

WESTMORLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES**SUMMER TERM 2023**Date: 15th June

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 (remote), Ms J Shaw, Mrs W Hill, Mrs Pauline Robinson, Mr C Murray
and Ms Anee Gupta

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs T King

Governor Support Officer

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The meeting opened at 3:37pm.

Governors were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair. The meeting was quorate with 9/11 governors in attendance. Apologies for absence were received from Donna Maskell 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. The Chair advised that dates for future meetings will be discussed towards the end of the meeting; tonight's meeting is taking place the first week back after the two-week half term which is too soon and needs to be considered when setting next year's dates. Further, if possible, the summer FGB could be held later to coincide with SATs results being published. Governors agreed that was a good idea.

The Chair noted that documents have been circulated on GovernorHub, but he appreciated some governors may not have had a full opportunity to review everything yet. If governors are unsure about anything they can approach the Chair or HT with questions.

At 3:40pm Ms Newton joined the meeting remotely.

With regards to the previous minutes, the Chair advised that the action points will be discussed at today's meeting and the minutes published in due course.

Governors were reminded to tick on GovernorHub to confirm that they have read documents. The Chair advised that when OFSTED inspect, they may look at data and governor activity and it is a clear way to show that governors have seen and reviewed documents.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

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

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

4. **CORE BUSINESS**

a) **Actions & Matters Arising**

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

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

b) **Approval of Inset Days 2023-24**

This item was discussed at agenda point 7.

c) **Pay Committee Membership**

The Pay committee membership was considered and agreed as:

- Mrs W Hill, Mr K Thompson and Ms J Shaw.

d) **Policy Approval**

This item was discussed at agenda point 7.

The Supporting Pupils' Medical Conditions in Schools policy was considered and APPROVED by the governing board. Dealt with in HT Report.

e) **Safeguarding Audit**

The Headteacher updated governors on the completion of the Safeguarding Audit.

5. **BOARD/STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT**

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

It was confirmed that individual governors have now been linked with different areas of the school and the HT Report sets these links out.

b) **End of Term of Office**

The Chair asked the GSO to provide an updated list of TOO. ACTION

The Chair noted that he has one year left on 4-year term. The Chair advised governors that he may not continue as Chair next year so governors should start considering succession plans. One option may be that if a governor is interested in the position of Chair, they could express their interest next term. Governors were invited to contact the Chair if interested. The Chair noted that a smooth transition is important.

The Board agreed to decide on the Chair and Vice Chair positions in the Autumn term.

c) Board Vacancies

None

d) Terms of Office for Chair and Vice Chair

Governors duly AGREED a continuation of the current arrangements. Terms of office to remain at one year from the date of the autumn term meeting 2023; the Chair and Vice Chair to remain in office until the date of the autumn term meeting 2024.

e) Expressions of Interests in the Roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Chairs of Committees

Governors were invited to give some thought to the roles and contact the Clerk prior to the autumn term full governing board meeting in order to express an interest. ACTION

f) Feedback on Governor Visits

This item was discussed at agenda point 7.

6. BRIEFING PAPERS FROM STOCKPORT LOCAL AUTHORITY

- Governance update and governor development
- Young Carers
- Improving School Attendance
- Early Years Update
- SEND Update
- DfE Updates for Schools

Governors noted the updates within the papers.

- A Stocktake of our Outcomes in Stockport 22-23 and the Impact of the Pandemic

Governors considered the following questions within the paper:

- ***Does our school data show that any of these issues apply to us locally at school level?***
- ***Are we addressing these issues strategically as part of our school development planning and what is the impact of the actions we are taking?***
- ***Do we need to do anything differently to ensure all our children (and those that want to join us) are fully included, are welcomed and feel they belong in our school?***

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

7. HEADTEACHER'S TERMLY REPORT

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

The HT advised that attendance is 93.3% at this stage of the year, it was 93.1% in the last report. Attendance is not yet at the 95% target, but it is an improving picture. The school has a raft of measures in place and Amanda is undertaking significant work on attendance. The situation is not helped by the LA only undertaking the legal aspects. The HT has met with the LA to advise that their offer is not working for Westmorland but there has been little change to this. The school have put significant effort into improving things, including sending regular letters and other measures to help build the case that a EWO would use to take action.

The school will analyse the data with specific circumstances removed. **ACTION**

Have any of the cases gone to court?

The HT advised that one case did, but it made a mockery of the court system given the size of the fine. It had no impact on that pupil's future attendance and the EWO is now reluctant to re-engage that family.

The HT advised that come pupils have taken extended leave to go abroad, including one instance of a pupil being absent for 12 weeks. There is an ongoing issue of pupils remaining on roll and being detrimental to attendance when they have moved out of the area. The school maintains contact with these families to ensure safety until they stop.

Can the school remove pupils from the roll after a certain number of weeks' absence?

The HT advised that previously, schools could remove pupils from the roll after 12 weeks absence, but they are no longer encouraged to do this.

The HT advised that there are 505 children on role, which is one of the largest figures for this time of year. The HT anticipates the figure will be higher this time next year as the school is only losing 39 children from Year 6. There has been a healthy intake into the Nursery and Reception classes, which is where the money lies. The HT noted very low numbers this year into this class, which was the same across local schools.

The HT referred to the safeguarding report prepared by James and noted there are some very high numbers in there. Child protection is the highest level of support offered informally and there are now 13 children (11 families) receiving this support in school. The HT noted this is the highest figure he can recall, at least for the last 5 or 6 years. The complexities the school is seeing if family situations are significant and often upsetting.

What is the difference between "LAC" and "other LAC"?

The "LAC" figure is looked after children in Stockport and the "other LAC" figure is looked after children who reside outside of the LA.

Governors were advised that the situations for the LAC children and their carers, are really complex and in many cases the child's situation is very unsettled. The HT noted that a LAC child would, by virtue of lived experience, be challenging to support and the school has seen an increase in the number of placements breaking down. The HT noted that it calls into question whether the assessment process is right for becoming a foster parent, given the number of placements that are breaking down. The HT queried whether a letter from the governors might help to set-out the school's concerns?

The issues would still exist. Even the very best of foster carers will struggle for long periods of time and with the complexities at play.

The HT noted that Amanda had recently completed her DSL training and will now be Senior Learning Mentor rather than Learning Mentor. The school now has 4 designated

safeguarding leads, the HT, DH, Amanda and James. Amanda and the DH are now Operation Encompass trained.

Staff have undertaken the DSL network training and have started the use of skin maps to locate children's bruising etc. It is a useful tool that is under-used throughout the LA. It provides a useful record should matters go to court.

The HT noted that James has instigated supervision meetings within his team, which provides staff with an opportunity to talk about cases and suggest other ways forward. Informal supervision happens each day with SLT/DSL feeding into discussions.

Amanda has had 34 pre-TAC meetings, which has had positive impacts on the attendance of those pupils.

Behaviour is good throughout the school. There is one pupil working with the inclusion service and there have been some short-term exclusions. There have been 16 additional incidents of bullying since the Spring meeting and staff have deal with those as they arise. Those incidents are generally around name-calling and occasional physical altercations. There are instances of parents expecting the school to deal with incidents that have happened outside of school; staff will sometimes take action if those same behaviours are being mirrored within school.

Governors had been invited to look around school, meet with subject leaders etc and were invited to give a brief update.

Mrs J Shaw

Mrs Shaw came into school to develop her understanding of correct safeguarding procedure. Mrs Shaw spent the morning with James, and they have prepared a list of action points to consider. Mrs Shaw will revisit this term. Mrs Shaw noted it was lovely to hear how things are progressing.

Mrs Hill came into school to meet with some of the curriculum leads. Spoke with one of the teachers about Art, who was really enthusiastic and had compiled a folder to show what the children had been doing and the future plans. Mrs Hill also listened to a Maths lesson; the teacher was fabulous and explained things really well to allow the children to understand different way of working. Mrs Hill walked around the school and went into each classroom. The HT clarified that the subject lead for Maths is Tom Finn, who is currently teaching Year 5. Mr Finn has spent a lot of time on Maths within school and will be meeting with the LA Advisor soon to talk about his vision of Maths. The LA Advisor will undertake an observation of the teaching of Maths across the school to verify what Mr Finn has seen. The HT noted that Maths was a big project to pick-up after the success of Kathy Williams, the previous lead. Maths is successful across the school but it's about consistency. Mr Finn will breathe new life into the subject with the Mastery approach; he has already written a planning proforma and has completed a pupil voice activity and scrutinised the books.

Mrs Gupta came into school to visit the well-being lead. They discussed the questions that are sent out weekly, the responses, how they are they audited etc. The school has not received any feedback from the parents so Mrs Gupta discussed what more can be done to promote the survey. It was discussed that the children have a lot of ideas and a different outlook on things. Mrs Gupta is to arrange another meeting to discuss issues further.

Mrs Robinson came into school to meet with Jennifer Grey, the lead on EAL. Jennifer advised that she was working towards a Silver award around EAL and has undertaken a significant amount of work. As part of the award, she had to compile a file of evidence but had also created a number of displays around school. Mrs Robinson noted that even where the child in question does not speaking a different language, they will be identified as being related to someone who does. Jennifer's work was assessed, and Mrs Robinson noted there was some "nit-picking" on small issues. The assessor visited the school and viewed all the work Jennifer had done. The school had arranged a party for Eid, at which

Mrs Robinson acted as a dinner lady, and the children and their parents loved it. All the children who celebrate Eid could bring a friend and they were provided with presents and amazing food. The organisers asked for feedback from the families and the only things raised were that the music could be better, the party last longer and more decorations. Next time, the school is going to bring the community in to provide guidance on the music and decorations. The HT noted that the school has also put green boxes together for children who are international new arrivals in class, which include play activities that won't overload children cognitively to ease them into the curriculum. Mrs Robinson commented that she had been working with one of the children who used one of these boxes and can see the benefits.

Has it changed from EFL to EAL?

The HT confirmed that it has.

Mrs Newton came into school to visit Jen Rowland and Sarah Beckingham to look at how online safety is covered. The PHSE and IT curriculums work together to cover the themes and ensure repetition throughout the year to reinforce learning. Sarah showed Mrs Newton the new government guidance, which gives more advice on online safety. Sarah is already in the process of mapping lessons to ensure the priorities in the new guidance are being covered. Although she is following the curriculum, all the materials are bespoke, and lessons are specifically planned to meet the needs of Westmorland children. Mrs Robinson also looked at Purple Mash and how it is used to make sure the children have age-appropriate access etc. The school has an account with the National College, who provide resources for CPD. Teachers and parents can access resources but there are also courses for governors to do some online safeguarding courses. Mrs Beckingham will share the log in details with governors. **ACTION**

Through Purple Mash, the school can also catch incidents of inappropriate use of the internet. The HT clarified it a system called Smoothwall, and it monitors computer usage on and off site and looks for any signs of abuse i.e. bullying, wellbeing, swearing, drug use etc. Can trace which children are involved via their log-ins. The software produces data for the school, which Sarah wants to be shared with her and Mrs Newton so that trends can be identified. The software is currently set at level 3, but it might be worth dropping this to level 2 as there are very few incidents coming through at level 3.

Governors were thanked for their contributions, and it was agreed that another round of governor visits should be arranged pre-Christmas.

With regards to INSET days, the HT advised that Twilights had been arranged for last INSET day of term. INSET days for next year were APPROVED as 4th and 5th September, 28th March and 29th and 30th July.

With regards to the Pupil Premium (PP) statement for the next academic year, the key thing for governors to note is that the funding has gone up as Amanda and Karla have targeted those children that had not applied for free school meals in the early years. The HT recorded his thanks for their efforts in this.

Turning to school organisation for next year, there will be 1 Nursery class and 2 Reception classes. The organisation for KS2 is slightly different, there will be 2 classes for Years 3, 4 and 5 but across Year 6, there will be 3 classes in the morning and then 2 classes in the afternoon for foundation subjects. In staffing, Cathy Williams has re-joined Year 6 to provide support using tutor-led funding.

With regards to the EAL Award mentioned above, the Bronze Award is almost confirmed but the school are unclear why this was not completed on the day; it has caused a lot of work for Jen and the school want to know why they were led to believe that they could apply for Silver.

The school has been awarded a Gold Green Trees Award, which has been led by Emma Leyland. It was noted that this Award forged incredible links with the local community; the children have been out to care homes planting plants etc.

The school has also received a Music Mark Award for 2022/23.

With regards to recruitment, the HT has been through several rounds of interviews and the school has changed the process, for instance, asking applicants to develop lesson plans on arrival, using random items as prompts. This new approach provides a very good idea of who would work well with the children. Three very strong candidates have been recruited. Morgan, an ECT, has already started, Jen Parker, a 3rd year teacher and Jess O'Doyle. The school has also recruited 3 Teaching Assistants through an agency. Recruiting for these positions has been difficult and the school does not lose out by recruiting through an agency.

With regards to future appointments, the school want to appoint a Parent Support Worker. There are some very hard to reach parents who think that education is only down to the school. The Parent Support Worker role will work directly with parents and children doing some modelling work and encouraging them to engage with their child's learning. The HT has identified potential candidates for interview. Governors were happy to APPROVE this appointment.

If successful, would either of those candidates require training for the role?

The HT clarified that both candidates have social care/mentoring backgrounds.

At this point a confidential discussion a held.

With regards to policies, the HT reviewed the Behaviour and Discipline Policy and strengthened it. The SLT have implemented consistent negative consequences for actions, which have been impactful. The HT explained the new peg chart system in place with 3 stages: (1) Westmorland Warrior (2) Think/Change (3) Time Out. Part of the success of the new system is the de-escalation the child gets in moving their peg on the chart; it provides an opportunity to break the cycle of their behaviour. Governors duly APPROVED the Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

Turning to H&S, Mr Murray and the HT are due to meet to discuss the fire doors. In the Early Years room there are no faults, but some doors should not be designated as fire doors. With regards to a building update, the school have extended the warranty with Seddons in respect of the underfloor heating, which remains patchy in performance. The thermostats around the school are battery operated and have a very short shelf life. The solar panels have been installed at a cost of £41k, which was agreed previously.

The HT asked governors whether they felt there should be any unspent funds at the end of the financial year or if they were happy to get the solar panels extended? Governors AGREED they were happy for any additional funds to be spent on more solar panels.

The HT confirmed that the school is checking with the insurance provider whether the heat pumps and panels on the roof are insured or is that needs to be adapted.

Is the underfloor system a wet system? Can it be flushed?

The HT confirmed it is a wet system and those measure have been tried. Initially, it was thought that the underperformance of the underfloor heating was down to the lack of power of the pumps in the boiler house. It has slightly improved with the replacement of those pumps, but it is still not working properly. Further, the temperature does not come on at correct times. Seddons are being held to account by the LA to get it right. None of the heating or electrical works have been of cost to the school.

The HT confirmed that the school did not lose any days of learning through strike action. Initially the school had 8 members of staff striking but by the final strike day that figure was down to 1. The HT felt it was very important to keep school open for the children.

Can the school offer remote learning for future strike days?

The HT advised that a number of children throughout the school would not have logged onto remote learning sessions.

With regards to SEND, the HT noted that Liz (SENCO) is amazing. Liz has transformed the Nurture provision, held SEN staff meetings and is now teaching an increasing amount in the Nurture room alongside Karla. The HT noted that managing the workload is complex in the room and Liz has been able to facilitate change and develop working practices with the TAs. Karla advised governors that the timetable has changed; targets in Nurture are very English and Maths focussed in the morning, with a discrete Phonics session. The 2 Year 2 pupils who did not pass the Phonics screening in Year 1 re-sat the assessment and passed.

There are future actions for SEN, especially around the use of inclusion files, which contain all the information for a cohort.

In terms of magic moments, Liz provided Jacqui Terry with the SEN support plans she had prepared, and Jacqui sent an email celebrating the plans. Another magic moment was 3 girls in Year 6 who attended a speaking competition run by the Rotary Club against other schools and won a cup. Pupils from the school have been attending this competition for 14 years and this was the first win. Moreover, one of the children had previously been selectively non-verbal so this was a massive achievement.

The HT asked if any governors would like to attend the Chester Zoo trip on 27th November. Mrs Robinson and Mrs Hill volunteered.

The HT was thanked for his Report and there were no further questions.

8. WELLBEING

This item was addressed in agenda point 7.

9. TEACHING & LEARNING

a) Committee Minutes

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 18th May were noted by the governing board.

b) Ratification of Policies

There were no policies to ratify.

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 18th May were noted by the governing board.

b) Ratification of Policies

There were no policies to ratify.

c) Approval of Finalised 2023-24 Budget

The HT circulated an adapted budget to include an additional staff role of parent support worker and some other changes. The budget remained well within costings for this current financial year and governors duly APPROVED the budget.

d) Budget Update

As above.

e) Evaluation of Pupil Premium, Sports Grant, Tutor-Led Spending

Governors were advised that the school is spending more on SALT going forward, resulting in SALT assistance for 4.5 days a week. The school asked for 5 days assistance, but they want to provide additional training for SALT staff. The additional SALT assistant will ensure all pupils have the required support.

The balanced system SALT review, due to start in September, will change the way SALT work but the people operating that project are not communicating with SALT. As a consequence, the school need someone in-house to deal with SALT.

f) Residential Trips

The following residential trips were considered and APPROVED by the governing board subject to all appropriate Risk Assessments being in place:

- Castleton (mid-July). The HT advised that all paperwork had been submitted to the LA for this residential.

The HT advised that there is an adventure trip booked for next year, which does not need to be signed-off yet.

g) Local Authority Buybacks

The school is with 360 for general facilities management. All other buybacks remain the same.

h) Scheme of Delegation

Governors considered and duly APPROVED the Scheme of Delegation 2023-24.

i) Finance Manual

This was deferred to the Finance committee meeting.

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

Mr C Murray and the HT are arranging a meeting before the end of ter.

The HT advised governors there are no accidents or near-misses to be aware of.

12. DATES

a) Full Governing Board (3:30pm)

- 12th October
- 1st February
- 11th July

b) Committee Meetings

- Finance – 28th September 1pm
- Curriculum – 28th September 2:30pm
- Finance - 18th January 1pm
- Curriculum – 18th January 2:30pm
- Finance - 27th June 1pm
- Curriculum – 27th June 2:30pm

With regards to the Curriculum meetings, the HT asked governors if there were any particular subjects, they would appreciate updates on. Governors requested presentations on Maths, Literacy and EAL initially.

 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 5:17 pm.

WESTMORLAND SCHOOL
SUMMER TERM 2023 GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING ACTION POINTS

ACTION NUMBER	MINUTE POINT	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION FOR	DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
1.	5b.	GSO to provide up-to-date list of TOOs	GSO	Post-meeting
2.	5e.	Governors to consider roles and express any interest to GSO	FGB	Post-meeting
3.	7.	School will analyse the attendance data with specific circumstances removed	HT	Post-meeting
4.	7.	Mrs Beckingham will share National College log-in details with governors.	Mrs Beckingham	Post-meeting