



St. Paul's Walden Primary School, Whitwell

Minutes of the Governors' Day

Thursday 25th April 2019

Key: √ = Present.

Governor	Category	Committee	Specific governor role	Term Starts	Term Ends	25th April 2019
Mrs Nancy Adshead Head Teacher	HT	Standards & Resources		01/11/18		√
Mr Paul Dawes - Vice-Chair	PAR	Resources (Chair) & Standards	English/GDPR	4/11/15	3/11/19	√
Mr David Rowsell	PAR	Resources	H&S/PE	11/02/16	10/02/20	
Mrs Jo Roberts	PAR	Resources	Curriculum/ Communication /Deputy DPO	20/1/17	19/1/21	√
Mrs Vicky Walrond	PAR	Resources	Behaviour	25/9/17	24/9/21	√
Mrs Sue Carter	Co-opted	Standards	Curriculum	4/11/15	3/11/19	√
Mr John Norman	Co-opted	Resources	CP	11/02/16	10/02/20	
Mrs Anne Reid - Chair	Co-opted	Standards & Resources	SEN/ Leadership	2/4/19	1/4/23	√
Ms Elaine Petch	LA	Standards	CLA/CP	30/10/17	29/10/21	√
Mr Jonathan Bailes	Staff	Resources		11/3/19	10/3/23	√
Dr Asha Herbert	Associate Member	Standards	Behaviour	30/10/17	29/10/21	√
Mr Matt Jackson	Associate Member	Standards	Communication /Early Years	07/11/18	06/11/19	

Clerk: Mrs Priscilla Simmons.

Mr Matt Jackson, Mr John Norman and Mr David Rowsell, had sent apologies.

The timetable for the Governors' Day had been loaded to GovernorHub in advance of the day and was received with thanks. This was accompanied by the following documents:

- Navigating the Educational Moral Maze, The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education, Pathfinder Resource Pack 2019 (which included Board Development activities, Case Studies & Ethical Audit).
- Governors for Schools 'Four things governors should prepare (or know) before meeting Ofsted inspectors'.
- Skills audit for governors based on the DfE competency framework.
- Results of parents' evening consultation Spring 2019.
- Timetable of year's business.

9 - 10am - Consulting the staff and children:

Governors to meet staff and groups of children to ask the following questions:

- What do you like about the school?
- If you could change one thing about the school, what would it be?
- Does the school help you to be 'happier' and to take care of yourself? How?
- If you had a friend moving to the village/looking for a job, would you recommend this school to them?

Governors reported that they had met with teachers, teaching assistants and groups of children, to ask the questions above. Feedback from the consultations was as follows (staff comments grouped together for anonymity, and classes identified where this helps to explain answers):

What do you like about the school?

Staff - The whole community, being part of and valued in the staff group, moving around classes is good, the Headteacher is accessible, the community feel, the classes and school grounds are good, nice surroundings, the Senco process, better communication now, very happy here, staff work well as a team; this is less stress now, wouldn't change anything now, like the community/team, all fine (better than it was), very welcoming Headteacher, teaching here is creative, mixed classes work well here; the registers are alphabetical.

Children - everything, friends, the food is good, teachers nice, snowball fights, ipads, the new home corner (Willows), drawing, writing, playing on the grass, friendly, sharing, football, kitchen garden, trips, library, clubs, sports day, camp out, disco, Easter egg hunt, maths, enrichment, new dinners, behaviour is better.

If you could change one thing about the school, what would it be?

Staff - More regular TA meetings, PPA time would be better if not on Friday afternoons (this is not an optimum time), the parents don't read emails, more storage, hall is dated, more TA support,

Good to be Green is OK for KS1, but higher in KS2, it may be less effective. In Year 6 children's attitudes change and it can be more difficult to motivate them; some staff hand reflection sheets to parents, but not all parents like this.

Behaviour is still an issue. Disruptive children in top two classes mentioned. Management of this, including use of the timer, was discussed by governors; teachers have been given back the responsibility to deal with behaviour.

Enrichment would work better in shorter sessions. Governors discussed if and how the enrichment sessions

could be changed.

Children - Work should be harder (Rowans), a bigger lunch hall, a climbing frame, own clothes and candy every day, have a statue of Cristiano Ronaldo, more play equipment, a swimming pool, a pet (guide dog), chickens, order of lessons (Oaks); maths when waking up is not great, more art, repaint the friend bench, House Captains should have more responsibility and we miss the Friday assembly with the House Captains, would like to be on the field more, more challenge with learning (Oaks) including homework, would like pottery and computer clubs again plus cricket, would like a litter picking day (as in the village), with prizes, more spellings (Silver Birch), more playground equipment including a zip wire, a pet show and tell, separate out Year 5/6 a bit more.

Does the school help you to be 'happier' and to take care of yourself? How?

Staff - See the above feedback.

Children - Having space to run around. There was concern about a child who may join the school - the governor reassured the children that anyone joining the school would follow St. Paul's Walden Primary School rules.

If you had a friend moving to the village/looking for a job, would you recommend this school to them?

Staff - This is my 'school family' – I would recommend, I would definitely recommend this school, but it was suggested that an Ofsted 3 would put some parents off. Kids are happy here (unlike an Ofsted 1 school not too far away); I would recommend this school. The Chair put forward that governors and staff should not be afraid of Ofsted, because the feel of a school is very important.

10am – lunchtime - Reviewing the school:

Governors to feedback on their consultations, plus the parents' input from parents' evenings and a quick consideration of attainment etc, to get an idea of where the school is at the moment.

The Chair also explained that, **aims and ethos** (statutory requirements for a school's website) are to be discussed and agreed (the agreement can be minuted at the June governing body meeting) today. These are things, which should feed the school's strategic development and be visible in all school decisions. The aims and ethos should be understood and valued by every member of the School community.

The current School strap line is 'Dream – Believe – Succeed' and the School's current aims are:

- To create a happy, caring, safe and inclusive school environment
- To support all children to achieve success
- To provide excellent teaching and learning opportunities
- To nurture a lifelong love of learning
- To provide a rich and challenging curriculum
- To develop and nurture strong partnerships with parents and the wider community
- To value each other, and celebrate the achievements of all
- To develop responsibility and respect for our village community and the wider world

Before the main brainstorming session, about how to define the aims and ethos of St. Paul's Walden Primary School, governors made the following main points:

- The School and village of Whitwell are a welcoming community together; therefore any ethos has to be

community focussed.

- There is no budget to grow the School further. Even though some appeals this year will be held for places at St. Paul's Walden Primary School, a one form entry would mean having to have 24 children in each class just to break even. The new housing estate does not necessary mean that there will extra applications for places.
- It would not be a good idea to use Ofsted wording.

Discussion and deliberation then produced the following ideas, the main words from which were written on a board:

- The children are rooted here (in a good way) allowing a foundation for success.
- 'From acorns mighty oaks grow' i.e. a nurturing environment allows learning, independence of thought, ethics and wellbeing to develop.
- The children are growing for their next stage in life i.e. ready for life. Many ideas can be dangled off of this. But the Chair of governors added a word of caution; that the children must be able to crawl before they can walk.
- This has to be the best for the children. Ofsted should pick up on the children's attitude.
- Resilience has to be here.
- Inclusivity and why we are different to other schools. Why our mixed classes work.
- The children make us unique. They are not afraid to say how they feel.
- Tolerance highly rated by parents (results of parents' evening consultation Spring 2019).
- The village (whatever the context or where people are from) and school community is inclusive, and everyone here has a value as an individual. This is our uniqueness again.

Question: How do these ideas would tie in with the budget? **Answer:** Everything ties in with the budget.

Question: How do we capture the community strength to enable us to continue what is happening?

A governor wondered if this is a rabbit hole, because oaks are not the finished article. Should not there be a preference for growing and learning together, as a community team? Is this explicable to the children? Governors very much liked the together idea i.e. everyone is embraced in a wider context.

Leading on from this, the new strap line suggested was '**Growing and Learning together**'.

Regarding the aims and ethos, further discussion, about wording, took place in order to get to the heart of the matter. The words confident and positive were given much thought. The Chair of governors added that, in class children will talk about the strap line, aims and ethos and what this means 'in action'. Another governor added that each class will make the strap line, aims and ethos their own. It was also pointed out that the environment is very important, as the children have space for freedom as well as having responsibility to look after the grounds.

12 - 1pm Lunch break.

After more thought, the governing body put forward and concluded that the new strap line, aims and ethos (to be maximised by the school's strategic plan) should be:

Growing and Learning together

Our school is a special place where we are all encouraged to be positive, resilient individuals.

Our nurturing environment and mutually supportive community enable us to be the best we can be.

1 -2.35pm Agree Priorities:

Having reviewed the school, priorities for both next year (School Improvement Plan), and beyond that, to be set, depending on agreed aims. Appropriate budget share then to be allocated to these priorities.

The Headteacher reminded governors that the Ofsted priorities, from the last inspection, should also be included along with other priorities identified. The Ofsted priorities are:

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- **The proportion of pupils exceeding age-related expectations in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is as high as that in English.**

Question: What has been put in place to help with this? **Answer:** Booster lessons, the use of the HfL advisors and HfL maths assessment, for example.

Question: How far away are we from reaching this goal? **Answer:** According to the JARV (14/3/19) at the time of the standards visit in October 2018, limited progress had been made to the areas for improvement highlighted at the previous inspection. A governor pointed out that this area is really for in depth discussion later, not today.

- **Marking and feedback are used well to improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling and punctuation.**

The Headteacher noted that new policies are in place, work books are being monitored and marking schemes are in place, and statutory words are being used.

- **All teachers set high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work.**

The Headteacher noted that this area would have been a whole school priority anyway.

Outdoor environment (from aims and ethos)

The Headteacher reported that the annual inspection of the outdoor P.E. equipment is due shortly. It is highly likely that the trim trail will be condemned.

Question: Could we spend some of the Sports Premium on this? **Answer:** We could potentially use some, but not all (there are rules covering expenditure). Quotes to replace the trim trail have come in at £15,000 - £20,000 or, if a lottery grant were to be used, about £10,000. This would include a non spongy surface area. One problem is that, because our ground isn't flat, many companies won't work with us. Or, an alternative would be to use Wicksteed Commercial Outdoor Playground Manufacturer and to install the equipment ourselves. However this will take much research, time, and work to do it.

The Chair of governors proposed that the school grounds are developed over a three year period (a problem though if the trim trail is condemned). The Headteacher added that the playground needs to be repainted (a quote of £500 has been obtained) and friendship bench repaired. Also, the Willows courtyard needs looking at. Regarding outdoor learning, the flat concrete area has some potential, but it cannot be seen easily. Neither is it free to use St. Paul's Walden Bury for Forest Schools.

Budget

Governors noted that the Resources committee will have to make some decisions about Finance. The Headteacher added that the budget is regularly updated three times a year. Fund raising drives and grants may help, but the budget includes only general maintenance.

Question: So, how much do we have to spend?

The Headteacher put forward the following scenarios:

1. With 2 new M6 teachers, and no other changes, there would be a £32,000 deficit for 2019/20.
2. With 1 new M3 teacher and 1 new M6 teacher, and no other changes, there would be a £26,000 deficit for 2019/20.
3. With 1 new M3 teacher and 1 new M6 teacher, and a part time business manager (25hrs/wk) and no other changes, there would be a £15,000 deficit for 2019/20.

Question: But does not an experienced person in the school office save money? **Answer:** Most schools have a part time business manager and some share. Benchmarking also shows that we are expensive in the office. But processes in the office are now being automated.

4. With 1 new M3 teacher and 1 new M4 teacher, and a part time business manager (25hrs/wk) and no other changes, there would be a £10,000 deficit for 2019/20.

So, the deficit for 2019/20 looks to be in the region of £50,000 and the deficit for 2021/22 in the region of £106,000.

Governors discussed and questioned why such deficits are forecast, especially as the annual spends are not huge numbers. A point made is that, because St. Paul's Walden Primary School has been growing pupil numbers recently this has offered some protection.

Question: What happens to schools that set a deficit budget? **Answer:** Teachers are made redundant.

Question (to the Headteacher): What is your teacher priority? **Answer:** Mine is experience, but an M6 teacher would have to add to the school. Having said that, Mrs Smith (Senco) would mentor an NQT.

Governors wondered what will happen, when schools become unviable. It was noted that the push for academies is not as strong as it was. The Chair of governors added that it is difficult to plan, due to so many variables. It is vital that the school census is accurate, as this determines LA funding.

Another option is to use some of the accumulated carry forward to pay for outdoor equipment, or to access other funding streams.

Conclusion

Following on from discussion so far, governors posited that the outdoor environment and health and wellbeing should be priorities. Measuring progress and achievement was also put forward and the Headteacher explained that this area is currently being worked on, because accurate data from Year 2 is not available (which is a base line for progress and achievement) presently. There has to be a way to enable teachers to accurately collect data, and this includes Pupil Premium, to make sure that funds are spent appropriately.

Question: Is your first year as Headteacher about the systems? **Answer:** Yes, by the end of the year the systems will be in place. At the moment we are just lacking data being accurately recorded; the HIP perhaps did not 'look behind the door'. Then we can build upon this.

A governor advised that the systems should be kept as simple as possible i.e. practice to succeed. The Chair of governors added that the Headteacher is deliberately over monitoring now, to make sure that data is accurate (the budget can reflect this), and to provide a framework. The governor agreed, but made the point that this all takes time and that there is lots more to be embedded.

Question: Is technology on the table? This should be a priority. **Answer:** Yes – computers and STEM (Science, technology, engineering, maths). The PTA may contribute £7,000 towards laptops. It may also be possible to use some of the Sports Premium for ipads.

Governors added that, alongside technology, communication (including face to face) is important, to be well a rounded school.

Governors concluded that the priorities should be:

- 1. Outdoor environment**
- 2. Health and Wellbeing – PSHE / Sport / Art**
- 3. Technology and Communication**
- 4. Monitoring Systems**
- 5. The Ofsted priorities from the last inspection**

The Chair of governors requested that the governing body's homework is to think about the school's Vision in three year's time.

2.35 – 3.15pm Governing Body Self Evaluation:

To define roles, analyse gaps in skills etc, to aid with recruitment and training of governors, as well as the development of a new governor induction pack.

The Chair of governors reminded everyone to complete their skills audit. HR skills are always needed.

Governor changes

- Ms Petch (LA governor) is stepping down from the governing body, as her orientation is no longer towards Whitwell, and she wished the governing body well. The Chair of governors thanked Ms Petch for her helpful contribution while a governor.
- Mr Norman will be stepping down from the governing body in a year's time.
- Dr Herbert (Associate Member) will be voted in as the LA governor at the June 2019 governing body meeting.

Governor Induction

The Chair of governors explained that it is important that governors understand time commitment regarding workload; governing body meetings, the governors' day, committee meetings and other groups, such as data analysis, plus training and visits. Time should also be set aside to read papers. All of this will be added to the Governor Induction Pack.

The Chair of governors will update the Governor Induction Pack.

Timetable of year's business

The Governors' Calendar of Compliance and Monitoring was shared. Governor visits (and the capacity for these was discussed) to be matched to the School Development Plan.

Governor Roles

Governor roles to be re-allocated at the June 2019 governing body meeting.

The Chair of governors thanked everyone for attending the Governors' Day, which concluded at 3.10pm.