



WEST CROFT SCHOOL



'Enjoy Learn Achieve'

MINUTES FOR FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Autumn term 2019

24th September 2019 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Present: L Davies, J Ebsworthy, D Ford, C Neale, G Morris (Headteacher), M Boxall (Executive Headteacher), K Kelly (Chair) and E Paine (Clerk)

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	NOTE	ACTION	LINK
A. Apologies for absence	Apologies received from: A.Hoare and M.Mills. Apologies sanctioned.		
B. Declaration of Conflict of Interests			
C. Minutes of the last meeting	9 th July 2019 – to be agreed as a true record. Minutes agreed as a true record. Unanimously agreed.		
D. Matters arising			
E. Any actions completed/not completed/next steps	<p>Headteacher Recruitment Chair and Clerk agreed to move this item and it was discussed after agenda item 1 was completed.</p> <p>Chair updated group on current progress. Explained that there had been 15 expressions of interest so far but with no actual applications received as of yet. Babcock adviser had assured Chair that it isn't unusual to not receive applications until the closing date which is the 30th September. Shortlisting is scheduled for the 2nd October and interviews for the 8th. Interview panel will be CN, KK and MM.</p> <p>Chair explained that she had given tours and spoken to 4 potential candidates. Chair had been honest regarding current situation of school and our plans to move forward positively for the future. Chair gave a brief overview of each person's background.</p>		

	<p>MB reassured that he was in place to support the process. Chair expressed concerns that another new HT and more changes would further push staff who were already feeling battered and bruised. Ideal situation would be that processes are in place so a new HT could come in and follow them.</p> <p>MB agreed regarding the processes and vision for the school but did counteract that there was a fine line and at some point you have to say to people that is your job and what is expected of you. My experience of balancing that as executive HT.</p> <p>Chair proposed discussion regarding what happens if Governors decide not to shortlist anyone.</p> <p>JE asked if there was a plan b for such a scenario. Chair responded that Babcock and County would provide support. MB added that is what Governors are paying for, that 3rd party professional advice and support.</p> <p>MB suggested still doing the advert for a substantive HT as soon as possible as December to April was the timeline for recruitment which is a potential key time with OFSTED revisit.</p> <p>School Vision Statement Had been discussed at the 9th July 2019 meeting. Vision needs rewriting as it is the previous Headteachers vision. Needs to be that of the Governors and school.</p> <p>School vision statement to be on 15th October agenda. Clerk will recirculate current vision and example vision from ECF to Governors to work on.</p> <p>Clerk reminded Governors of need for confidentiality, especially during Part II items. Discussion must happen during scheduled meetings so that it can be evidenced in the minutes. Email conversations must not be used to make decisions and can be used as evidence if requested. School emails must be used for data protection and safeguarding.</p>	<p>Governors to discuss vision statement at next meeting. Clerk to circulate papers needed for this.</p>	
<p>F. SIP review (I)</p>			
	<p>1. Governor paperwork including declaration of eligibility and terms of reference</p>		
	<p>1.1 Welcome to new Governor Chair welcomed new Parent Governor J.Ebsworthy and thanked him for joining us and supporting West Croft. Everyone present gave a brief introduction of themselves including their role on the Board.</p> <p>Chair gave JE an overview of the schools current position and where Governors were trying to make a positive impact. Governors reassured JE that it took a while to fully digest all the information and feel up to speed so not to worry and just to ask if he needed any help.</p> <p>1.2 Practical signing and updating of paperwork Clerk had received no new nominations for role of Chair and Vice Chair so it was unanimously agreed that K.Kelly would continue as Chair and M.Mills as Vice Chair.</p>		

	<p>Governors felt that given the schools current predicament this was sensible and provided stability and continuity.</p> <p>Governors present made the following decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Current structure of FGB and standards committee to continue. Full Boards have been providing all Governors with a better understanding of the full picture. Duplication was happening with two committee structure. *Clerk to review policies on behalf of Board and produce a spreadsheet clearly showing which policies have delegated power to the Headteacher. Clarification needed on how specific polices, particularly model ones provided by DCC, are. *FGB meetings will be open to members of the public but a visitor to the meeting cannot add items to the agenda or make comments/decisions. *Meetings cannot be attended via conference calls. <p>All decisions above unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Governors had a brief discussion around current vacancies after a few departures at the end of the Summer term. It was agreed that KK would contact two associate members to discuss their membership and being more involved.</p> <p>1.3 Terms of reference – Standards Committee Clerk had provided Governors which 3 versions to compare: *Previous ToR for Curriculum committee under previous Headteacher *Babcock model version *National Governance Association version</p> <p>Governors agreed to adopt the NGA version of Terms of Reference which were clear and concise.</p> <p>1.4 Agree Governor roles and lead responsibilities Governors agreed that current responsibilities/subject leads would remain the same. Once new Governors were recruited those with two responsibilities would delegate one. JE was allocated Health and Safety and would contact DF to arrange first meeting.</p>		
	<p>2. Staff</p>		
	<p>2.1 Staff cover MM had requested this agenda item but as absent the item was to be moved to next agenda. Clerk had asked MM if she wanted Clerk to provide a report or questions on her behalf but MM declined.</p> <p>2.2 Absence Report Summer 2019 Absence Report for Summer 2019 had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting for reading.</p> <p>KK asked DF if the numbers provided on the report were high. DF responded yes, last Christmas period had been very bad, probably worse period since DF had started. Staff on sick leave already which started two days in to the new term. KK asked how we cope with that. DF responded that it can become difficult and supply budget is soon swallowed. Every absence is processed in the same way though and</p>		

when triggers are met absence meetings are arranged. Policy is being applied appropriately which includes action plans and risk assessment. Everyone is managed through the same policy.
MB confirmed that is was a model policy provided by DCC.
DF added that HR support was also received from V.Washington, a service which the school pay for.
MB added that the policy provides a financial point of view too. I.E. This is how much money you should be spending on staff. Policies are robust.

JE asked if there is a correlation between staff absence and current situation of school.

GM/MB responded yes, can be clinical but you have to manage and apply the policy appropriately.

CN asked if the absence also links with any support plans staff are on.

MB replied yes, often an absence will come after you have had to have a 'pokey' conversation.

KK - how do we balance that issue with reputation and community? Relationships across the board are deteriorating.

GM – parents see things black and white which adds to the difficulty.
MB – it is a complicated issue. Parents complain and then we deal with that issue (regarding the staff member) but then parents wonder why that staff member isn't here.

KK – does seem to be the worse it's ever been.

GM – it was never going to be a quick fix.

JE – I find myself often having to defend West Croft. Would I find myself as invested if my child wasn't here?

KK – I still think it is all interlinked. Recently completed staff surveys clearly indicate the main issue is behaviour and schools reputation.

MB – engagement and attitude changes of staff isn't my job or why I am here. It is an underlying current here still.

KK provide an example of an incident that had happened at school today which seems to be a reoccurring one. A whole class has to be evacuated from the classroom due to the behaviour of one child in that class. This happens regularly in several classrooms and always involves the same children.

KK – what happened today, would that not have happened if the staff had been following the behaviour policy and required teaching standards as you suggest they haven't been? I don't personally think so. If everything was perfect and in place and being followed to the letter these incidents would still happen.

How do you stop that so teachers can actually teach?

MB – progress across the school is appalling. No denying that but it is not one fix. But this is what we are doing and the route we have taken. Trying to consistently raise standards across the school through teacher training and appraisals. We are being consistent across the standards and what we expect quality of teaching to be. Behaviour is teachers' responsibility to manage. Doesn't help that Learning Assistants are not being deployed properly.

GM – some members of staff managing very difficult children well. Others are not.

KK – it's an impossible task and it's a very big concerning point for parents. We have a long history of these behaviours, something is clearly not working.

MB – it is not the child, it is how staff interact and deal with the situation. CPOM's is not providing enough evidence to move any children on to other environments.

DF – I disagree with that comment. We must have enough evidence for these particular children.

KK - Who can access CPOM's?

MB – only members of staff registered on the system.

KK – why are whole classes being evacuated? I don't understand why the individual child can't be moved? We have plenty of rooms here. At last terms meeting we were told all about the support rooms available and the new SEN team.

GM – LJ goes in to class and figures out plans to help the child not dysregulate. Always preferred option for the child to stay in class. Plans are not always being followed through fully.

CN – Governors were provided with lots of evidence at the exclusion panel we recently did so is it about time? Are we still gathering evidence?

MB – we can't do teaching standards and level of time needed for moving children on. Has to be one or the other.

KK – those dozen or so children have a massive impact though. Are you saying wholly that the behaviour is the teachers fault?

MB – no it is a complexity.

GM – we have to demonstrate that we are providing the support and it isn't working. Appropriate pathway has to be followed for each child.

KK – has every adult had the training to complete CPOM's properly?

MB – yes, but not being completed consistently.

KK – I reiterate again it's an impossible task for staff. How many more weeks can we talk about the same thing?

DF – I can see both sides of argument. Pupils are out of class every day though. Everyone must be able to see that there are issues.

MB – what do you want us to do?

KK – something has to change, level of disruption is too much for both children and staff. Perhaps the suggestion earlier of moving the individual child and not the whole class would work.

GM – planning and teaching has to be delivered by a teacher not a Learning Assistant. We do not have enough teachers to move a number of children to different areas.

KK – level of disruption is never going to be solved currently as things are.

DF – was the removal of a group of year 5's last term beneficial? Were the teachers left in class able to move the rest of the class forward? Would it be worth costing out that as a potential solution?

GM – it was but can't be allocated in the current budget.

MB – the example given of the situation that happened today was resolved by members of SLT.

KK – but it wasn't in terms of parental communication and the playground gossip which effects our reputation.

CN – Governors challenge isn't personal to anyone, we all need to work together. We are all trying to pull together for the good of the school.

KK – it's just currently not working. We need to try something new.

JE – do you feel like the school is heading in the right direction?

MB – GM is trying her best and can't do anymore. I see unravelling when I haven't been here for a couple of days. In reality it takes 2-3 years to turn a school in crisis around. I have the experience from previous schools in similar situations. I can see school potential. Old staff are taking time to move forward, newer staff are more on board.

JE – are the staff aware? Do they know the level of discussion

	<p>happening here? MB – they are starting to realise.</p> <p>KK – lots of our staff who have been here a substantial amount of time have great connections with our families. I witnessed this at the Summer Fair, staff were communicating with our families and that is powerful. Just because someone isn't used to doing something in a new way doesn't make them poor at the job. Are we not at the point when we try something new?</p> <p>MB – some staff are less receptive but I'm not saying that 'old staff' are not on board it's just a longer process. GM – we could realistically do with 4 more Learning Assistant's but it's just not always possible. Unfortunately often comes back to money.</p> <p>KK – I believe behaviour goes hand in hand with progress and we are clearly at a point where what we are doing isn't working we need try some new ideas.</p> <p>MB – has this conversation suggested that Governors don't feel that my support is showing any impact? KK – perhaps not.</p> <p>Group present felt that discussion had become intense and perhaps the meeting should close and everyone have the opportunity to digest and think.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meeting closed at 7.50pm</p>		
	3. Policies		
	<p>3.1 Safeguarding amendments Not discussed – move to 15th October agenda</p> <p>3.2 Code of Conduct for Staff Not discussed – move to 15th October agenda</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meeting closed at 7.50pm before agenda item 3 was discussed.</p>		
7.50pm	Meeting closed		
	Clerk to distribute minutes by 3rd October		
	Standards Committee to be next meeting – due ASAP		

Key :

Green = decision

Red = challenge

Blue = action