



WEST CROFT SCHOOL



'Discover your Legacy'

MINUTES FOR FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Spring Term 2021

23rd March 2021 – 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Meeting held remotely due to National Covid19 restrictions

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

Visitors: D Wright (Finance Manager), 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 :

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Red = challenge

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ITEM NUMBER	NOTES	ACTION
A. Apologies for absence	M.Mills – apology sanctioned	
B. Declaration of Conflict of Interests	None	
C. Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes from the 9 th February 2021 End of Term Review from the 12 th February 2021 Both sets of minutes proposed and unanimously agreed.	
D. Matters arising	Meeting date needed to set budget w/b 26 th April 2021 Agreed: 4pm on Tuesday 27th April	
E. Any actions completed/not completed/next steps		
	1. Budget Monitoring	

	<p>1.1. Update given by Finance Manager</p> <p>Budget monitoring report circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>DW explained that year-end was approaching.</p> <p>March carry forward currently £240,772. The more carry forward the better at this stage, all spending stopped for now.</p> <p>No significant differences to last month report.</p> <p>KK questioned when conversations need to start happening in more detail about the tricky nature of the budget going forward. On the 27th April meeting date just agreed?</p> <p>DW replied yes, a 5-year budget plan will be brought for discussion. Bottom line will fluctuate a little bit after this month but will be able to see each line and how much is allocated.</p> <p>CL asked if that plan will be received in advance.</p> <p>DW replied yes, will aim for at least a week in advance.</p> <p>KK asked DW if she was satisfied with the budget as it was at the moment.</p> <p>DW responded that the budget balances at the moment, discussion at next meeting will be around challenges ahead for the next few financial years and planning for that.</p> <p>CL asked TP and CM if there was anything they currently felt there were having to go without.</p> <p>TP replied, potential different staff models, might have to compromise in terms of that. Will explain in more detail at budget meeting. Looking at each budget lines, compared to last financial year. Trimming on some lines. Looking how to save creatively, and getting good value for money.</p> <p>1.2. Approve services to schools' budget & procurement card for EP</p> <p>DW explained that LEA school services are purchased from County. Support and areas we can't do ourselves.</p> <p>Library – currently spending £12,000 a year, new plan to move the library in house. Meeting with CC and RT (librarians) to discuss and move forward.</p> <p>LEA services involve some choices, some not, has to come to Governors for approval because has to be purchased before the budget is set.</p> <p>DW confirmed that the library service was the only line to be potentially removed. Agreeing worst case scenario with saving if library is scrapped.</p> <p>CC asked if the educational psychology hour blocks purchased, could increase?</p> <p>DW replied potentially, but if you don't buy the blocks in advance they tend to go. We would have to justify spend from somewhere else, out of other budget lines.</p> <p>JE asked if Babcock services were affiliated with County. Run for profit?</p> <p>DW responded; presume it runs for profit. County sold some of their services off a number of years ago.</p> <p>JE questioned if they were the only available providers around?</p> <p>DW answered that she had never heard of schools not using Babcock. Good to keep in mind and research though.</p> <p>JE noted the school previously being approached and purchasing some support from the Dartmoor Teaching Alliance.</p>	
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	<p>DW concurred, but academies do more in house. Flexibility around who they buy their services from. DTA wouldn't be able to provide us with everything.</p> <p>KK noted that academies tend to run as a business not a school. Would take a lot of prove and persuasion to join an academy.</p> <p>Purchase of LEA services unanimously agreed.</p> <p>DW left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Proposal of a Procurement card for EP as Office Manager. Unanimously agreed.</p>	
2. Headteacher Update		
	<p>2.1 Full Termly Headteacher Report</p> <p>Report provided to Governors in advance of the meeting. No questions raised prior.</p> <p>Question from CL regarding case studies, not remote learning specific, but does include. Contextual information.</p> <p>TP explained that staffing had been looked at in conjunction with DW and the budget. Model will decide on recruitment, minimum can recruit is 3 externals. Great response to adverts, 35 potential candidates, lots of relocating. Zoom meetings, calibre of candidates is good. Easter holidays to apply, interviewing in second week back. Strong NQT's here, internal and external appointments, will be a fair, open, transparent process.</p> <p>Confidential at this point but staffing change as of last night, email to go to staff shortly. GC going at Easter. Year 1 unstable this year, another change, senior leadership presence needed there, to give good finish in Year 1.</p> <p>KK asked what the parents' reaction had been to this. Dissatisfaction with Year 1 this year?</p> <p>TP clarified: just in terms of Year 1 in general?</p> <p>KK – yes</p> <p>TP replied, not really, lockdown periods have masked that a little, couldn't have predicted the pregnancies etc</p> <p>KK noted that it was a shame that the timing of recruitment could have been better for Summer term for future candidates in September.</p> <p>TP agreed, shame it hasn't worked out that way.</p> <p>KK noted that we currently employ temporary teachers with reasonable calibre.</p> <p>TP concurred yes, several NQT's that have grown.</p> <p>JE queried that regarding the teacher that's left Year 1. Next year will we sure up Year 1? Don't want to leave bitter taste in parents' mouth.</p> <p>TP agreed, yes don't want to repeat, also Year 2 staffing for those children currently in Year 1. Having good leadership in that year to really set the expectations for the year group. Quality and stability for Year 2 the same.</p> <p>JE noted that Nursery discussions have been the same. Year 1 is crucial year too. Those areas are key to get right so children have a positive journey all the way through.</p>	

	<p>TP explained that there should be a more stable staff model going forward. Good or better teachers to provide consistency across the school. GC leaving profession. She has done right thing, credible for not just going off sick.</p> <p>Meeting moved to Part II regarding specific staffing matter</p> <p>TP noted that the fall in roll next year for Reception is a concern. Want to get good OFSTED, improve the uptake of pupils. Strong marketing plan and get numbers in. CC asked if it was a low cohort? Anything else behind that? Low birth year? TP responded yes, low birth year/cohort. Other schools struggling too. Ours shows because of largeness of school. CM added that County provide us with catchment area numbers for pupils, has fallen but not as much as some others. Abbotsham down to 3 children in a few years. Falling number is across the board in Devon. This year might partly be because children aren't in a setting, because of Covid. Setting normally tells the parent when applications are due. TP added, we will keep a close eye on the situation and monitor. Don't want to go to split classes/mixed year groups, don't think it's educationally good.</p> <p>2.2 Governor OFSTED Preparation KK noted that Governor discussions need to start, moving towards imminent visit. Governors need to start preparing. Need to know what MM is going to do. Make decision about Parent Governor, new Governors etc and then decide OFSTED team. Similar set up as last time, worked well. TP agreed, as with before covid/lockdown, meet fortnightly with real focus on OFSTED preparation. CL asked if there was an update on the recruitment of other external governors. EP explained that email approach has been made again, now that school had returned and it was more suitable for external visitors. CL questioned what OFSTED's view would be, on a lack of Parent Governors/Governors.</p> <p>KK noted that if we can demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge, or lack of in potential candidates, that is good evidence for vacancies. CC added that it would be good to recruit lower school parents, join for the whole school journey. TP – agreed timeline? KK responded, wait for MM and other Parent Governor calibre to be established. After that, allocate an hour a week or every two weeks for OFSTED preparations so Governors can be prepared.</p> <p>2.3 Review of school times KK noted that she had been approached by lots of parents, 30 or so, wanting to make the school day longer again. Loss of an hour each day for some parents, affects our low-income families particularly. Survey to establish thoughts?</p>	
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	<p>TP agreed a survey would be a good idea, not going to change for after Easter, but will do a trail run of changes after May Half Term for what school day will look like in September. Ask about breakfast club and after school club provisions too.</p> <p>KK noted that parents/carers have shown lenience because of Covid but when those parents go back to work things will need to change.</p> <p>TP added that survey can go out to everyone, parents, staff, Governors etc.</p> <p>KK agreed, about what everyone wants, not just TP as Head or me as Chai etc.</p> <p>CC questioned if the lunch hour will return.</p> <p>TP responded that half an hour is too short but maybe 45 minutes instead of hour going forward. Analysis of lunchtime, last 10 minutes seems to be where the problems arise, disruption. Will form part of the survey. Wellbeing time for staff too. All important.</p> <p>CC noted that some children eat really slowly and are not getting a break.</p> <p>TP agree that half an hour is too short, acknowledge that completely.</p> <p>KK noted that her personal circumstance is very similar to lots of other parents, not different, context makes a big difference to family life. Timings can have a real impact.</p> <p>JE asked if wrap around care still exists.</p> <p>TP replied yes, Athos running Can Play, both breakfast and after school club available in KS1 hall.</p> <p>JE questioned when things go back to normal in September, that's the provision we are going to continue to offer?</p> <p>TP responded, Athos hasn't decided yet, so if he decides against continuing we need a plan for that provision.</p> <p>JE noted that lots of working parents won't even consider school without that option.</p> <p>TP agreed, deal breaker for lots, we need to commit and try it properly for 2 years. Got to get as many children here as possible. More professional working families.</p> <p>KK asked; is breakfast club viable?</p> <p>DF replied no, costs the school money, very popular because it is cheap but not cost effective. Might have to look different in the future, different set up.</p>	
	<p>3. Governor Reports</p>	
	<p>3.1 Governor recruitment update Update given above under agenda item 3.2</p>	
	<p>4. Policies</p>	
	<p>4.1 Flexible Working Model policy, recommended by CL. Agreed delegated power to TP and KK as Headteacher and Chair. Use of policy unanimously agreed.</p> <p>4.2 Finance Policy Recommended by KK.</p>	

	<p>Use of policy unanimously agreed.</p> <p>4.3 Recruitment Model policy, recommended by JE. Use of policy unanimously agreed.</p>	
	<p>5. AOB</p>	
	<p>5.1 Request for absence from member of staff Request received for leave from partner of learning assistant. Amendment to previous request. Letter read in advance of the meeting by all Governors.</p> <p>Governors discussed the impact of the request on school.</p> <p>Impact included change to PPA support, as the member of staff has had a change of role since the original request was made. Has also been a change of Governing Body since the original request.</p> <p>Any requests currently involve the potential of a quarantining period due to COVID-19 restrictions. Has bigger implications.</p> <p>Agreed that Clerk would seek HR advice as to implications for saying no now but yes previously. TP noted that requests should be decided based on the impact on the pupils and not be staff led.</p> <p>5.2 Premises update JE apologised for not adding to the agenda prior to the meeting. Emails between myself and DF regarding premises. Funding for repair of the main roof, with some smaller areas, received equalling £253,000. Secures the school roof for a number of years – positive. £5,000 on new boundary fence. Have visited school and seen where the new fence will be. Great to see money being spent on the site. DF agreed, really pleased, good progress. Will have impact on school life. School roof is a 4.5 month project, start in June, finish in September, will have impact on car park and scaffolding etc but is workable. JE also confirmed that the school emergency plan had been updated. Thanks to DF, plan is very detailed. DF noted that not all Governors receive a copy of the plan. Due to nature of sensitive information. Chair, Headteacher, JE, DF and EP receive a copy.</p> <p>DF informed Governors that a full health and safe audit is being conducted. Virtual meeting, with documents being sent in preparation for that.</p> <p>CL asked if Governor visits could resume. TP replied yes, agreed that visits that benefit school can resume. Governor visits included in this. All sensible precautions taken, so no problem at all.</p>	<p>Clerk to seek HR advice regarding request.</p>

	<p>Governors welcome to participate in staff COVID-19 testing scheme to allow visits to resume.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 7.10pm</p>	
7.30pm	Meeting ends	

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