



WEST CROFT SCHOOL



'Discover your Legacy'

MINUTES FOR FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Spring term 2021

9th February 2021 – 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Meeting held remotely due to National Covid19 restrictions

Present: J Ebsworthy, D Ford, C Ley, C Callaghan, M Mills, T Page (Headteacher) K Kelly (Chair) and E Paine (Clerk)

Visitors: D Wright (Finance Manager), L Johnston (SENDCo & Safeguarding Lead) and C Marston (Deputy Headteacher)

NOTES TO MEMBERS:

Chair- Katrin Kelly

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.

Key : **Green = decision** **Red = challenge** **Blue = action**

ITEM NUMBER	NOTES	ACTION
A. Apologies for absence	None	
B. Declaration of Conflict of Interests	None	
C. Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes from the 8 th December 2020 including Part II item Proposed and unanimously agreed as a true record. Clerk reminded Governors to permanently delete email containing Part II item.	
D. Matters arising		
E. Any actions completed/not completed/next steps		

	<p>1. Budget Monitoring</p>	
	<p>1.1. Update given by Finance Manager Budget monitoring report was emailed to Governors in advance of the meeting. No questions raised prior to meeting.</p> <p>DW explained that she had tried to provide very descriptive notes to explain. Hopefully helps understanding and gives context. Any other questions? KK commented that the additional timescales given to get back on track will work hand in hand with positive OFSTED. Hopeful all will fall in to place with good inspection which in turn should lead to increase in pupil numbers. Hard to plan without that so FIP's application gives us time to embed.</p> <p>DW noted the larger carry forward then previously indicated. Budget setting in November assumes everything will be spent, that hasn't happened, partly due to school closure. But we are now in a much better position to know. Healthier balance but is only due to timing. Lots of budgets are ringfenced for spending next year, because wasn't done so this year. Better financial position than expected but can't step back, must be mindful of spending and saving but not at cost of improvement to school. CL clarified that any budgets not spent won't be lost.</p> <p>DW replied no, will carry forward. Ideally don't carry forward huge amounts because you should spend on the children. KK added, external agencies don't like large carry forwards as should be using to improve school.</p> <p>DW agreed, too large of a carry forward is seen negatively, told off for carrying to much forward. County would say the exact same, should be used to improve the school.</p> <p>1.2. FIPS Update DW confirmed we had received a verbal response, confirming that our application had been successful and FIP's will help. Waiting for confirmation letter for details but will help with non curriculum issues. KK questioned if successful meant all of the money requested or a certain amount?</p> <p>DW replied, have indicated up to a certain amount, but we can go back to them if need be as 3-year budget plan is really ominous. Will give us 18 months to try and radically improve and embed, ultimately pupil numbers need to dramatically increase. KK agreed, strong marketing plan is needed.</p> <p>CL asked if the agreed money had to be spent on specific items. DW responded yes, the items/suggestions in the plan that WAM brought to Governors in December.</p> <p>TP expressed thanks to WAM and DW, huge bit of work that is really beneficial to school, really appreciated.</p> <p>DW left the meeting at this point.</p>	
	<p>2. SEND Update</p>	
	<p>Update from SENDCo regarding SEN/Vulnerable pupils in relation to school closure</p>	

	<p>LJ explained that TP had briefed her after previous Governor meeting. Have prepared slide show that should answer most questions, suggest we go through and then any questions not answered are asked at the end.</p> <p>Governor safeguarding presentation was shared on the screen and emailed to Governors after the meeting.</p> <p>LJ talked through the slides and highlighted or explained the following key points: <i>*Flow chart provided on defining vulnerable children.</i> Red = very vulnerable, child in need or child protection, should all be in school. All our red rated children are in school.</p> <p>Orange = children with social workers, external support from agencies etc. Most of our orange rated children are in, if not social workers are giving face to face support/contact.</p> <p>Green = have previously received support, can be at home but with regular contact from school.</p> <p><i>*Slide showing numbers and percentages of our vulnerable children and who is attending school. Breaks down EHCP, CP & CiN etc</i> Shows level of engagement/contact if at home. Discussion with parents, say what we can do at home and what we can't work towards, parents then decide whether they want them in school.</p> <p>Regular contact with parents, individual learning packs sent home, continue to have review meetings etc, everything we do in school continues to happen.</p> <p>Explained difference between child protection and child in need. Child protection = no choice, child in need = parental consent.</p> <p>Have seen some improvement in engagement amongst other vulnerabilities since laptops went home. One family = 4 pupils.</p> <p><i>*Invisible vulnerable pupils – new phrase created by CM</i> Big hit in County. Example given. Many more crop up in daily and weekly basis.</p> <p><i>*Slide showing how engagement is tracked</i></p> <p><i>*Next slide - where concerns become more significant</i> All other services are still working together to support children. No difference because of partial closure, everyone and everything still working.</p> <p>LJ confirmed that was the overview of what we are doing to make sure our children are safe. Everyone is working hard, good team, safeguarding team, year group teams, Teachers and TA's etc. Identify where it isn't good and make it better.</p> <p>CL – invisible vulnerable indicated, how many approximately?</p>	
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	<p>LJ replied, hard to put a number on it but increases weekly, parents having to engage in remote learning for longer, changes stress and expectations, currently reviewing 2 or 3 weekly.</p> <p>KK explained that it was mainly herself as Chair that had raised the questions. Wanted Governors to have the knowledge, confidence and competence to know what we are doing. More to be done on the invisible vulnerable, where is the balance?</p> <p>JE – how are we accessing the invisible vulnerable? Is it mainly the parents approaching us?</p> <p>TP responded yes, main channels are Class Dojo messages or phone calls. Increase since the Government’s announcement that schools will be closed until at least the 8th March. 1 – 2 a day on average. Trying to reassure parents. Parents evening kept in to discuss realistic expectations of learning. Mindful of individual context.</p> <p>CC noted that it was important to let parents engage and come to us but not everyone is going to ask for help. Some people will struggle on, asking for help is a barrier.</p> <p>LJ added that in part Record of Engagement spreadsheet helps us with that. We can then approach parents and ask if we can help. Trying to explore other ways to reach out.</p> <p>KK – important that we can prove and understand what we are doing. If we are inviting in can we do much more?</p> <p>TP asked CC if she had any suggestions for this.</p> <p>CC replied visual is the best way, seeing the children, it is much easier to lie on screen, phone etc. Everything we can offer, we should try and offer. Capacity for learning will be reduced by the time the children come back to school.</p> <p>CM noted that in Year 6, CC and another member of staff have got a good system of home visits on a Friday. Staff being aware of what vulnerabilities are. Not just on a list, teachers and TA’s knowing what is going on at home.</p> <p>MM asked how well the coffee morning was attended. How are we safeguarding staff on home visits?</p> <p>TP replied, staff always in pairs. Coffee morning was offered to whole school, one parent turned up. Interesting conversation though, gave a point of view unexpected. Parent had struggled slightly with Wellbeing day – that particular family thrive on the structure. Hadn’t thought of that.</p> <p>KK commented that home visits were great. Really good idea. Large staff workforce means we can do that effectively. As long as we are doing all the things we can and following up on leads that’s positive.</p> <p>CM agreed, staff are always listening and following up. Everybody has capacity to be vulnerable at the moment.</p> <p>CL questioned, particularly in terms of self-employed parents, are we satisfied that every child has enough to eat?</p> <p>LJ responded; those we know about, we can and are supporting, free school meal vouchers, food bank vouchers etc. Probably those that we unfortunately don’t know about but those we do we actively support.</p> <p>DF agreed, still working with food bank, delivering over Half Term, small amount of money offered from the food bank to suggested families.</p>	
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	<p>KK – engagement of laptops, how are we monitoring that they are being used?</p> <p>LJ explained that the Government sent no home agreement for the laptops, we set up our own to make sure laptops are returned in an appropriate condition. Some children still not engaging, even after laptop donation. No excuse now with laptops & routers provided. General increase seen though, no guidance or expectations on what happens with the laptops after.</p> <p>TP added that the consensus is that the laptops become school property. Will be used within school.</p> <p>CM – laptops will enhance opportunities for all children in school on return.</p> <p>MM asked if Councillor Kay Corfe had been involved in laptop donations.</p> <p>LJ replied yes, donated a few via Complete Computing. Asda and the Bridge Trust have also been generous with donations.</p> <p>TP confirmed that the Bridge Trust application submitted had been accepted.</p> <p>CL – timescale for Chromebooks being purchased with Bridge Trust donation?</p> <p>TP responded that the Chromebooks were available so should arrive soon. Current laptops at school aren't fit for purpose so 32 Chromebooks might stay at school.</p> <p>KK added that the home agreement was sensible, make sure laptops come back to school so they can be utilised for projects like the ICT suite idea. Helps improve the schools offer.</p> <p>JE – have you found that Covid19 and requirement of remote learning as highlighted the vulnerability already out there? Extra help given out that was hidden before?</p> <p>LJ replied yes, families have approached us, talking to families, situations have been exemplified but vulnerability was already there.</p> <p>JE – increase workload for Inclusion team?</p> <p>LJ responded, has certainly identified more vulnerable families, that continued support will be needed for, might be on various levels though, support from teachers through to Inclusion team. Large primary school with need already there, but if need is there we have to support how we can.</p> <p>JE noted that we wouldn't want the support to disappear just because Covid has in the future.</p> <p>LJ agreed, positive that relationships have developed with teachers, parents/carers are talking more freely with teachers, lots to think about in transition back to normal school.</p> <p>JE added that his personal experience has been really nice. Really positive and nice to see the interaction with teacher.</p> <p>LJ left the meeting at this point.</p>	
	<p>3. Headteacher Update</p>	
	<p>Update includes School Development Plan, Remote Learning Development Plan, COVID-19 Catch up funding plan and the Self Evaluation Form</p>	

	<p>TP explained that he would keep his update brief, since Governors are currently meeting more regularly at the moment.</p> <p>SDP has been updated in connection with B.Murray, combined and amalgamated with CM's teaching and learning spreadsheet. Context of remote learning as changed/stunted the success criteria.</p> <p>TP asked Governors to look at plan in detail before Q&A Session on Friday and raise any questions then.</p> <p>RLDP shows the 4 areas of OFSTED, actions in place are for remote learning to be the best provision it can be.</p> <p>COVID-19 catch up fund - school allocated just over £43,000 to provide resources and catch up on missed schooling. Couldn't find any examples or templates on local school websites so have created my own. Sent to JD for advice and feedback. Is difficult to write/predict because you get the money in 3 stages and not at once. Important to share with Governors, so understanding of where the money as been allocated.</p> <p>KK asked if the money has to be allocated to closing attainment gaps? Can't be allocated to mental health or wellbeing?</p> <p>TP replied, could be, if we see that as a barrier to learning. Some allocation has been given to a teacher to work with specific groups to aid this.</p> <p>KK clarified that she was thinking more about a whole school approach, for example a wellbeing day. Understand that is more about closing the gaps from not being in school.</p> <p>TP responded yes, aimed more at academic aspects and being ready for learning.</p> <p>KK asked if when school returned in September, the approach to go right back in to full learning was the right thing to do. Will we have the same approach this time? Or a slower easing in due to this being the 3rd lockdown.</p> <p>TP replied that it had been the right approach in September, because the whole school had returned and we had a new curriculum. This time we would be mindful of how it has affected mental health and if the children are ready to learn. Pace/approach would be slower but expectations would still be high.</p> <p>CL noted that solid plans couldn't be made until the children are back at school and you can see where they are academically and emotionally.</p> <p>TP agreed, trying to still do passport curriculum remotely, teachers trying to keep momentum going, but is hard to mirror what is happening at home. Return to school would be of wellbeing nature in first few weeks.</p> <p>TP informed Governors that OFSTED had received a complaint from a parent, about something that happened 5 years ago. Unfortunately, even though the complaint was of a historic nature and not related to current staff, it still required half a day's work. Report has been submitted to local authority and will go back to OFSTED. Does show that anyone can ring OFSTED and regardless of what is said, it has an impact. Goes on schools' record and will still provoke conversations.</p>	
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	<p>KK noted that it was perhaps a weakness of the direct approach to OFSTED. Local Authority and OFSTED should be able to recognise genuine complaints against others.</p> <p>TP added that the feedback was everything is a learning experience. Does allow implementation of next steps for future.</p> <p>TP noted that the school being requires improvement, means an inspection could be imminent in terms of remote learning offer. KK, CM, TP and JD to meet tomorrow and discuss. L.Prowse provided a really good example of questions asked to another school. Will provide that as crib sheet for Governors.</p> <p>OFSTED inspection might come first, if not Local Authority one will, will be scrutiny in some form. Disappointed not to have got the e-visit site visit completed before lockdown, would have shown strides forward for the school.</p> <p>CC clarified that the visit is exclusive to the online provision being provided?</p> <p>TP replied yes, will check if remote offer mirrors curriculum in school during remote period. Will check the offers match.</p> <p>KK noted that schools aren't closed, just change of learning provision and expectations.</p>	
4. Governor Reports		
	<p>4.1 Governor Q&A Sessions from 15.01 and 29.01 Proposed and unanimously agreed as a true record.</p> <p>4.2 Remote Learning Scrutiny from 27.01 Proposed and unanimously agreed as a true record.</p> <p>KK questioned if the nature of the minutes were suitable for the website and written in a similar fashion to other schools.</p> <p>TP confirmed that it was good practice for minutes and meetings to be open and transparent. Our minutes reflect this, professional minutes, but we will always double check content before going live on the website.</p>	
5. Policies		
	<p>5.1 Redundancy Policy Model policy provided by DCC. Proposed and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>5.2 Relationships and Sex Education Policy CL questioned if this was a completely new policy. TP replied that it was based on new guidance received in September. CL noted that it covers Reception to Year 6, is there a programme for teachers to use? Uncomfortable and potentially awkward for staff the older the children get. TP explained that the school used a support programme called Jigsaw, provides PHSE curriculum support which incorporates Sex Education, provides framework. Proposed and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>5.3 Admissions Policy 2022 Provided by DCC.</p>	

	<p>Noted amendment needed on the following: Early Years provision available from 2 (not 3 as stated). Proposed and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>5.4 Safeguarding Appendix Guidance received from Babcock: Where Governing Boards have already ratified this appendix, we advise that the Chair and Safeguarding Governor should be made aware of these amendments alongside those staff who are responsible for coding attendance in registers. This should then be minuted at the next Full Governing Board meeting. Appendix ratified on 29.01.2021 Amendments shared by LJ with MM and EP on 10.02.2021</p>	<p>EP to confirm amendment with County.</p>
	<p>6. AOB</p>	
	<p>6.1 Request for absence from member of staff Request received for leave from teacher. Letter read in advance of the meeting by all Governors. CL clarified that staff member was a teacher - Year group? TP replied yes, Year 2. Staff member is aware that Governors approval is needed. Request is for a wedding in a different Country so not sure it will happen anyway given current Covid restrictions. JE questioned if this request was different to the last request received at Governors, which was declined. TP responded yes, in my opinion. Covid has meant the change in date for the wedding. Unfortunate, as wedding was previously planned for date when leave wouldn't have been needed. CC clarified whether given the destination, the staff member would need to isolate or quarantine before/after travel. Should that effect decision? TP – good point, hadn't thought about that. KK commented that weddings, especially those abroad, are once in a lifetime type scenarios, personally think it would be unfair to say no. Also considering impact of Covid. MM asked if there would be capacity to cover the absence in school. TP replied no, supply cover would be needed. MM asked what the cost implications of this would be. TP responded that supply would be a cost but the staff member would be unpaid, as per the policy for Leave and Absence, so this would be offset. KK noted that it was the first request received from this member of staff and Governors do try to approve one if appropriate. Pandemic has changed the circumstances of this particular request. CL agreed, but also noted the need to not set a precedent. TP agreed, out of context of Covid decision would be a no, day or two requests that are easily covered yes, but full week with cover needed is declinable. After some discussion Governors approved request for leave as unpaid and with clarification needed on quarantining rules.</p>	<p>EP to confirm in letter to employee, after clarifying quarantining restrictions for</p>

	Letter to employee will be clear in unpaid leave, which will include quarantining timescale if applicable to trip.	country being travelled to.
7.10pm	Meeting ends	

Key :

Green = decision

Red = challenge

Blue = action