



WEST CROFT SCHOOL



'Enjoy Learn Achieve'

MINUTES FOR FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Spring term 2020

21st January 2020 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Present: L Davies, J Ebsworthy, C Neale, M, Mills D Ford, A Hoare, T Page (Headteacher) K Kelly (Chair) and E Paine (Clerk)

Visitor: Dr L Fancourt (SLT member providing curriculum report)

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	26 th November 2019 Unanimously agreed as a true record.	
D. Matters arising	<p><u>Co-opted Governor term of office – renewal of current member</u></p> <p>KK's current term of office is coming to an end very shortly. KK left the meeting so that remaining Governors could discuss her membership.</p> <p>Governors clarified that they were discussing and agreeing KK staying on the Board and not her role as Chair.</p> <p>Governors required very little discussion regarding co-opting KK again, unanimously agreeing that KK would be reappointed as a co-opted Governor for a new term of 4 years and continue in her role as Chair.</p> <p>KK returned to the meeting and was informed of the decision.</p> <p><u>Staff request for leave of absence</u></p> <p>Clerk had received a request for two days leave during term time for a Learning Support Assistant. Letter had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting for reading.</p> <p>MM asked if the leave was authorised what we would do for cover and would there be a cost implication.</p>	

	<p>TP responded that cover would be provided in house so on this occasion there would be no monetary cost.</p> <p>Governors then had a discussion regarding requests for leave in Term Time and agreed reasons why Governors would authorise such requests. These being exceptional circumstances outside of the staff members control. For example being invited to a wedding overseas.</p> <p>MM questioned why Governors had recently received three requests but previously had only received requests very infrequently.</p> <p>Clerk confirmed that the Staff Leave and Absence Policy gives delegated authority to the Headteacher to approve leave of absence requests for up to 5 days. Anything more than that has been submitted to Governors for approval.</p> <p>TP added that as this is the first request he has received since being appointed as Headteacher he wanted to clarify Governors position on requests being approved and check that Governors were still happy with the delegation in the policy.</p> <p>Governors confirmed that they were happy to continue the current arrangement as detailed in the policy and as a Board would only consider requests of 5 days or more.</p> <p>Governors agreed to decline the request received on this occasion and not give authorisation.</p> <p>Clerk will write a letter to staff member to inform.</p> <p><u>Finance Authority Table</u></p> <p>School Business Manager and Finance Officer asked Clerk to bring to the meeting a slight amendment to the Record of Individuals with Authority to Authorise Items table which is included in the Finance Policy.</p> <p>The table has been amended to allow DF and DW to sign off orders in the absence of WAM. This will allow the office to continue functioning in the absence of WAM without having to constantly disrupt the Headteacher for small orders of things like stationery. The amendment also allows separation of duties between DF and DW.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed the amendment to the table.</p>	Clerk
E. Any actions completed/not completed/next steps	Clerk to continue compiling list of policies clearly showing delegated responsibility	Ongoing task
	1. OFSTED preparation - Curriculum	
	<p>Agenda Item 1.2 was discussed at the beginning of the meeting before any other items to allow LF to just be present for her section of the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 Update on the current curriculum and recent changes LF distributed a print out of a powerpoint presentation regarding the curriculum which was also presented on the screen whilst LF spoke.</p> <p>LF started by explaining what defines the curriculum, which is everything children experience in school. Just foundation subjects were being</p>	

discussed tonight, which is everything apart from English and Maths. The change in OFSTED's framework which was made available from September is quite significant. The change brings the framework in line with the curriculum implemented in 2014.

The new framework is split in to 3 sections which look at quality of education being provided.

These are: Top-level view, deep dive and bringing it together. We are certain reading will be looked at along with Maths as well but in far more detail than previously inspected.

The change in framework is why we are we making these changes to the way we provide the curriculum.

LF talked through 'The Forgetting Curve' and memory chart shown about how we retain knowledge. This theory is being used to help teach the curriculum. Based on this theory OFSTED will ask children about the curriculum from the previous year. Why Knowledge and Cultural Capital information shown was also referenced as part of this process.

LF moved on to what this meant for West Croft and where West Croft currently sits amongst the changes.

LF explained that most foundation subjects are taught through a series of 'Projects' that are cross curricular in nature. The length of projects range from one week to three and a half.

This means subjects are taught across the school consistently but not through the same project as the project is adapted to be age appropriate. West Croft had invested in Focus education for foundation subjects and the sticky knowledge theory.

Scrapheap challenge slide shows the theory of 'sticky knowledge'. This gets stuck in to each child's book as a starting point for each project. Subject leads get together and design the project for each year group.

LF continued that not all foundation subjects fit neatly in to a project so we don't 'shoe horn' them, we do something slightly different.

Deliberative practice is good for this, for example art. The children can spend 15 minutes each day practicing art skills which leads to a full art lesson where they can produce the desired outcome. Without the deliberative practice that possibly wouldn't have been achieved.

PE and MFL are the main subjects that stand alone not in a project.

LF commented that when subject leaders were asked to place themselves in the Blanchard Model shown most placed themselves in the red section. This is mainly due to new subjects being led or lack of experience in their current subject. OFSTED questions were given to see if they could answer, most couldn't and realised you have to contribute more if you are a subject lead.

Subject lead files have been established for CPD and consistency.

Monitoring (book looks etc) are being led by LF still at the moment but the aim is for subject leaders to monitor on their own once they are more confident about the process.

A report reviewing subject leaders was distributed to Governors at this point to help demonstrate what changes have been made so far and what is going to happen next over the Spring Term.

The three main objectives are/will be:

- *understanding the intent. The intent is being shown everywhere across the school, including a large display in the school hall. Reinforces the message for all, staff, pupils and parents so that if asked by OFSTED everyone should be able to answer.

- *mock deep dives in to subject leads

*schemas, the theory of building on previous knowledge and connecting it to make sure it is remembered clearly by pupils. Hoping to implement in Autumn Term.

KK asked if Governors should know who all the subject leaders are.

TP replied not necessarily. As long as you have something to refer to.

KK commented on the same language being used across the school so that the children recognise. Makes sense, we must all be talking from the same page.

CN agreed, provides consistency for the inspection.

KK commented that basic practices have sometimes let us down in the past. Using the same language to the children should mean that they can answer the question whoever is asking them, a teacher or OFSTED, it won't fluster them whoever it is because they recognise the language.

JE asked if it was ok that most of this curriculum update was still in its infancy, when OFSTED come will they be understanding of that.

TP responded that the implementation has started; ground work is in place so OFSTED would consider that.

LF added that if we can show our vision and OFSTED can see that everywhere, that this will be taken in to consideration and be a positive for us.

JE asked if all schools are in the same position.

LF replied yes, but not everyone has started like we have. But we have a need to because of OFSTED visiting imminently.

KK commented that it was positive that subject leads now have to actually lead. Before it just seemed to be a title.

TP answered; there was no leadership or ownership before. Just teachers name on the paper.

KK agreed; whole school approach has been lacking previously. A subject leader/s across the school is good.

LF added that as subject leaders grow in confidence they can be more independent.

CN asked if SEND needs is looked at separately or as part of this main curriculum. We have high level of SEND pupils.

LF responded all needs are looked at as part of this main curriculum; teachers differentiate for their class and individual pupils.

CN commented that we need to document clearly that we do this.

LF replied that we are, shows in books etc

MM asked if this also applied to pupils on the other end of the spectrum. Our high end children, do they still fit in to the curriculum we are providing?

LF replied yes, we make sure they are still matching the objective but with more challenging work.

MM asked if OFSTED provide guidance on what other schools are doing.

LF responded no, no guidance is given at all for assessment.

CN commented that OFSTED will want to see that we've made progress. They will know what they are going to look at when they arrive.

MM added that at our last inspection cultural variety was commented on as being lacking. Is that embedded in the curriculum now?

LF replied yes, there is now a subject lead for British Values and they are seeing how it can fit in to projects.

Governors thanked LF for her report and presentation.

	<p>LF left the meeting at this point - 6.20pm</p> <p>1.1 Agreement of dates for extra meetings in preparation for OFSTED KK asked TP how often he thought meetings should be held. TP clarified that KK meant the 'OFSTED A Team', Governors who will be the Team who meet OFSTED? KK responded yes. TP asked what was feasible for Governors. Would recommend once every two or three weeks. KK commented that it needs to be a super sharp hour, the main focus being preparing for OFSTED. Ideally three or four members of the team means that we can always have at least two available. TP agreed, we need three core members but other people could dip in and out.</p> <p>After some discussion it was agreed that KK, MM, CN and JE would be the core group, meeting Monday mornings from 9am – 10am. Monday 10th February would be the first session and act as a planning meeting to agree agendas for future meetings.</p>	
	<p>2. Headteacher report</p>	
	<p>Headteacher report was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>TP asked if there were any questions regarding the report. How are Governors finding the format of the report? KK commented that she liked the tables of data, they are clear and concise. TP added that hopefully the whole report was clear and concise. Trying to keep it an appropriate length, mainly not too long and shows clearly what I'm updating on. Taken from my last report and updated from there to show progression.</p> <p>JE asked if staff morale had improved since discussed at the last meeting. Morale was connected to behaviour and lack of support. TP responded that he hoped so, seems to have, so hopefully that will be reflected in the next survey. Lack of support from SLT regarding behaviour was an issue but feels the new policy and structure has helped improve morale. Staff wellbeing – huge push this term on that. Wellbeing Team has been established and new ideas already implemented, including tea and coffee now being free for staff and staff being able to vote for a colleague to be 'Star of the Week', who is presented with a small goodie bag in assembly.</p> <p>MM asked what had happened regarding the Assistant Headteacher secondment role and it not being fulfilled. TP explained that the role had been offered to one of the two candidates interviewed. The candidate had been asked what her situation was at interview; she said she had been allowed to come for interview so presumed it was fine to accept the secondment role if offered it. The job had been offered with the view to start in January but unfortunately the Headteacher of the candidate's school came back and said they didn't have capacity to release her. School is part of a trust so it was frustrating to hear this. Secondment was safety net for both parties but hasn't worked out this time. KK commented that it was a real shame. Something about the candidate that would have potentially been very good for West Croft.</p> <p>MM asked what position that leaves us in.</p>	

	<p>TP responded that it does leave us short in terms of SLT capacity. Just TP and LJ out of class which is limiting. We are receiving Tier 1 support for school improvement. Things are ok in terms of operational, everyday things but we need improvement in teaching and learning across the school which is what the extra Assistant Headteacher role was designed to give. Exceptional teaching needs to be showcased across the school to help improve overall.</p> <p>Alumnis and Babcock who are providing support are following up on potential Assistant Heads but if that doesn't yield any results we could/may have to look at an internal way to build leadership.</p> <p>J.Dymond has also been reassigned as West Croft's School improvement officer. JD has more capacity in the interim to support the school because of her location.</p> <p>S.Bissett is also coming on Monday afternoon to visit.</p> <p>KK commented that there has always been a positive relationship between JD and me as Chair. Hope that benefits the process.</p> <p>TP added that hopefully JD and J.Stevens (current school improvement advisor) have had a good handover. Feels slightly like we are starting from the beginning. Hope that's not the case.</p> <p>KK asked if the website review and school attendance audit provided were mainly for information at this point. Are we making progress on the feedback provided?</p> <p>TP responded yes, progress has been made already, things can and have moved to green from amber or red. Delegated to SLT as to who will assess which issues. Idea is to then have the audits redone to check everything has been addressed.</p> <p>KK remarked that getting a conclusion for lots of things has been needed recently so progress is good.</p> <p>TP concluded that capturing those things in the HT report will be a suitable way to show progress and improvement.</p> <p>KK - going back to previous notes and notes regarding bullying – have we done assemblies or anything as mentioned?</p> <p>TP – not yet but we can programme in. In class too so can be age appropriate.</p>	
3. Finance		
	<p>Both the SFVS and the budget monitoring update were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>3.1 Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)</p> <p>LD explained that the data is sent through to County and added to a massive database. This database allows comparisons of all schools. Can filter to see almost like for like. Dashboard shows where we are against other schools. Lots of green areas which is positive. List of questions as part of the dashboard have been answered by LD and WAM. Question 17 was potential concern but has now been resolved. KK and LD have completed financial skills audits for SFVS.</p> <p>KK questioned the red RAG rated section, should we be aware and fixing?</p> <p>LD replied that we only currently have the one, spend on education support staff, which is an overspend in comparison to other schools. Governors should be aware and make efforts to explain why or change the RAG rating.</p> <p>Governors discussed the potential reasons why we have an overspend compared to schools of a similar size or nature. Discussion included SEN percentage and large number of pupils.</p>	

Natural wastage could be.

JE asked if behaviour was part of the reason. High volume of staff needed for behaviour problems?

TP noted that the success of new behaviour policy could mean we could slim down support staff or could mean that the volume of support staff makes the policy work.

KK added that a sensible plan for moving forward was needed. Perhaps natural wastage would occur finding a middle ground. What should we be committing to right now? Looking at in more detail or leave for now?

TP responded that for now keeping an eye on is the sensible option.

Whole school staff structure review is needed at some point but not right now. Any extreme changes at this stage, especially with OFSTED looming, is not a good idea.

Approval to send SFVS to Babcock as working document.

Proposed by LD, seconded by KK, unanimously agreed.

3.2 Budget monitoring update

LD noted that notes provided alongside the monitoring update are all similar to previous version.

- Pupil Premium Income: still showing as incorrect due to the incorrect interpretation of the criteria. Still showing on our books even though County know, is likely to be the end of the financial year before we know actual clawback.
- Catering equipment: £8,000 expenditure set aside for new vehicle as current one nears the end of its life.
- Catering provision: overspend. Monitoring very carefully. More meals being provided than was anticipated.
- Nursery staffing: next steps are being considered. D Grade role was not recruited for.
- School improvement: invoices received for support received from MB under the management partnership totalled £34,000
- School improvement: £15,000 set aside for recruitment of seconded Assistant Headteacher will be carried forward if not used during this financial year.

KK expressed concerns on the impact of Nursery. Hopes the staff aren't at breaking point.

TP explained that a Nursery review was scheduled for this Thursday.

Babcock advisor coming in to do review which is designed to be supportive and non-judgmental. Nursery strategic meeting will be needed after so that we are clear what we need for September 2020.

CN asked for clarification as to what a D Grade role is?

TP replied that they can assume responsibility of the classroom.

KK asked when the review happens and perhaps indicates they need more support, can we do that straight away?

TP responded yes in theory; money is still there for appointment that didn't happen so it would be about finding someone suitable.

DF added that two mealtime assistants have been appointed in the Nursery and staff have said they have felt the impact of that.

KK added that GM, previous Nursery Manager was good at keeping some parents in check. Two very nice and kind and nurturing people in charge now so worry about pressure of dealing with that side of things. Supply would be an awful situation for Nursery so we must avoid that happening.

	<p>JE noted that in terms of repairs and maintenance there is a lot to do. DF and staff do a really good job with what they have but the buildings are old and tired. But are well looked after, JE was impressed how well.</p> <p>TP added that a 3 year cycle for keeping maintenance up to date would be good – strategic then and focused.</p> <p>MM also added that the PTA could be involved with funding for playground and outdoor equipment.</p>	
	5. Policies	
	<p>Clerk expressed concerns that a number of policies were behind schedule for being reviewed and agreed because of Governors wanting to be very specific about delegated authority. Although this is very practical and worthwhile the last few policies brought to meetings hadn't been agreed so the number of policies needing to be processed was increasing.</p> <p>Governors agreed that more time was needed to focus on one policy at a time instead of skim reading a few in one go for a meeting.</p> <p>The policies below are to be looked at by individuals and notes made regarding updates and any changes. Task will also be timed to give a better indication of how long is actually needed to review the remaining policies.</p> <p>Policies to be looked at and notes emailed to Clerk by Monday 3rd March.</p> <p>5.1 Charging and Remissions Hadn't been updated in time for the meeting so was moved to the next agenda.</p> <p>5.2 Code of Conduct for Staff Model DCC Policy To be reviewed by CN.</p> <p>5.3 Probationary Policy for School Support Staff Model DCC Policy To be reviewed by MM.</p> <p>5.4 Whistleblowing Model DCC Policy To be reviewed by Clerk and TP.</p> <p>AOB Chair informed Governors of the upcoming Governance Review on Thursday 13th February. Previous review from March 2018 will be looked at and compared to where we are now. Chair and Clerk may email and contact Governors to arrange or check things in preparation for the review.</p>	<p>CN</p> <p>MM</p> <p>Clerk/TP</p>
8.00pm	Meeting ends	
	Clerk	
	HT & Chair of SC	
	Clerk	
	All SC members	

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