



**Minutes of a Meeting of the Full Governing Body of Woodfield Community Primary School
Held virtually, 11 May 2021, 6.00pm**

Present: Mathew Atkinson (MA) – Acting Executive Head Teacher
Jo Marwood (JM) – Acting Head of School
Bridget Tayan (BT) - Joint Chair
Paul Haslam (PH) – Joint Chair
Jan Tringham (JT)
Victoria Lack (VL)
Matthew Boyle (MB)
Martin Deacon (MD)
Saskia Boardman (SB)
Jonathan Spruce (JS)

In attendance: Karen Butler (KB) – Senior Education Advisor
Karen Taylor - Bursar
Chris Walker (CW) - Clerk

Governing Body functions:

Ensuring the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined

Ensuring that the Headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school

Ensuring the sound and proper and efficient use of the school's financial resources

No.	Agenda Item	Part 'A' – Procedural	Action
1	Welcome and Introductions	<p>PH welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>PH set out his vision for the governing body at this point in time, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This meeting represented a landmark and is cause for celebration. - We have a “permanent” temporary excellent leadership for the school - We will, hopefully, agree a plan that whilst reducing school costs, fulfils the governors’ requirement of a marketable functional school and provides all the mandatory teaching we are obliged to deliver to our pupils. This will enable our leadership team deliver teaching and the new curriculum - We have a full governing team with two new parent school governors joining us from the next meeting. - We have a set of governors capable of delivering governance plan to fulfil our obligations in supporting the school. - We are no longer firefighting but starting to build for the future. We have a platform to recruit more pupils for future school years. <p>PH informed governors that item 2 would be moved to be item 8 within the School Improvement section of the agenda.</p> <p>MD made a point of order that the proposal being brought in respect of a new teaching structure had not been notified to the governing body prior to the meeting and therefore brought as an agenda item. The proposals had not been circulated and the full governing body had received no prior notice and therefore were being asked to make a decision on that basis. MD stated that this was a breach of all protocols in respect of how school governing bodies should be managed, specifically with the provision of an agenda with seven days’ notice.</p> <p>MD continued to make representations that it was impossible for governors to vote on proposals that a proportion of which had absolutely no knowledge of the proposals.</p>	

2	Apologies	No apologies- all present.	
3	Identification of confidential items	To be considered as the meeting progressed.	
4	Identification of urgent other business (AOB)	<p>PH reminded governors of the background to the establishment and purpose of the First Committee, as follows:</p> <p>Following MA and JM' s agreement to take the school forward and their brief (from the governors meeting 23/03/2021) to structure the school going forward, the school were advised by HR in order to discuss a support staff restructure, we needed to urgently establish a Selection Committee to hear leaderships' proposals and support them through the consultation process. This needed to be 3 governors. Meetings were likely to be during the day.</p> <p>The remit of such a group was to review the proposing of a support staff reorganisation and support the process, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation (with unions and NYCC) in which figures are discussed/presented for the planned school structure • The union has the ability to propose alternatives • Make the final decision • Its confidential and runs over several weeks. • It needs to have an appeals' process that requires the governing body to use different governors who must not have been part of the first process. <p>This committee was convened on the 25th March and the associated timeline finishes on the last day of term should the appeals process be needed.</p> <p>The need for this committee, its confidentiality and its potential to impact on individuals has ramifications on what can be discussed at this meeting in terms of the Start Budget.</p>	

		PH stated that given who had sat on the First Committee that the membership of any Appeals Committee would be self-selecting.	
5	To remind governors of the need to declare interests, pecuniary or non-pecuniary.	MA/JM declared an interest in any discussions which related to the Priestley Academy Trust as employees of that organisation.	
6	To approve the minutes of the meeting on 23 March 2021	The minutes were approved as an accurate record to be signed by one of the Chairs once able to do so.	
7	Matters arising	All items had been completed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.	
		Part 'C' – School Improvement	
8	Finance	<p>Start Budget The Start Budget reports had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>PH informed governors that the budget had been put together to address specific criteria</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reduce any costs where possible 2. To have a marketable and functional school 3. To deliver the level of teaching that we are required to do whilst ensuring that the new curriculum is fully developed in the next academic year. 4. That, it had been developed in conjunction with NYCC and was approved <p>The finance link governor has circulated the following to all governors, by email, on the 9th May:</p>	

The budget summary provided takes into consideration the recommendations of the First Committee that will be presented in outline on Tuesday and, as a member of the First Committee and the finance link governor, I have no hesitation in endorsing the approach and the resulting budget to the Governing Body.

On behalf of the Governors, PH agreed to pick up anything arising with KT following the meeting, however.

As discussed earlier, a number of the governors would not see any details of the plan. However, the teaching structure for next year is available and JM would present this.

Questions would be invited after which PH would ask for governor approval for the budget for next year. For those Governors who had not been privy to the first committee decisions and felt they could not support the budget based on the information made available – this would be minuted.

PH confirmed that staffing restructure proposals had been incorporated into the Start Budget.

JS provided governors with a verbal update on the meeting of First Committee mindful of the need to keep the contents of the discussions confidential:

- Minutes from the First Committee would have to be kept confidential from those governors who were not members to ensure complete impartiality should they become members of the Appeals Committee. This was standard procedure in these circumstances and was based on the advice of HR.
- The Committee members had considered the proposals presented by MA/JM and had scrutinised all the evidence presented to them. Robust discussions had been undertaken.
- Governors were assured that the proposals represented the best option for the school, and they were unanimously approved by the First Committee.

Questions were invited

Q: Which governors were on the committee?

A: BT as Chair, JS as Finance Link Governor and JT, who has significant experience as a previous Headteacher. All governors were invited to join the committee in the email of 25th March 2021.

A number of governors had significant concerns about the process. Specifically,

- The FGB is being asked to consider and approve a Start Budget without having any knowledge of the organisational restructuring that it is to support.
- Governors were being asked to decide on a new class organisation and teaching proposal when they had received no warning of this being brought to the meeting and had therefore not had at least 7 days to consider the proposals.
- Whilst governors were invited to join the committee, it had only been described as a committee to support the school leadership. It was not given any delegated decision-making powers.
- The FGB was being asked to ratify the school organisational restructuring when the process of consultation with staff and trade unions was still ongoing and had not been concluded. This was basically an act of disregarding any staff or trade union views and is a potential breach of employment law and North Yorkshire County Council policies in respect of consultation with staff; that importantly decisions should not be made prior to the consultation process concluding. It was queried how this would be managed with staff and trade unions when they became aware that the committee and FGB had made such a decision prior to the end of their consultation.

Class Structure Proposal

As part of the process to address the deficit position a class restructure needed to be made. JM presented three options for governors to consider. The pros and cons of each option were set out clearly.

Option 1 – to retain the current 3 class structure. Whilst this would provide the necessary capacity and room for growth it did not reduce the deficit at all.

Option 2 - a 2 class structure. Would impact on the deficit but with a significant impact on curriculum delivery, no capacity for growth and the likelihood of the need for further changes in the future.

Option 3 – a 2.5 class structure. Many benefits including sufficient capacity for growth, smaller class sizes which would help to support the closing of learning gaps in core subjects and a substantial reduction in the deficit. This structure would mean a split in the Year 4 group and some pupils in Year 2 having 3 different teachers in a week.

JM confirmed that Option 3 was the preferred option and had been discussed with staff. It is hoped the same teachers could be used to deliver this model.

VL joined the meeting at 6.24pm.

JS confirmed that this proposal had been discussed at the First Committee meeting. As no redundancies were required an appeals committee would not be required and therefore consideration could be given at this meeting.

Governor question

Q: How would you split the Year 4 group?

A: We would look at factors such as ability, age and friendship groups and consider those pupils that would benefit most from moving into each new class. We would work with the parents before any decisions were made.

Outturn

KT talked through the March Summery Budget Report which highlighted a better than forecast position at year end with a c/f of £19k against a forecast of £10,474. KT confirmed that she would ensure that all monies owed (e.g. from the Staff Absence Insurance) would be chased. Unspent funding from the Sports Grant had been carried forward and ringfenced.

Start Budget

KT confirmed that the Start Budget had been based on the 2.5 class structure and the restructure approved by the First Committee. The figures would also be updated to reflect the final Outturn. MA informed governors that the detail of the proposals had been shared with the LA including the impact on the start budget. The LA had approved from both a finance and a school improvement perspective.

Governor questions

Q: Are the LA willing to support the deficit on an ongoing basis?

A: Yes. All information has been shared. The proposals do not achieve a financial balance but the LA were content and indicated that we could proceed with the support staff and class restructure on this basis.

Q: Are we being asked to approve a budget without having any of the restructuring detail?

A: Yes

Q: Have the unions been briefed?

A: Yes

A number of governors were concerned that staff and unions had been informed of the detail but governors had not and yet they were being asked to approve a budget without having any level of detail.

Q: Could you confirm if the LA are picking up the deficit or effectively allowing it to run?

A: They are not picking up the deficit which amounts to £330K by the end of 2023/24. The school will need to earn its way out of deficit. The LA are content that the proposals will provide a sound basis for the school to grow, to enable it to attract pupils and therefore address its ongoing deficit.

In discussion,

- Governors noted that the preferred option would reduce the deficit from £150k to £100k per annum, roughly a 1/3 reduction.
The Chair stated that:
- The proposal represented a sustainable teaching model and class structure that would deliver the curriculum and ensure continuous school improvement.
- Would enable the school to present a good offer to prospective parents thereby increasing numbers.
- JT stated that the 2.5 class structure was a recognised and effective structure.

Concerns

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governors were being asked to make a decision in respect of a budget and proposals which were still being consulted on and was therefore liable to change. - In this light, how could the full governing body fulfil their function of holding school leaders to account when they didn't have all the information they needed. - Decisions were being asked for on information presented in this meeting for the first time. Governors need to ensure that they give all decisions the required level of scrutiny to ensure full accountability and considering proposals of which no notice had been given in advance did not amount to effective scrutiny - Was asking for a decision on the basis of these caveats' constitutional? - Does a 40-pupil roll justify having a full-time headteacher non -teaching? <p>KB confirmed that the LA were content with Option 3 from both a financial and a school improvement perspective and that the LA had been involved with the discussions at every stage.</p> <p>The Joint-Chairs acknowledged that the process was not ideal and understood the concerns of those governors who did not have all the information. Advice had been sought from the LA to ensure that the process was being implemented in line with all appropriate regulations and policies. The LA had provided advice on how to carry out the process and confirmed that it met all governance requirements.</p> <p>Advice on the governance of the process was sought from the Clerk in respect of bringing such fundamental items to the meeting with no notice and for some governors to have no knowledge of the proposals they were being asked to agree to</p> <p>Action: The Clerk agreed to seek clarification from LA governance officials.</p> <p>Governors were asked to vote, by a show of hands, on:</p> <p>Option 3 – Class Structure: The proposal was approved. 6 votes in favour, 3 votes against. The proposal was additionally recommended by KB and the Executive Head</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Clerk</p>
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		<p>Start Budget The Start Budget was approved. 6 votes in favours, 3 votes against.</p> <p>VL stated that although she had voted against the proposals, it did not mean that she disagreed, only that she had not been able to give them full consideration</p> <p>Action: JM agreed to circulate the presentation to governors after the meeting and to respond to any further questions governors might have via email.</p> <p>Governors thanked KT for her presentation. KT left the meeting at 7.11pm</p>	<p>JM</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Annual Schedule of Governing Body Business and Governance Action Plan</p>	<p>Annual Schedule of Governing Body Business JT had updated the Annual Schedule of Governing Body Business to reflect actions that had been completed. This had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. The Schedule would continue to be updated as and when actions had been completed. JT talked through progress and the following actions were agreed:</p> <p>PH - to complete actions 6-9 BT – to check action 12 MA – confirmed that there are no Looked After Children (LAC) at the school. JM/MA – to confirm action 42 and provide anonymised evidence. Action 41 – was an action for the LA currently.</p> <p>Action: Item 42, Pupil Premium/ Sports Grant Impact statement, Report to Parents on the SEND Policy to be agenda items at the next meeting.</p> <p>Action: JT to update governors on progress at each meeting.</p> <p>Governors thanked JT for undertaking this work and for continuing to monitor implementation.</p>	<p>PH BT JM/MA Clerk JT</p>

		<p>Governor Action Plan</p> <p>The Governor Action Plan had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. JT reported that the Plan contained those actions set out in the Post-Ofsted Action Plan, the Local Authority School Partnership Improvement Plan and the Local Authority Governance Health Check.</p> <p>Action: Governors to check to see what actions had been completed and to email confirmation to JT</p> <p>Action: PH to work with MB to undertake a website compliance audit.</p> <p>Action: To consider a committee structure for 2021-22.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>PH/MB</p> <p>ALL</p>
10	Headteacher Report	<p>The Headteacher Report had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. JM/MA talked through the key points.</p> <p>JM explained that the school was currently in the window for a Section 8 Ofsted Inspection. Section 8 inspections would not result in a change of judgement. This could only be done with a two-day Section 5 Inspection. Section 5 inspections would only be undertaken where there had been significant progress since the last inspection. Governors agreed that it was important to push for a Section 5 inspection as significant improvement had been made and that an improved judgement was not only deserved but would be essential as part of the process of attracting new pupils.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the continued positive stories about the school which had been published on social media sites.</p>	
11	Policies	<p>School Medical Policy</p> <p><u>Governor question</u></p> <p>Q: Do you have named boxes with photos for pupils for medicine and access to an EpiPen?</p> <p>A: We do have personalised medicine boxes yes but there are currently no pupils requiring an EpiPen in school. We would ensure the necessary equipment was made available should this change.</p> <p>Q: Could you tighten up the wording to give more specific time frames instead of using terms like regularly or frequently?</p>	

		<p>A: I will check with the LA to ensure that we can change this wording as these are standard documents produced by the LA based on advice they receive.</p> <p>Action: MA to check the use of these terms and also the wording with regard to the use of inhalers.</p> <p>Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy – approved. Action: Governors agreed to nominate members of its Complaints Panel and ensure that at least one member had undertaken the complaints training.</p> <p>Whistleblowing Policy – approved.</p> <p>EYFS Policy - approved</p>	<p>MA</p> <p>ALL</p>
12	Academisation Update	<p>PH confirmed that there had been no developments since the last meeting.</p> <p>KB provided a verbal update on her recent visit to the school. In summary, KB informed governors that she had been impressed with the progress the school continued to make, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The level of active learning being undertaken by the children - Teacher subject knowledge - The good behaviour throughout the school - The curriculum; staff ownership and links with the school ethos clearly evident. <p>JM confirmed that links with the local library had been established and once covid restrictions had been eased would be broadened as widely as possible.</p>	
13	Governor	<p>Training</p> <p>A number of governors had undertaken data training and pupil premium training. The slides from the training had been circulated and all governors confirmed that they had read the slides.</p> <p>The two new parent governors would undertake all required safeguarding training and the introduction to governance training.</p>	

		<p>Vacancies The two parent governor positions had now been filled.</p> <p>Monitoring BT provided verbal feedback following her visit to monitor the implementation of the marking and feedback policy. BT confirmed that the policy was being applied consistently, was effective and aligned with lesson objectives. The marking, linked to the weekly review sheets, identified children who needed additional help. This could then be provided as soon as possible after each lesson. Overall BT had been impressed.</p> <p>Action: MB agreed to make a presentation to governors on 'respect' within the curriculum intent at the next meeting.</p> <p>BT to undertake a curriculum monitoring visit in June 2021. Volunteers were sought to undertake monitoring visits on Behaviour and Pupil Attitudes to take place in July.</p> <p>JT left the meeting at 7.45pm</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>ALL</p>
14	Marketing Update	<p>PH informed governors that the Marketing Working Group had met. A number of actions had since been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links had been made with the Harrogate Advertiser. The paper had agreed to follow the progress of the school and to publish positive articles along its journey, including a 360-degree video of the school. - A range of positive events had been organised to highlight the school, with the engagement of staff. - The promotion of the school would continue to be a priority over the next 6 months. 	
15	Correspondence	None	
16	AOB	<p>Appeals Committee Governors agreed to defer the filling of this committee to the next meeting.</p>	

		<p>KB stated that she had received advice from NYCC governance unit during the meeting and that the establishment of the first committee and exclusion of governors was legitimate and that the school had followed due process and that she would forward on the advice by email.</p> <p>It was pointed out by some governors that it appeared that the advice was based upon information that the First Committee had been established with delegated decision-making powers. This was incorrect and the email that had been sent to governors only stated that the committee was there to support the school leadership through the process. At no point had the FGB ever delegated any decision-making authority to the committee. These specific representations were not responded to by the meeting chair or answered.</p> <p>PH thanked JM/MA on behalf of the governors for all their hard work in developing the proposals discussed in tonight's meeting.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 20.10pm</p>	
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Signed:

Position:

Date: