEA Services were approved</p> <p>Rubbish Collections – NDDC no longer offer the service and of the 3 quotes received, Biffa are the best for price and what they provide. It is a 12 month contract and will be reviewed in a year. It will start on 01/04 and coincide with NDDC finishing on 31/03.</p>	
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	<p>Grounds Maintenance – the current provider has gone into administration and we were only able to get 1 quote from idverde despite requests. We will accept for 12 months and retry next year. The only alternative is to employ a groundsman and provide training and equipment. £7398,14 Idverde quote approved by Governors.</p>	
5.	<p>SFVS & Benchmarking – SFVS - this is completed every year and CL asked questions prior to the meeting as below:</p> <p>1. Q. I think we need to appoint a finance governor and provide training as soon as possible rather than waiting for the gov body to be at capacity as this may not happen soon enough. <i>A. I assume that when the roles are distributed amongst the governing body this will be included and a governor appointed</i></p> <p>5. Q. Who would cover your finance duties if you were sick? Is the named person adequately trained? <i>A. Basic finance duties will be carried out by Darren Ford to ensure orders and invoices are kept up to date. If I were to be off for any length of time, we would ask the DCC finance team for support. Our finance officer, Helen Wright, would be able to advise and potential our previous finance office, Michelle Avery, who now works at Appledore Primary would also be able to advise.</i></p> <p>6. Q. Will the appointment of a new HT and DHT have an impact on our budget or is this an unknown factor at the moment? <i>A. Until I hear from Martha and HR about the bandings for the role we will not know the impact of the change to leadership. The previous budget plans had built in the deputy and assistant head return to part time teaching so the ongoing impact will be less that you are probably anticipating, although a teacher in class would be a saving on leadership teaching.</i></p> <p>7. Q. Will we be recruiting non classroom based KS2 leads as per the restructuring plan? <i>A. No – this was only ever a one-year plan with them returning to class in Sept 23. The lack of available candidates for advertised teaching posts meant that this plan had to be reassessed.</i></p> <p>13. Q. Can you remind us what the ongoing initiatives are? <i>Staffing Restructure – impact ongoing</i> <i>Stocking our own library – partially completed</i> <i>Upgrading IT and Website – partially completed</i> <i>PE Premium Funding – based upon an academic year</i> <i>Repairs and Upgrades – ongoing – carpark gate is failing and we are anticipating a replacement in the upcoming months</i></p> <p>21. Q. Will Governors be involved in decision making regarding goods and services going forward? <i>A. Yes where applicable services and quotes will be brought to governors in line with the policy for who can agree spend</i></p> <p>25. Q. What are the outstanding matters if any from the audit reports? <i>A. The outstanding items from the audit report are shown on the attached report.</i></p> <p>26. Q. Can you clarify what is meant by voluntary funds? <i>A. Voluntary funds are any funds from non-public sources that exist for the purposes of a school and are established under the authority of the school governors. They are sometimes known as school private funds. They might include income from parents or pupils, and donations from parents or members of the public.</i></p>	

	<p><i>We include all our income in our main school budget and accounts. This means we can send any income off to DCC for banking which is safer than one of us having to walk it down to a local bank (and there aren't many left!) Also voluntary funds need to be separately audited by an independent person and this would incur a cost. SFVS Approved for submission</i></p> <p>Benchmarking – similar to last year and filtered per pupil as it shows the best results this way. Last years figures are given for comparison. Data is 2021-22 and not the current year. Q. Where would we sit if this was 2022-23? A. <i>Unsure but the position is better.</i> Q. The other schools that we rank against – are they stable? A. <i>Unknown – we try to compare with similar or comparable schools but this is not easy – we use near by/those with nursery/by size and similar SEN/FSM etc – but none are the same as us.</i> Q. Are any of the national schools part of academies? A. <i>Unknown. The local ones are all maintained.</i> Q. Are the years financial or academic? A. <i>We use financial year. We hope next year will be better as the staff changes will be included. All local schools have similar budget issues.</i> (DW left)</p>	
6.	<p>HT Written Report – all governors agreed that they had read the provided report. Recruitment is the priority and a shortlist will be produced tomorrow. There are lots of candidates for September start. Hopefully good, strong candidates and interviews will look for the best fit within WC. There are 3 potential internal candidates on temporary contracts and 2 vacancies. Q. <i>Is there more interest since the Ofsted outcome?</i> A. <i>Yes, compared with local schools. We will not compromise on quality.</i> There is a contingency plan in place for the summer term and we will not take anyone who we feel is not good enough. It is exciting to have new, younger staff with new ideas. NPQ leadership courses are currently being run for free and we are encouraging staff to enrol – 4 have applied. We are showing staff that WC invest in staff. We have also been approached to take students. WestaCoffee is helping with attendance and parental engagement. From September, we will have cover for leadership. Q. <i>Have you appointed someone?</i> A. <i>Yes, a past employee with 20 years' experience who teaches KS2. They have good relationships with the pupils and are strong enough to teach 12 difference classes.</i> Q. <i>If we take on students, do we have the staff to teach/mentor?</i> A. <i>Yes. There will be 2 students and already have staff willing to help. The mentor role has been reduced.</i> It is in collaboration with TEAM Academy.</p>	
7.	<p>SEN - Q. <i>Are we being sent more SEN children than the National Average? Is there a limit on the % of SEN pupils in a school?</i> A. <i>No, but without an EHCP we have no funding and the trend of need is increasing.</i> Q. <i>If we have too many, do we have the resources to allocate staff/space?</i> A. <i>Most can cope with minor adjustments but we could need an additional class space next year. We could use Kiwi (class for 6 pupils with specialist provision). Ofsted praised WC for the SEN support and inclusive nature.</i> Q. <i>Are DCC asking WC to take more?</i> A. <i>We have spaces so can be asked – other local schools don't have the space.</i> Within the past 3 ½ years, the way that WC has managed SEN has been much better. The philosophy that TP has put in place is great and to be praised. The demand for SEN is getting greater and we put things in place to meet these needs. We are under pressure from DCC</p>	

Continuation of FGB minutes 7th March 2023

14.	Impact Statement – We have approved financial documents and policies. We have started to talk about skills and training and looked at the staff internal progress in investing in people. We have considered the provision for SEN pupils balanced against non-SEN. We have adopted a Code of Conduct for Governors.	
15.	Date of the next meeting – The next meeting will be a Finance meeting on Tuesday 25 th April 2023 at 5.00pm, with the next FGB on Tuesday 9 th May 2023 at 5.00pm.	

With no further business to discuss in Part 1, the meeting went into Part 2 at 6.55pm for 17 minutes

Agreed as a true record	Date
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