

WESTMORLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

SPRING TERM 2023

Date: 2 February

Time: 3:30pm

Venue: School

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr K Thompson (Chairperson), Mr M Henderson (Headteacher), Ms Karla George (Deputy Head)
Ms K Andrews, Ms F Newton, Ms J Shaw, Mrs W Hill, Mrs Pauline Robinson, Mr C Murray and Ms
Anee Gupta

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs Natasha King Governor Support Officer

Bold = Governor question/comment

The meeting opened at 3:34pm

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Governors were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair. The meeting achieved quorum with 9/11 governors in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Jacqui Terry and accepted by the governing board.

2. **DECLARATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)**

The Chair invited governors to declare any items for discussion under AOB.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

a) **Declaration of Business Interests**

Governors were asked to declare any business, financial or personal interests in any agenda items; no declarations were made. Signed forms have been returned.

Governors were reminded that they should declare any interest which arose during the meeting.

b) **Business Interest Forms**

The Headteacher confirmed that completed Business Interest Forms had been received from all governors.

CORE OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURING CLARITY OF VISION, ETHOS & STRATEGIC DIRECTION

4. **CORE BUSINESS**

a) **Previous Governing Board Minutes, Actions & Matters Arising**

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th October, copies circulated previously, be approved and signed by the Chair and authorised for publication.

The actions from the autumn term minutes were reviewed as follows:

MINUTE POINT	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION FOR	UPDATE
8.	HT to continue with informal discussions and research re MATs	HT	Ongoing
9.	Governors to contact LA and raise concerns regarding suitability of the new EWO system	Chair/Governors	
12.	Update on Health & Safety Audit	HT/SLT	
13b.	Ratification of Model Pay Policy	All Governors	Complete

b) Approval of Policies

Governors considered and APPROVED the following policies which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- Leave of Absence
- Respect

The HT noted that the main change to the Leave of Absence Policy is with regards to staff attending interviews, which has not caused difficulty previously, and suggested this paragraph remain.

The Chair reminded Governors that they should mark policies as “read” on GovernorHub to keep track.

At 3:41pm DH entered the room.

The HT confirmed that the Respect Policy is an LA policy that deals with how people treat each other. It has proved quite a useful policy. When incidents occur, the school issues a respect letter to the parent and anything beyond that, goes to Devon Sherwood at the LA. Devon then liaises with the parent and failure to comply with the Respect Policy would potentially lead to banning order. There are, currently, no parents subject to a Section 547.

The updated guidance on Managing Critical Incidents from the Local Authority was noted. The HT confirmed this was reviewed some time ago; it is a basic common-sense approach with relevant contact details.

c) Pay Committee Recommendations

The Chair of Pay committee confirmed that pay recommendations had been received from the Headteacher and considered by the committee. Payroll had been informed.

d) Agreement of the Draft 2023-24 Budget

Governors considered that draft budget and assumptions summary provided by the school Business Manager (SBM) prior to the meeting.

The Board confirmed they had discussed the indicative draft budget last week. The HT confirmed there had been a visit from the Finance Officer since that meeting and various grants have come in. As such, anticipate £60k over the 12% schools are allowed to keep. The HT confirmed that the Board has discussed spending plans, and all are currently within his remit of spending allowances. The HT will allocate the monies once the order has been put on the system, in line with the school priorities.

The draft budget 2023-24 was AGREED by the governing board.

e) Delegation of Draft 2023-24 Budget

Governors AGREED to the delegation of the draft budget to the Resources committee for further scrutiny and approval prior to submission to the local authority by 31.5.23.

f) Approval of Inset Days 2023-24

This item was deferred and delegated to the HT. **ACTION**

e) Approval of Finance Manual

Not discussed.

5. BOARD/STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

a) Governing Board Development Plan (Skills Audit, Induction, Training, Succession Plans)

The School Development Plan (SDP) is reviewed on termly basis. One of the key items is Governor development. The school has been struggling how to best link Governors with different areas of the school and have taken the approach of allocating roles, which can be reassessed next year.

The HT contacted Governor Support Services (GSS) who suggested linking governor roles to the priorities in the SDP. There is an issue with this in that the SDP changes regularly. Some subjects require a Governor to be attached to them because the school is in the process of applying for quality marks.

- Safeguarding – Jacquie Shaw
- EAL – Pauline Robinson
- SEND – Jacqui Terry
- Wellbeing – Anee Gupta
- Curriculum – Wendy Hill
- KS2 – Katie Andrews
- EY and KS1 – Donna Maskell
- H&S – Colin Murray
- E safety, remote education etc. – Faye Newton

The Chair noted it is up to Governors to determine how often they come into school; he would anticipate at least once a term. The HT highlighted EAL, which the school is seen as leading the field in with the most languages spoken.

The HT will provide Governors with a document setting out roles and responsibilities and contacts. **ACTION**

The Chair stated that ideally, Governors can feedback to the meetings.

Several of the Governors recently attended LA training focussing on the governors' role in safeguarding. Jacquie Shaw subsequently sat with James and went through the questions from that training, which was very useful.

b) End of Term of Office

None

c) Board Vacancies

None. The HT noted he will check with DM with regards to her intentions to continue on the Board. **ACTION**

d) Feedback on Governor Visits

This was discussed briefly above, and the HT clarified that meeting were staff were to find out information/seek clarification.

e) Stockport Governor Conference

Governors were advised that the 2023 GOVAS conference has been arranged for 25th March on Microsoft Teams. Registration details will be circulated in due course.

6. BRIEFING PAPERS FROM STOCKPORT LOCAL AUTHORITY

Governors noted the following papers:

- Governance Update and Governor Development
- The Schools Bill – Where Now?
- Appeal for Volunteers
- DfE Updates for Schools

Governors considered the questions within the EYFS briefing paper.

The DH confirmed that the EY intent and curriculum is on the website under the EY tab. With regards to the question about transition, the documents come from other providers i.e. SALT, social workers and health visitors and the various parties discuss any children identified as a concern. The school does stay and play sessions both in EY reception and in nursery, which provide an opportunity to observe the children in our setting and see how that matches up with what the school have been told.

The HT noted that in conversation with other parties, the school has highlighted that there are inaccuracies from various services about how information about parents and children is recorded on formal systems. The school has consistently shown professional curiosity from a safeguarding perspective. The school is working with other partners to improve the recording of questions on transition and support appropriate information sharing.

CORE OBJECTIVE 2: HOLDING THE HEADTEACHER TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL AND ITS PUPILS

7. HEADTEACHER'S TERMLY REPORT AND SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Headteacher's Report had been circulated to the governors prior to the meeting and questions were invited:

The Headteacher updated the governors on the School Development Plan's progress. With regards to the Nurture provision, the school has learnt lessons from the first term and now offer it to far more children than before. Afternoons look very different in that the school is using the staff to benefit the children from the Nurture provision, and other children. The school is using staff to deliver SALT programmes, as a number of speech and language issues were identified following pupil progress meetings. Highly skilled staff in the Nurture group are delivering language packages to these children and the school can demonstrate positive outcomes from that intervention.

The HT confirmed that school attendance has gone down. There have been a couple of nasty bugs, which has had an impact. The EWO service that once was is now diluted and as a school, we are classed as a "red" school, with attendance below national. The EWO input is 2 hours a term, which is insufficient. The school has 138 persistently absent children and there is not the time within those two hours to discuss those children. The HT had scheduled a meeting with senior staff at the LA to discuss attendance.

The HT confirmed the school is delighted with Amanda, who was recruited to assist when the learning mentors were off. She observed James doing some parent meetings about

attendance and has now begun organising and conducting meetings herself. There were four parents who did not attend, and those meetings are being rescheduled; the school will explain that if attendance does improve, that child may lose the Nurture provision, or another procedure will be followed.

In EY, persistent absence is an issue (not statutory), but team are engaging with parents to get those children in.

With regards to admissions, there are 495 children in school, but potentially losing 3 who should be going to an Adswold school. Another 3 are moving to Offerton, having been at the school as an interim measure.

James has put a report together, highlighting which children are being seen by which service. The report flags up where the school do not agree with the step-up/step-down actions that are taken, or rather not taken.

James has made 10 referrals into the MASSH and 4 of those have led to social care involvement. One of those included child protection, 2 resulted in early help and 1 with a school-led social worker. There is a hesitancy from some services to refer into the MASSH and the school have followed that up with service leads who have also identified issues.

Andrea, a learning mentor, has advised that she wishes to step away from work for the time being. This has allowed the school to appoint Amanda and re-establish the team.

With regards to pupil behaviour, a British values course was recently delivered to the children, and they commented on the good behaviour in school. There has been one racial incident reported since the last meeting, so 2 incidents this academic year. There has been one homophobic incident; the LA have been asked to write to that family. There have been no disablist incidents. There have been 15 incidents of bullying reported and dealt with by staff since September. The school held an antibullying day so would expect a spike in reporting after that. The children tell us they know who to talk to in school.

With regards to support services for children, the school were part of a trial looking at children's mental well-being. Jess worked with the school and came up with effective ways of working; she saw over 100 children in a year. The pilot finished in July and the decision was made to maintain the project in schools, allocating a well-being officer but transferred to an NHS service. This has resulted in a long delay in set-up. Jess is not able to work with the children until the service is set up, despite previously working in the school. The HT suggested that Governors could contact the NHS Trust or MP. **ACTION.** The new service has introduced an 8-page referral document, which includes some aggravating questions. HT has raised that with the project and there is a meeting in February to discuss. The HT will keep the Board informed.

The HT highlighted Me Too, a support group for children experiencing domestic violence. An outside worker is coming into school and working directly with children but has been off sick since September and not due back until February. Amanda and James are picking those children up, and Diane will do therapeutic work with them when she returns.

There has been one exclusion, involving a part time timetabled child, slowly re-integrating into full-time.

The HT highlighted there is documentation on GH about academisation. The school has made no firm decision or commitment. The plan is to meet with Tim Bowman on 7th February to explore his support for the school setting up a Trust, rather than joining one.

The Chair gave the Governors an overview of the academisation decision process and the finality of that decision. The Chair noted that most secondary schools have academized.

At 16:37 the DH left the room.

The HT noted that academies seem to become masters of their own destiny. The school has already opted out of some of LA services and opted into other, external services e.g.

EP assessments which cost about £15 more than the LA provision and are of greater value to the child.

At 16:39 DH returned.

The Chair noted that the LA remain integral to the decision; they have a view of the whole borough. They also work with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).

The HT has had an initial conversation with RSC, who recommended approaching the LA to see if they would support an application. If the conversation goes well, the school will go back to the RSC for the next steps.

Are all secondary schools academies now? Could we affiliate to boost numbers?

The HT confirmed not all are. Affiliating would certainly boost numbers. Stockport also has the benefit of bordering with Tameside. Could look at developing relationships there.

The HT requested permission from Governors to allocate funds given to the schools, which is ring-fenced for energy efficiency (approximately £19,000). The suggestion is to allocate about £2,500 of that to the Nurture provision door. Ideally, the school would have spent the remainder on changing lighting and heating, but the school were involved in a LA funded grants scheme, which provided new lights and a new roof on the EY department. The finance committee suggested a useful project could be fitting solar panels, which the school would have to contribute towards. The Governors APPROVED this spending, with remaining contribution coming from the school budget.

The HT noted that there are 2 members of staff currently doing over and above what they are contracted for. The school would like to make further payment to those staff members, especially in light of the savings made since September as result of staff illness. HR services have said the school need to refer to the Pay Policy for minimum/maximum values for honorarium payments. A lengthy discussion occurred. The SBM had calculated for each post the cost to the school, that had been planned into the budget. The savings/income generated through supply insurance payments and the non-replacement of specialist roles for a variety of reasons were also highlighted. Each case was considered on its own merit. Comparisons of the contracted roles and the additional tasks and duration these roles were undertaken for, in addition to these extra responsibilities being taken up without hesitation, were all taken into account.

From the calculations provided by the SBM and the lengthy discussion, the Board unanimously agreed to make these payments on a one-off basis for each member of staff. The Chair was asked to inform the SBM to make these payments and would provide her with the figures. The HT would check the position with HR with regards to lump sum/tax etc. **ACTION**

Governors asked that their thanks were passed onto those staff members for their support.

At 17:10 JS left the room and re-entered at 17:11.

With regards to Health & Safety (H&S), the Childrens' Centre no longer have caretaker. The HT questioned the managers about snow clearance and gritting and they had not considered it. They suggested they would put a plan in place for September! At a meeting with the H&S executive last week the HT sought their advice on snow clearance, and they explained the liability consequences to the Childrens' Centre, who have secured gritting services with another company.

In terms of the building, everything has been done. The underfloor heating appears to work, although seeing more outage of boilers since the work was completed. The roof on the EY building is fully insulated and brand new.

In terms of pay, the school had previously broken the Pay Policy into smaller increments, which saved money but in light of the cost-of-living crisis, the HT has spoken to Governors about moving back to national scales which Governors agreed to.

In terms of the recent strike action, the school maintained full school opening on that day. The rules have changed since previous years so strike action can be covered by agency staff. The school had 5 supply staff in. There is a further day at end of this month, and the school will take the same approach, although this may change closer to the date.

Is there anything the Governors can do to support the teachers?

The HT confirmed that there is a proforma to write to the MP. The key issue is that there is no back funding for covering the rise in earnings. The school would struggle to afford more than the 5% they have received. Governors were happy for this but noted unlikely to be impactful.

Turning to Magic Moments, the school sent Phil on a slow cooker course. The school had a donation of 50 slow cookers from Fair Share and have been able to train parents on how to use them. To date, they have targeted the Year 6 cohort but a further 50 are being delivered.

Finally, the HT noted that hybrid meetings have had a great impact on Governor attendance and the HT thanked Governors for their commitment.

8. WELLBEING

This was discussed at agenda item 7.

9. TEACHING & LEARNING

a) Committee Minutes

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 10th October were noted by the governing board.

b) Ratification of Policies

None

CORE OBJECTIVE 3: OVERSEEING THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL & MAKING SURE ITS MONEY IS SPENT WELL

10. RESOURCES & BUDGET

a) Committee Minutes

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 10th October and 12th December were noted by the governing board.

It was noted that the committee minutes were criticised as part of the audit. The DH is now minuting those committee meetings. The Audit Report raised a high priority issue, and the school are contesting some aspects of the Report. The HT is to write an action plan in response to the Report and bring it to the Board. **ACTION.**

The HT thanked WH for her offer of support in the office.

b) Ratification of Policies

None

- c) Budget Update
Discussed previously.
- d) School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) Update
Deadline is end of March. The Finance Committee have requested a draft for their next full meeting.
- e) School Fund Audit Certificate; Approval of School Fund Audit Arrangements
The School Fund has been completed by WH; there remain a couple of points to be added in.
- f) Report on Pupil Premium (PP), Sports Grant and Covid Catch Up Spending
The impact of the Sports Grant on the children is significant.
- g) Local Authority Buybacks
The HT confirmed the school is reverting back to Stockport Homes having previously moved to Robinsons. SBM to action this. **ACTION**
- h) Scheme of Delegation
This item was not discussed.
- i) FINANCE MANUAL
This item was not discussed.

11. PREMISES & HEALTH & SAFETY (H&S)

Discussed at agenda point 7.

12. DATES

a) Full Governing Board

15th June 3:30pm

b) Committee Meetings

Finance – 9th March 1-2:30pm

Curriculum and Standards – 9th March 2:30pm

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors were reminded to email the HT with a picture and short statement about why they are a Governor by the end of next week.

With no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 5:46 pm.

WESTMORLAND SCHOOL
SPRING TERM 2023 GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING ACTION POINTS

ACTION NUMBER	MINUTE POINT	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION FOR	DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
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1.	4f.	INSET days deferred	HT	Post-meeting
2.	5a.	HT to provide Governors with list of link roles, responsibilities and contacts	HT	Post-meeting
3.	5c.	To check with DM re her intentions to remain on the Board	HT/Chair	Post-meeting
4.	7.	Governors to consider chasing NHS Trust and/or MP for progress on new NHS mental health provision	All Govs	Post-meeting
5.	7.	Agreed extra staff payments to be arranged – Chair to send details to SBM and HT to check with HR regarding tax implications	HT	Post-meeting
6.	10a.	HT to prepare action plan in response to Audit Report	HT	Post-meeting
7.	10g.	SBM to action move back to Stockport Homes	SBM	Post-meeting

Draft