



**Minutes of Willingham Primary School
Full Governing Body Meeting
held on Tuesday 7th May 2019 at 7.00pm**

Present

Caroline Hyde (CH)	Chair
Katy Stevenson (KS)	Vice Chair
David Morel (DM)	Headteacher
Jo Aldhouse (JA)	
Sarah Ashworth (SA)	
Liz Bowen (LB)	
Emma Fuller (EF)	
Matt Lockyer (ML)	
Emma Mason (EM)	
Sarah Morgan (SM)	
Sarah Nelson (SN)	
Kate Van Dort (KVD)	
Angela Walker (AW)	

Also in attendance: Stuart Lock, Executive Principal and Sally Stanton, Director of Education from Advantage Schools and Christine Brandon (Camclerk).

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present.

2. Declarations of Interest

No pecuniary interests were declared.

3. Opportunity to Meet Stuart Lock, Executive Principal, Advantage Schools Current and Future Relationships with WPS

By way of introduction, the Chair reminded the meeting of the background to the FGBs previous approach to academisation and the very different position that the school now found itself. However, the FGB had recognised that it was still important to develop relationships and collaborate with other schools and so was keen to listen to what Advantage Schools might have to offer.

Stuart began his presentation by describing the current school landscape. In his view, local authority led schools were now a thing of the past. Under constant pressure to support all local services, school budgets were being continually squeezed. Ultimately, he envisaged a position whereby there would be 250 MATs and super MATS operating in England and Wales. In terms of performance, Stuart considered that schools should be doing better and he added that Advantage Schools had started to do things differently by concentrating on curriculum and 'entitlement to knowledge', reviewing workloads

Headteacher: David Morel. Chair of Governors: Caroline Hyde

and introducing 'no marking' policies. Currently, the Trust was financially secured, had £1.8m to invest in infrastructure and were currently managing two schools. Stuart described the management structure and senior appointments that had been made and the openness and transparency that would result in the financial position and audit outcome being made publicly available on the Trust Website. Mention was also made of the current profile of the Board of Trustees.

Sally Stanton described the work that had taken place at Elstow Primary School. Subject areas had been re structured and re sequenced. An art specialist was seconded from the Bedford Free School to review ideas/development of the art curriculum at Elstow. Sally also mentioned the emphasis placed on working with senior leavers at the BFS, bespoke training for staff to bridge gaps that may have occurred during initial teacher training and opportunities for professional development.

In general terms, Stuart was of the view that WPS would, at some stage be forced to join a MAT for financial reasons and he encouraged the FGB to consider one that was 'mission' rather 'results' led. He believed that WPS would become a better school were it to join the Trust and conversely that the Trust would be stronger with the addition of WPS.

Given the increasing focus on standards and safeguarding and the impact this has on school resources, Stuart assured Governors that their Executive Team would take on these requirements and fulfil them more effectively. The existing FGB would become a Committee of the Trustee Board. Although, there were reasons not to join the Trust (and these related mainly to location) and mindful that the decision was irreversible, Stuart urged Governors to undertake due diligence before making their decision, to appreciate that there would be huge economies of scale and savings and to recognise the benefits of curriculum expertise, reduced staff workload, and improved assessment outcomes. He challenged Governors to consider what they wanted the school to do better and to consider what their biggest fears were if WPS was to move towards becoming part of any academy.

The Chair thanked Stuart and Sally for their contributions and invited Governors to ask questions. In terms of her fears, the Chair identified the importance of identifying the right MAT for WPS, achieving the right partnership and the timing of any decision. She accepted that all the work undertaken previously by former Governors might have to be revisited and reviewed to seek answers to these questions. In answer to further questions Stuart emphasised the importance of consultation with parents and expressed the opinion that WPS would become an academy within four years. In terms of protecting its existing values, Stuart advised that Governors should only approach those schools to which it would want to be aligned and those working towards a 'knowledge rich' curriculum. In conclusion, Stuart suggested that the Trust would seek to develop a hub of schools in Cambridgeshire otherwise there would be some diseconomies of scale. Governors were invited to send any further questions to Stuart via the Head teacher. The visitors withdrew at 8.02pm.

Governors briefly discussed the presentation and generally agreed that there was time to continue to research, review and explore potential options particularly as once taken, the decision to academise was irreversible. The Head teacher added that there were no Trusts currently operating locally that WPS could align with but Governors noted that there were others nationally with 'knowledge rich' experience. The Chair concluded the item by questioning whether there might be a role for WPS to generate and lead interest in the 'knowledge rich' curriculum amongst schools locally, to broaden practice, share expertise and attract funding perhaps in collaboration with Cottenham PS and that maybe this could be a softer approach to academisation?

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 12th March 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. Budget 2019/20

Sarah Nelson, Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee and Jo Aldhouse, School Business Manager gave a brief overview of the 2018/19 budget and reported on the proposed school budget for 2019/20. Copies of the budget and funding statement had been circulated in advance. JA undertook to circulate the summary report to Governors after the meeting.

Governors were reminded that the school had had a carry forward of £35,806 from the previous year. Income had exceeded expenditure such that £45,432 remained in the budget which together with the carry forward from 2017/18 meant that the school could carry forward a surplus of £81,238 to 2019/20. The extent of the surplus was principally due to savings accrued from the vacant post of Deputy Head and by being extremely careful with expenditure. It was also reported that the carry forward to 2019/20 of funding for capital expenditure amounted to £15,621. From a low position, Honeypot Pre School had maintained good and steady pupil numbers during the year which meant it had achieved a surplus of £10,490 to carry forward to 2019/20.

In terms of the budget for 2019/20, this had been based on the assumption that 313 children would be attending WPS from September. Funding per pupil in 2019/20 was £2763, a reduction of £18 in comparison with 2018/19. Minimum Funding Guarantee had been set at £33,676. Governors were advised that estimated expenditure was due to exceed income by £36,776 but allowing for the carry forward the school should achieve an end of year surplus of £44,462. However, this sum would not be sufficient to achieve a balance budget in 2020/21 so it would be necessary to review the class structure again in the Autumn if pupil numbers were not predicted to increase. Governors were hopeful that new housing development in the village might bring forward an increase in pupil numbers.

The Capital Budget of £23,075 for 2019/20 would be used towards replacement of a pump for the central heating system with other projects to be determined by the Finance & Premises Committee following review of the Asset Management Plan.

Governors were pleased to note that Honeypot was able to set a balanced budget based on anticipated pupil numbers and that a carry forward of £9446 had been predicted at year end.

Whereupon and on the recommendation of the Finance & Premises Committee, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the 2019/20 School Budget be approved and signed by the Chair for submission to the LA; and
- b) that the appreciation of the Governing Body be extended to Sarah Nelson, Liz Bowen and Jo Aldhouse for their contributions towards the budget process.

6. Head teacher's Report

The Head teacher referred to the following documents –

- Raising Achievement Plan
- Framework of Expectations
- Teaching Review Schedule

Copies of each had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In terms of the RAP Update and given the detailed entries, Governors were encouraged to send in comments/questions after the meeting once they had had the opportunity and time to review the document properly.

Governors queried the reduced percentage recorded for pupil attendance and the Head teacher explained that this was due to the impact of part time timetables for individual children.

Governors acknowledged that it was essential to develop a 'Governance Section' within the RAP and to review whether the Governing Body Structure continued to be effective and efficient. All Governors indicated a preference to be involved in this work rather than to delegate it to a small group. The Chair proposed that Governors should convene offsite in June/early July for this purpose and the Head Teacher offered to advise.

ACTION: KS to identify a date for Governors to meet off-site before the end of term

The Head teacher confirmed that all safeguarding practices were undertaken in accordance with the RAP.

Referring to the Framework of Expectations, the Deputy Head Teacher explained that she had worked through two sections of the Framework with staff, that it had been well received and that it was essential to be consistent and clear about expectations in the classroom and around school.

7. Policies for Ratification

In terms of the policies listed on the agenda, it was noted that a new Complaints Policy template had not yet been made available by the LA but was expected shortly, that a small Working Group of Governors should be appointed to look at the Public Sector Equality Scheme under 150 and that policies on equality & diversity for staff, SEND and Intimate Care would be submitted to the next meeting. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the replacement of the word 'pupil' with 'children' in the last sentence of paragraph 1.1, the Statement of Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff & Volunteers (May 2019) be approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

8. Questions to and Updates from Committees

The Chairs of the Personnel, TALB and Finance & Premises Committees gave a précis of the proceedings of each of their recent meetings.

Regarding the Personnel Committee, mention was made of the positive feedback received to the Staff Questionnaire, a copy of which had been circulated to all Governors. Questions relating to the structure and management of Honeypot had been resolved since the last meeting and it was suggested that, in future, as formal and ultimate responsibility appeared to lie with the Governing Body, an item relating to Honeypot (staff, numbers and safeguarding etc) should be placed on every agenda.

ACTION: Clerk to add a standing agenda item for Honeypots

In terms of TALB, SM advised Governors of the end of Spring Term key data outcomes and made reference to the Pupil Premium Statement, the Framework of Expectations, Curriculum Policy and Literacy Spine some of which had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Similarly, Finance & Premises had given detailed consideration to the budget, premises, health & safety, the sports fund and the LA School Improvement Package.

9. Governing Body Business

- i. **Governor Visits: Monitoring Forms/Feedback** – EF, SM and LB confirmed that they had recently undertaken visits to school to look at data, the literacy spine, SEN and TAs review and the Budget and that reports of these visits needed to be uploaded to the website.
- ii. **Governor Training: Briefing Sessions and Annual Governance Conference** - It was noted that EM and ML would attend Briefing Sessions on 8th and 21st May and that KS would attend the Annual Conference on 15th June.
- iii. **Recognition of Contribution to School** – The Chair and Governing Body recognised and commended the contribution made by Jon

Headteacher: David Morel. Chair of Governors: Caroline Hyde

Thorley-Wraithe to the school over 25 years of service and requested the Head teacher to pass on their appreciation to Jon.

- iv. **Governing Body Membership** – Having been apprised of the current position in terms of membership of the Governing Body and required skills, it was agreed that a ballot should proceed to recruit to the parent governor vacancies.

10. Any Other Business

As Cottenham PS had recently been subject to a pilot Ofsted Inspection under the new Framework, Governors agreed with a suggestion that the Head teacher, James Kilsby should be invited to the next meeting to give a short presentation on the experience.

The Head teacher invited Governors to come into school to monitor the SATS process and undertook to circulate the timetable to enable arrangements to be made.

11. Outcomes and Key Messages

In concluding the meeting, the Chair reiterated the importance of using the time available to Governors wisely to prepare for and review academy options. The Chair also reaffirmed her gratitude for the work undertaken by JA to produce a balanced budget, to KVD for her contribution to the positive Honeypot budget outcome and commended the progress and outcomes demonstrated by the up to date RAP.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Noted - that the next meeting of the Governing Body was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 16th July 2019 at 6.30pm.



Chair

The Meeting ended at 9.31pm