

**WEST COKER C OF E VC PRIMARY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 23 March 2022 AT 18:00**

In attendance: P. Hyland (Head), J. Williams (Acting Chair), H. James, R. Sibthorpe, C. Murphy (Clerk)

Absent: P. Reddish (Chair), R. Aitken, L. Boersma and N. White.

1. New Governors

No new governors attended the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from P. Reddish.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND NOTICE OF CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There were no declarations, and no confidential items were raised.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY

No items were raised

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th January 2022 were agreed to be an accurate record and were forwarded to the chair to be signed.

6. Matters Arising

5.1 Declarations of Interests Forms. Many of these were still outstanding. The Clerk would send out new forms which should be completed and returned to the Clerk asap. **ACTION: ALL**

5.2 Pen Portraits were still outstanding from most Governors. They should be sent to the Clerk as soon as possible.

ACTION: ALL

5.3 Arson Policy. The Headteacher confirmed policy was up to date.

7. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

An up-to-date version had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Headteacher indicated that the colour coding of the sections illustrated the following:

Black – had been completed but was waiting for appropriate reflection.

Purple – was completed and working

Green – was working very well.

Focused monitoring provides evidence regarding the implementation of the curriculum and its coverage, so that the leaders know the extent to which it is providing balanced, rich and engaging learning opportunities. At present, HT not confident the evidence is there to back this up.

Improvements in the teaching of handwriting across the school ensure that all children are developing a legible and fluent writing style. A particular focus on EYFS and KS1. This will move through the school as time goes on into KS2.

Cross-curricular links are successfully assisting in raising standards in reading and writing. PR raised concerns about children not knowing exactly what it is they are writing. PH not worried if children cannot articulate this to OFSTED as happy that the children understand the work they are producing. JW expressed she is supportive of cross-curricular teaching in students learning.

Staff new to the school are well supported – the new 1:1 teacher had taken part in lessons and interactions with staff and pupils.

Teachers use the pupil tracking system to support them in identifying any pupils at risk of underachieving and ensuring the provision to rectify this is established. Headteacher and LC moderate at the end of each term.

The data manager (Headteacher) tracks pupil's performance using SIMS to ensure consistent and accelerated progress for identified individuals/groups.

Assessment of the previous school structure identified Phonics and Early Reading as an area that required development. Weaknesses were recognised in the teaching, assessment and resourcing. HT commented phonics teaching is currently going well. HJ to come into school to help with phonics implementation.

The current judgement on leadership and management would be inadequate due to the reliance on leadership from outside and the fact that governance has not held leaders to account. The HT is making improvements, but an effective governing body must urgently engage with a systematic monitoring programme for the school and provide regular feedback challenge and support to the HT and staff. HT pressed the issue of Governor visits to recommence now Covid restrictions have eased. A calendar for Governor visits is to be renewed.

It was decided, and agreed, that all governors would divide and 'champion' one of the four priorities of the School Development Plan. JW to create a timetable and calendar for Governor visits into school relating to each priority they are 'championing'. It is essential that Governor visits become a regular occurrence to ensure that the schools management structure is an effective tool for leading and managing the school into a successful future.

P1 – JW to champion

P2 – HJ to champion

P3 – PR to champion

P4 – LB, NW & RA to champion

8. 8.1. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

This had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The following points were made:

- One Year 1 and one Year 5 pupil had left and both pupils' parents cited the size of the school among their reasons for leaving.
- A delayed starter has joined Reception Class.
- 4 children at SEN Support Level in KS2 and 1 EHCP (MSB3). It is anticipated that one child will move from SEN to EHCP at some point in the future.
- 1 EHCP (MSB4) in KS1 – Delayed Reception child. Started as expected on 28th Feb 2022. Progress made is impressive and her timetable is being increased quicker than anticipated.
- It was confirmed that there had been no pupil exclusions.
- Attendance was above the Government published national figure of 92% at this time. One child with poor attendance (82.4%) usually due to feeling ill. There is a family history of a severe gastric disorder and the Mother has made a GP appointment, but this will not be until the end of April.
- A 'Reason for Lateness' book has been introduced for parents arriving after 9am. This has resulted in an improvement in the number of children arriving after the register has closed at 9am. A Governor raised the concern over GDPR issue with this and Headteacher suggested the school secretary would take lead and be the only person to write in the book to prevent any GDPR issues occurring in the future.
- There had been one Safeguarding concern recorded.
- The Thrive programme was working well with 8 pupils involved and 1 other in pastoral support. RS, Pastoral Lead, has returned to work and is working with the Headteacher to embed Zones of Regulation.
- PH met with Safeguarding staff from LLE school to complete the Safeguarding Audit. PH also met with JW (Safeguarding Governor) to complete the Governors questions in the audit. LC and PH are now both up to date with Safeguarding Lead Training.
- The current staffing arrangements and changes were noted. Details around the crossing patrol were noted.
- There were concerns about small numbers in the Breakfast Club and After School Club, but it was felt these sessions offered parents a choice and would potentially help attract new pupils.
- Whole school worship in West Coker Church is currently having fewer parents attend.

- In the region of £150 raised from successful fund-raising days for Red Nose day and Ukraine.
- The Toddler Group has opened successfully with numbers near capacity for the first 3 weeks.
- As it currently stands, no new Children's worker has been appointed to replace Mrs Wooton.
- Playground equipment was inspected on 18/01/22. The only issue was the state of the tarmac around the edge of the rubber safety surface. Recommendation currently is to continue monitoring.
- The forthcoming list of events was noted.
- Community involvement deemed vital if school pupil numbers are to increase. JW queried whether Open Days were in existence. HT & RS confirmed (Pre-Covid) Open Days were not very successful due to low turnout of attendees.
- Governors suggested leaving school brochures at local doctors' surgeries, new housing developments etc to help try and advertise the school.

The Headteacher was thanked for his comprehensive report.

8.2. CURRICULUM UPDATE

All children are working hard and producing quality pieces of work in all subjects. Efforts and the unusual length of term seem to be having an effect with many children showing signs of tiredness, especially in KS1.

Cornerstones curriculum is being used fully in both classes, but this is revealing some gaps in its content.

Book monitoring has taken place internally and by the LLE and SEP. The work demonstrates the level and depth required in all year groups, but presentation needs to be improved. KS2 is battling a legacy of poor handwriting. As the teaching of cursive style from reception embeds, this will lead to an improvement throughout all year groups. 'Catch-up' continues to address weakness in the days learning.

Year 6 'SATs' groups are showing promising results.

Zones of Regulation being trialled within KS2, with a view to expand it to KS1 once working properly. RS and PH are visiting North Curry CE VC Primary School (24/03/22 where this is already operating very successfully.

Parents Evening had been well attended and it was rewarding for teachers to be able to tell parents face to face how well their children are doing.

8.3 FINANCE REPORT.

The 22/23 Budget Report had been prepared by Finance (G. Hamlet, SCC), who joined the meeting via a Teams call at 18:34. The budget forecast a deficit of £8,525 but hoping, if carried forward, it may well decrease which will help to support the school in future years. Enquires had been made at County level, however, Growth Funding is all that is available as the school currently doesn't qualify for any other grants. Low pupil numbers remained a concern for the future. PH mentioned the possibility of a new starter who was due to view the school later that week. The importance of Breakfast Club and After School Club was discussed and its expense ruled an essential outgoing if the school was going to attract new pupils by having 'wrap around care' on offer to parents and pupils. PH informed board that in September, if numbers at the clubs were still low, the staff would no longer be contracted for hours of Breakfast/After School Club hoping to make a saving for the school. A copy of the Budget Report had not been circulated prior to the meeting but was reviewed during the meeting and was signed off.

8.4 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE.

A briefing paper had been circulated prior to the meeting from the 'Role of the Governance Board' Course on the 17th of March 2022 attended by Health & Safety Governor HJ. Reiterating the Governance Boards responsibilities to ensure policy & procedures are being followed; staff are trained in H&S; there is a sensible approach to H&S in school; they work closely with HT. HJ is to make contact with the Local Authority Health & Safety contact to create a checklist (Terms of Reference). A new H&S Policy is to be updated on the school's website.

8.5 VISITS INTO SCHOOL.

- Safeguarding Governor JW met with PH on 28/02/22. During the visit the 'Safeguarding Audit' was discussed, in particular, the GB aspect of the audit. An action plan was created to address highlighted areas as actions. These are:

- i. Ensure all staff have read Part 1 and Annexe A of KCSIE.
- ii. JW to complete Governor Safeguarding Training.
- iii. Support Staff have the appropriate safeguarding training.
- iv. The school follows the guidance on remote learning.

The Headteachers workload was also discussed during the visit. JW suggested PH should block out large chunks of time where crucial work can be completed with sole focus without being disturbed. JW suggested Fridays when TA can cover.

JW/PH also discussed implementing the vision of the school, ways of sharing the vision with all stakeholders and ways this can be done. PH to produce 'Vision Statements' better suited to the school's visionary. A meeting is to be held with parents and governors invited to help create a new, fresh vision.

- PH and PR met on 16/02/22 to catch up on development of the curriculum. Curriculum and HS Link Governor HJ also attended the visit. They went to the KS1 classroom, the children were doing some maths work and were all engaged with the tasks. There were a lot of displays and working walls which showed recent work and current topics, the children had resources to assist the work they were doing. They looked at several books which showed steady progress, PH mentioned some issues with the Maths resources that sometimes causes a little confusion. KS2 classroom observed, again, the lesson was on task, behaviour was very good. The Working Walls were relevant, and pupils could explain the work on them. Several books were looked at which again showed steady progress, it was noted by PH that there is a legacy issue with presentation in books which the school is constantly working on to improve. There was evidence on longer lengths of writing.

The classroom looked busy in its appearance and conducive to a good learning environment.

The school had been doing some practice SATs work and the data was looking encouraging.

The school were also supporting the children in test skills and resilience.

- 03/03/22 PH met with SEP John Jeffrey to evaluate the current position of the school following a SEP visit in November 21 and to revise and/or agree new challenges for leadership and management, and to identify any external support that might be required. SEP Representative JJ concluded that Safeguarding is effective. The revised, two class structure is working appropriately. The HT has established a cohesive staff team. All indications are that the school remains viable in the short to medium terms and to ensure long term viability, pupil numbers must begin to grow and the reputation of the school in the community must continue to improve. The LLE model of support continues to be effective. The leadership of the Headteacher is developing strongly and there is evidence of impact. NPQH has started and described as positive and of benefit by the HT. Concise Self Evaluation Form and School Development Plan documents are in place which inform school improvement. Systematic monitoring is on-going by leaders and developing by the LGB in order to inform the SEF. This needs to be further deepened and embedded by Governors. The HT has conducted Performance Management with all staff, based on whole school targets. The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve and provides a secure foundation for further development. Pupil books remain an area of focus for improvement, so that they more effectively evidence pupil progress through a sequence of learning. As yet, books at KS2 are not presented well enough. Learning environments are well cared for and are providing a safe and purposeful space for pupils.

The school is embedding the Cornerstones Curriculum model to provide a framework/structure and to ensure pupils progress through a sequence of skills in all subjects. However, this is a complex issue, especially at KS2.

The LGB must continue to embed its role in monitoring provision and holding the HT and others to account.

The school would be vulnerable to a judgment of Requires Improvement at inspection at this time. This could be an Inadequate judgment if continued progress is not sustained, and the IMPACT of improvements is not evidenced.

In the evaluation of the school, many aspects are moving from RI to Good. However, so many aspects of the school's provision are in the early stages of implementation, and time is needed for them to embed and evidence IMPACT before they may be judged as GOOD.

- PR attended the core group meeting on 15/03/2022 and reported it to be an extremely encouraging meeting which complimented PH on the work that has been happening over recent months and the improvements that have started to be embedded across the school.

The school now has a strong staff team that understand the priorities and developing its confidence. The HT continues to strongly develop his role. He is developing confidence in the management/organisational aspects of the school, whilst also beginning to think strategically

and lead the school effectively.

He has an ongoing and effective relationship with the LLE, using this role to develop his skill set, and to improve and develop the school.

The NPQH course [Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership (CEFEL)] started in December. Governors and others must remain mindful of the workload and well-being of the HT. Governors need to visit the school and actively question and challenge where applicable.

8.6 Well Being

Headteacher reported both parents and children were tired – A reflection of an unhappy world in general in current times. (Cost of living crisis, Covid recovery). An action group for staff, children and parents to be set up to illustrate to parents what children are learning in school. To introduce 'Zones of Regulations' where children learn about their own feelings, giving the children the skill-set enabling them to be 'ready to learn'. Headteacher requested Governors to attend.

HT is happy in school; however, his workload prevents him from having time to update online systems. Intending on taking Fridays to enable him to dedicate time solely to HT Role. JW suggested he works from home on this day to help ensure he has minimal distractions. This was deemed not practical due to staffing levels and HT will work from his office in school instead.

8.7 SEND

SEN information circulated by Headteacher before meeting. 'SEN in a nutshell'.

One child has joined with an EHCP and is under the care of Paediatrician and SaLT. One referral to the ASC/ADHD Pathway took place.

SENDCo has attended Preston EP meetings and SENCo Network meetings. An EP assessment took place this term. Governors found this illustration helpful.

Also see details above from JW's visit on 28/02/22.

8.8 Performance Management

Covered within HT's Report.

8.9 SIAMS Update

Pauline Dodds to come into school to help prepare readiness for SIAMS.

9. POLICY REVIEWS

Headteacher confirmed the Arson policy is up to date.

It was noted that Headteacher would appreciate acknowledgment and a response from all Governors upon receipt of policy reviews moving forward. ACTION – Clerk/Governors

10. CLERKS' BRIEFING

The Clerk reported that she had joined in the online session held earlier that day, 23rd January 2022. The presentation slides and other notes were to be circulated to Governors once received by the Clerk. The Clerk added that the following items had been emphasised:

The School Financial Value Standard Return (SFVS) was due to be submitted to the Local Authority by 31/03/22 but that date has now been extended until 29/04/22.

The withdrawal of the @educ.gov.uk email address was confirmed as the 1 April 2022. The Headteacher confirmed that alternative arrangements were in place and the Clerk will request that the school secretary re-circulates log-in details for all Governors.

11. Any Other Business

Academisation – Headteacher has spoken to Diocese as thought potential Academisation of the school would bring much needed support for the school itself and its functioning as a whole. PH has emailed John Abbott (CEO of the Richard Huish Education Group). The schools within this group are not being 'standardised' and remaining independent, something PH & Governors feel is vitally important for the school to maintain. PH also researching into other Academies to see what might potentially best suit the school. 2 x Governor training to complete. PH to send link.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Proposed date of next meetings: Wednesday 18th May 2022 18:00
Wednesday 13th July 2022 18:00

Commitments needed to ensure meeting is quorate.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm

Action Sheet**Actions from meeting dated 23rd March 2022**

| Minute | Action | By Whom | STATUS |
|---------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| | Completed Declarations of Interests forms to be returned to the Clerk as soon as possible. | ALL | Outstanding |
| | Pen Portraits to be sent to the Clerk for uploading to the website. | ALL | Outstanding |
| | Arson Policy to be checked and circulated. | Headteacher | Completed Closed meeting 23/03/2022 |
| | <u>Check SCR (April)</u> | <u>JW</u> | |
| | <u>Create file of Safeguarding evidence in preparation for OFSTED. (April)</u> | <u>JW/Headteacher</u> | |

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| | <u>Complete the Governor Safeguarding Training.</u> | <u>JW</u> | |
| | <u>2 Governors to attend Headteachers Mid-Term Performance Review (May/June)</u> | <u>LB,JW,HJ</u> | |
| | <u>Create Timetable for Governor visits for 4 Core SDP Priorities by end of April.</u> | <u>JW</u> | |
| | <u>Governors to attend 'Well-being Action Group'</u> | | |
| | <u>Governors to contact Clerk to confirm attendance at future FGB Meetings to ensure meetings are quorate.</u> | <u>ALL</u> | |
| | <u>2 x Governor Training – Academisation. PH to send link.</u> | <u>Headteacher</u> | |
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