



# WEST OXFORD C P SCHOOL

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CARE - THINK - INSPIRE - ACHIEVE

Headteacher: Clare Bladen BA(Hons) PGCE, NPQH

## RATIFIED AT FGB4 23 JUNE 2016 MINUTES OF THE 3<sup>rd</sup> FULL GOVERNORS' MEETING IN 2015/16 HELD AT SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016 AT 5.30pm

**1.0 Present:** Andrew Roland ~ parent governor (chair) **AR**, Clare Bladen (headteacher) **CB**, Rebecca Huxley ~ LA governor **RH**, Joey Potgieter ~ co opted governor **JP**, Jenny Crewe ~ co opted governor **JC**, Colin Cook ~LA governor **CC**, Susanna Pressel ~ LA governor **SP**, Claudi Thomas (associate governor without voting rights on FGB) **CT**, Rachel Goode ~ co opted governor **RG**, Kelly Faye ~ elected governor **KF**, Peter Smith ~ staff governor **PS**, Ben Selby ~ parent governor **BS**

**In attendance:** Ursula Irvine, clerk, **UI**

### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

To be completed for FGB4 unless otherwise stated:

#### SECTION 5

- i) **CB and Sue Bright** to complete cost comparison figures relating to proposed business manager role, hopefully before 20<sup>th</sup> April, for use in finalising the budget.
- ii) **JP** to issue wellbeing survey and run a staff workshop for non-managers with **CC and JC**. **JP** also to work further on the draft well being policy, taking into account governor input and present the draft at the workshop for feedback, following which **JP** will finalise the draft for approval by FGB4.

#### SECTION 6

- iii) **CB and PS** to pass their recruitment short list to the governor nominated by the chair to assist with the current KS2 recruitment process, and liaise with them as agreed going forward.
- iv) **CB** to have first draft of new SDIP ready for ESW3.
- v) **JP and CB** to continue to keep actions pursuant to Peter Cox report under review in their 1:1 meetings.
- vi) **CB and PS** to pursue setting up a LBGT champion role in the school, and to consider arranging staff training on LBGT issues and whether the school requires any further resources such as books in this respect.
- vii) **UI** to amend FGB agendas to include a reference to LBGT issues with regard to any incidents or complaints to report
- viii) **RG** to form a working group to consider Peter Cox's comments about compulsory uniform over the summer and report to FGB1.

- ix) **CB and PS** to review progress against the recommendations from the 2013 OFSTED inspection and report to FGB4.
- x) **JC** to drive Vision Statement consultation process over the coming two months with parents, children and the wider community with assistance from **RG, JP, RH and PS**. The final Statement to be put to FGB4 for approval.
- xi) **Lisa Penton** to be asked to flag to **CB** which policies need updating/reviewing on an ongoing basis, with a view to **CB**'s drafts being provided to the relevant committee or FGB chair ahead of the meeting at which they need to be approved. **CB** also to ask **Lisa** to update the policies matrix and website as appropriate and ensure that the updated versions are the ones that are used in practice.

## SECTION 9

- xii) **AR** to continue to provide support to **JP** as new FGB chair and **JP** to meet with **BS** for handover of HPR chair role.
- xiii) **JP** to prepare call for nominations letter and **UI** to liaise with Jo Carr to plan and run new parent governor election.
- xiv) **RG** to continue to work on Governor Newsletters – ideally one by the end of April and another at the end of the summer term.
- xv) **UI** to update all governor lists, amend notice board contact details as agreed, and provide all these to Jo Carr and Lisa Penton as well as to governors. **Lisa** to update governor details on the school's website.
- xvi) **All governors** who have not provided photographs of themselves to attend visit of school photographer in May.
- xvii) **BS** to undertake on line Prevent training.

## 2.0 Notification of Any Other Urgent Business, racial or health & safety incidents, or complaints received:

Two complaints had been received: one from an individual parent concerning the approach to learning by a teacher in respect of a pupil with specific learning needs which had been passed to **AR** to deal; and one from a group of parents concerning staff turn-over with which **JP** is dealing. No other matters were reported.

## 3.0 Procedural items

- 3.1 The meeting was quorate
- 3.2 There were no declarations of Interests relevant to agenda

## 4.0 Matters arising from the Minutes of FGB2 (10 December 2015)

4.1 Review of actions: – most had either been completed and required no further discussion or were covered in the Head Teacher's report or elsewhere in the agenda:

- data (now "assessment information") training: nothing had yet come up, but **CT** will continue to look out for courses suitable for ESW members.
- Head Teacher's reviews: **RG** has been appointed as the governor who will assist the chair with these.
- Safeguarding: It was agreed that Jo Carr should also undertake lead training **CB** to arrange

4.2 The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

## 5.0 Brief report from HPR2 by **JP**

This included the following:

- 2016/17 Budget: An additional HPR budget meeting would be held on 20 April. Governors were asked to contact BS with any queries/concerns about the budget before then. The 3-4 year forecast is not good, but it is also possible that the source of funding will be very different in the future if the school is required to become an academy.
- Proposed new office manager role: this will need to be funded from within the budget, but has not yet been factored into it. SB and CB had been working on the costs savings to off set against the extra expense. (For example, it is envisaged that an external accountancy service from SB will be retained but reduced to 3 visits a year rather than monthly.) It was hoped that the cost comparison would be ready in time for 20<sup>th</sup> April. Action **CB and SB**. CB said that all other schools in the Partnership have business managers and believed them all to be full time. KF noted that the appointment of a business manager had been transformative for the school at which she teaches. It is envisaged that the role would free CT up for more strategic work (but not teaching).
- Staff wellbeing policy, survey and workshop: The draft policy had been circulated prior to FGB3. Some feedback had been received but not all in time for JP to consider prior to this meeting. Some of this was discussed. For example, it was confirmed that it is the leadership and governors who have responsibility to ensure compliance with the policy. However, all staff have a collective responsibility to comply, behave appropriately and treat each other with mutual respect. It was recognised that the policy does not have to be perfect and there are different possible ways of drafting it – however its existence will hopefully engender confidence and show that the school cares. It was agreed that JP issue the wellbeing survey, and then, with CC and JC, run the workshop which will discuss the results as planned. The draft policy incorporating those suggested amendments that JP decides to adopt will also be presented to staff at the workshop for discussion so that their input can be taken into account before the policy is finalised. It will then be put to FGB4 for formal approval. **Action JP**. It was acknowledged that the governing body should not overlook the wellbeing of the head teacher and deputy.

## 6.0 Head Teacher report

The format of the report and the information provided within it were welcomed. Various matters were discussed.

6.1 continuity of teaching cover: it was noted that this has been good this year.

6.2 recruitment: CB reported that there had been many applicants for the vacant KS2 post, including the current supply teacher for that year. Having plenty of time to deal with the recruitment process meant that candidates could visit to look round the school before the shortlisting for interview stage. This enabled CB and PS to get a better feel for the individuals. They had also been heartened by the positive feedback they had received about the school.

Governor involvement in teacher recruitment was discussed in detail. Previously governors had been involved in all appointments but in the last 3 to 4 years mostly only in relation to SLT appointments. CB noted that a former chair of governors with directly relevant experience had also assisted with some more junior appointments in the past. An SLT member will always be involved with appointments relevant to their areas of responsibility. OCC's recommendation is

that governors should definitely be involved with senior appointments and with more junior appointments if the head and/or SLT are new.

Concern was expressed that the most recent appointment had been made on a permanent basis within a very short timescale, and to commence with the summer term. There had been fewer candidates and much less time available to advertise the post and make a selection than with the current process. In particular, it had not been possible to interview the successful candidate in person, see them teach or show them around the school prior to their appointment. CB was confident that she had appointed an excellent teacher and reported that the new teacher seems to be settling into the school very successfully. As well as the skype interview (with which children on the school council were also involved) she had spoken to the previous two head teachers and received unreserved recommendations. She also noted that not all candidates are able to visit the school in person even when more time is available. If she had not been sufficiently impressed by any of the candidates she would not have made a permanent appointment. However, she was concerned that a further change in staff following the end of a temporary appointment may aggravate existing parental concerns about staff turnover and would have been costly if a supply teacher was used. CT felt that the priority must be to get the right teachers even if this necessitated buying more time with a temporary appointment, this would be the better way to reduce turnover in the long run. There is no surprise when a temporary contract ends and no concern over disruption to a particular class when this occurs at the end of the academic year rather than part way through. Normally, it was felt that a successful candidate should have seen the school and been observed teaching before their selection, but it was appreciated that sometimes it is necessary to compromise.

Further to earlier discussions between the chair of governors and CB and in the light of concerns about retention and recruitment it was proposed and agreed that whilst the ordinary expectation was that junior appointments would be handled by the SLT, in the short term governors should be involved in relation to all appointments – the process and degree of involvement to be agreed on a case by case basis, for eg depending upon availability and timescale. CB and PS were concerned that any governors involved should have relevant experience of recruiting professional staff and RH advised that governors who are parents should not be involved in recruitment for their own child's class. KF noted that the experience of the school in which she teaches is that governor involvement in recruitment can be very helpful. It was also felt that a governor may bring a helpful different perspective. It was noted that there needs to be a relationship of mutual trust between the SLT and governors. CB and PS were asked to see this [not as a lack of trust but] as the provision of support and as such something that could be beneficial. There was no question of unpicking the appointment that had been made, but simply of focusing on the process for recruitment going forward.

It was agreed that going forwards when the school needs to recruit a teacher, CB will tell the chair of governors who will then nominate a governor to be involved in the process, normally out of RG, BS, JC and RH. With regard to recruitment for the current KS2 vacancy, **PS and CB** will pass their short list to the nominated governor for review/discussion and liaise with them as agreed going forward.

It was queried what additional skills it is hoped that the new recruit will bring to the school. CB said that her overriding priority is to appoint an excellent teacher. The new year 3 teacher will take on subject leadership for English, so this leaved maths

to be filled. Foreign language skills would also be desirable but not essential. Ability to take and give support and to work in a team are also very important.

- 6.3 SDIP: **CB** confirmed that a first draft of the next SDIP will be available for discussion at ESW3. There was a brief review of school visits undertaken and forthcoming by those governors with specific areas of responsibility under the current SDIP. It was confirmed that ideally each such governor will have undertaken two visits during the course of the academic year with the aim of looking for progress made between the first and second visits.
- 6.4 pupil tracker / data: This has been the first year of getting to grips with life without levels. CB was satisfied that staff are using the tracker consistently and appropriately. They have been checking each other's assessments and there has been constant moderation and discussion in staff meetings, sharing experience and considering different approaches. CB had attended an "embedding life without levels" course and other members of the SLT had undertaken training too. The school will have a fresh start using the tracker next year, building on the experience gained this year. Being the first year, there has been no directly comparative data from last year, save for the SATS results. Nevertheless, when asked, CB felt that the comparison %s were still reasonably useful. Issues concerning development of an "assessment policy" were discussed, including the need to provide guidance, but retain flexibility at this early stage, and the extent to which all staff should be involved with the formation of such a policy.

Various points concerning the data were touched on but it was noted that a more detailed discussion would take place in ESW2.

CB said that she continued to follow the advice from Mary Watts early in 2015 to be as ambitious as possible in setting targets, albeit with reference to the particular cohort in question. The targets thus represent the best possible outcome, and it is not therefore a major problem if not all milestones are met. There was concern that if unrealistic targets were set this could be stressful for teachers, but CB felt that there was not an over emphasis on the targets, they were understood to represent an ideal and the main focus was on the regular pupil progress review meetings and maintaining a dialogue about progress.

KF noted that normally at this stage in the year one would expect more children to be above age related expectations, particularly building on the previous year's good results. However, the fact that the goals are getting harder to achieve and all the issues with adjusting to life without levels had to be taken into account. Monitoring three year trends is also difficult for these reasons.

The high level of anxiety in all schools concerning assessment was discussed – the governors sympathised with this and were appreciative of the enormous effort teaching staff were putting in. The potential for discrepancies, for example between a teacher's report assessment of a pupil and their subsequent SATs results, were noted.

- 6.5 quality of teaching and learning: The lack of Outstanding teaching assessments in CB's table were discussed as a concern. CB explained that the lesson observations were conducted by two SLT members. In line with the Ofsted approach they may move to undertaking more frequent, regular drop ins rather than planned formal observations. CB confirmed that teachers know what they are being assessed against. The grade awarded will not normally be given, but strengths and

areas for development are always discussed. The key to the assessment is to consider whether all children are learning and engaged.

BS queried what it was reasonable to expect. The answer was: all teachers to be assessed at least good with 40% outstanding, but to aspire to 100% outstanding. On this basis the current data is concerning. [Ways of achieving an improvement were discussed](#). CB's aim is to recruit excellent teachers, but it was agreed that professional development, training and coaching in the job are also important. PS noted that good practice is shared in staff meetings and there is an ongoing dialogue in the staff room. If individuals are struggling with certain aspects of their work, other teachers will help - for example with observations and shared lesson planning. He felt that staff are now more open to discussion across year groups which helps with continuity from one year to the next, and that mentoring arrangements are also in place.

## 6.6 Peter Cox report

Governors had all had the opportunity to review the report prior to the meeting. A number of the proposed actions had already been (or were in the process of being) addressed. The chair of governors' 1:1 meetings with CB would continue to keep these under review **action JP and CB**. The following matters were discussed:

- (i) Whether the school should have an LGBT champion: this had been raised by Peter Cox in discussion but did not appear in the actual report. CB and PS noted that they are already alive to LGBT issues and aware of the sensitivities and risk of bullying associated with "difference" in a wide range of forms. It was also necessary to be aware of relevant religious sensitivities and how best to handle these in relation to LGBT issues. The feeling was that the school's pupils are generally very accommodating to each-other, but that it is important to ensure that staff have appropriate training and that the school has appropriate resources such as books with a range of different types of families. PS had already had relevant training and has knowledge of good resources. He was willing to act in this role but also receptive to other staff being involved too. **Action CB and PS** to pursue. In addition, it was suggested that going forward the question at the beginning of FGB meetings about any incidents or complaints to report should include any LGBT as well as any other discriminatory matters. **UI** to implement.
- (ii) School uniform had also been raised by Peter Cox although he had conceded that there is no evidence to say that it improves educational performance. Ofsted inspectors like to see a uniform and many appear to consider a uniform as necessary to satisfy the test of pride in appearance and presentation, and collective ethos. He had made the suggestion that a compulsory uniform might be considered at least for Year 6 most of whom will be required to wear a uniform when they start at secondary school.

It was noted that the school does currently have a uniform, the question was whether it should be made compulsory. It was also noted that there can be various gradations in what is actually required when uniform is compulsory. This is a well worn debate with strong feelings on both sides and there was reluctance to allocate significant time to it at this point. However, since the issue had been raised, **RG** said that she would organise a working group to consider the issue over the summer and report to FGB1.

- (iii) Cursive handwriting: the writing (and handwriting teaching) in Years 1 and 2 had been praised, and this standard of writing will flow through to the higher years in due course. Peter Cox has advised that all hand-outs and displays should use cursive writing. PS explained that it is difficult to focus on handwriting in KS2 with so many other requirements to cover. There had been an ongoing internal debate as to whether cursive writing should start in reception and this is likely to happen going forward. It was noted that the assessment criteria for handwriting in the new curriculum are extremely rigorous and can result in very able pupils not getting full credit for their abilities. It was queried whether a formal writing policy is required.
- (iv) Number of staff teaching in Year 6: As deputy head, PS has extra duties to undertake some of which have to be undertaken during school hours. He said that he had explained this to his class, whilst stressing that they are his priority. In addition, the intervention strategy devised to achieve improved levels of progress within this cohort involves PS focussing on the individuals who need extra help leaving others to teach the rest of the class for some non-core subjects. Whilst his routine absences seem to be well accepted, he had had a number of additional absences shortly before Peter Cox's visit (for training, an interview panel and conference attendance) which was probably what prompted the concerns raised by some pupils. It was noted that once at secondary school, pupils will need to get used to having a number of different teachers for different subjects.
- (v) Assessment of Teaching: this had been good overall, taking into account that CB and PS know their school well, know what they are doing and exercise good judgement.

#### 6.7 Review of progress against OFSTED recommendations from 2013 inspection

It was noted that many things have changed since 2013, it is important to look forwards too and the criteria OFSTED will apply next time will be different.

Nevertheless, the recommendations from the last inspection will be a starting point for the next inspection and it is a requirement to keep them under review. CB said that she keeps the recommendations in mind and they appear on the SEF too. She and PS will now review progress against them and report back to FGB4.

One positive comment from the last inspection related to in-post training undertaken and disseminated by the subject heads at that time, for eg with regard to reciprocal reading. It was queried whether this has continued. CB said that there is not a one size fits all approach either to learning or teaching. Some staff are comfortable with reciprocal reading and others prefer guided reading, some use it in part but not all the time. In addition, a balance has to be achieved between preparation for SATs and nurturing creativity. It was queried whether a whole school approach is needed, or a vision or policy to underpin this flexibility. It was noted that the new Year 3 teacher will have the opportunity to take stock, in assuming responsibility for English, the SDIP will cover reading and writing, and ESW will discuss these issues further too.

## 6.8 Review of PE and Sport Funding and Outcomes:

Various questions were raised. Access to after school sport was discussed. There has been insufficient take up of most free/voluntary clubs - only football remains. It was suggested that the children should be asked what clubs they would like to have on offer. With relevance also to behaviour management in the playground, the possibility of lunch time sports clubs was raised. However, the fact that lunch is by way of graded sittings makes this tricky. The lunch time supervisors and TAs have their hands full already although some of the Year 6 children are acting as sports leaders at play time. Meanwhile, whilst CPD PE training is available, not all staff are motivated to do it.

It was explained that the £9,000 PE funding is an annual payment deriving from the Olympics legacy. The school sets objectives which is monitors. *It was queried what the base line for this exercise is and how improvement is measured.* It was suggested that some of the targets were aspirational but either not achievable or not tangible. Essentially, the aim is to increase up take of pupils in sport and involvement, for example, in external tournaments; to conduct good PE lessons and to continually strive to improve these; and ultimately for PE to have an impact on outcomes such as academic attainment. These missions are ongoing from one year to the next. It appeared that there may be scope to develop more measurable goals and CB will keep this under review. OFSTED is interested in how the money is used and the Head Teacher's report on PE funding and outcomes needs to go on the website. However, the view was also expressed that sometimes investment of money generates good but intangible results.

## 6.9 Pupil Premium Report:

This report appears on the school website. It is done retrospectively, so the current report is the impact review for 2014-15. It is anticipated that for 2015-16 the vast majority will make expected progress. Again, the report will be discussed in more detail by ESW. Generally, it was noted that the number of pupil premium children is, like those with SEN designation, reducing year by year, in part as a reflection on the changing intake of children.

## 7.0 **School Vision**

JC talked about the vision document and how it had been created. A brainstorming meeting involving governors and staff had been held to think about what we want the school to look like in 3 to 5 years time and what needs to be done to achieve this. Rob Mc Neil had helped to turn the ideas into statements for the purpose of consultation with staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. The consultation will be used to identify preference and priorities.

Thanks were expressed to Rob Mc Neil and in particular JC for all their work - the Vision was felt to be realistic, inspiring and consistent with the school's values. It was noted that the Vision Statement is not an end in itself and will be treated as a working document. The acid test will be to deliver on it. It was also noted that the vision will need to be linked to the budget – ie taking into account funding restraints.

The aim is to consult during the coming 2 months with a view to the Vision Statement being finalised and approved at FGB4 and published in September 2016. In the first instance it was agreed that **JP, RH and RG** will meet with **JC** to work on the consultation/survey document, this will be shown to **PS** and input from other

governors will also be invited within a set timeframe. The document they produce will then be sent to Lynne Rushton for her professional input. The vision and consultation process will be presented to the parents' forum on 6<sup>th</sup> May with the survey to follow soon after. **JC** will liaise with **PS** with regard to consultation with pupils.

## 8.0 Policies

Update on Policies Matrix and review of policies for the current academic year:

The current version of the policies matrix to be provided to Lisa Penton (LP) and she to be asked to flag to CB which policies need updating/reviewing, with a view to CB's drafts being provided to the relevant committee or FGB chair ahead of the meeting at which they need to be approved. The chair will then assign the draft to a governor for review. LP then to update the policies matrix and website as appropriate and ensure that the updated version is the one that is used in practice. In due course it is envisaged that the new business manager would take responsibility for keeping policies up to date, liaising with the governors to obtain approval of updates as and when required. CT reported that all ESW policies are up to date. Any policies requiring updating and approval by HPR to be provided to the HPR chair in good time before HPR3. **action CB and LP**

## 9.0 Governors

### 9.1 Election of new chair of FGB to commence with immediate effect:

JP was the only nominee and was elected unanimously by show of hands.

### 9.2 Election of new chair of HPR to commence with immediate effect:

BS was the only nominee and was elected unanimously by show of hands.

### 9.3 Handover arrangements:

Handover for FGB chair was already underway as AR would shortly be away on business. He and JP were meeting with CB the next day to handover on the chair/Head Teacher 1:1 meetings. AR will continue to provide guidance and support going forwards.

JP will meet with BS for an HPR chair handover.

### 9.4 parent governor election:

AR suggested that this takes place before half term so that the new parent governor who replaces him can attend the last sub-committee and FGB meetings of the academic year to help get them up to speed before they commence their appointment in September 2016. **JP** to prepare call for nominations letter and **UI** to liaise with Jo Carr to plan the election process.

### 9.5 Governor Newsletter:

**RG** will refer in the next issue to JP being the new FGB chair and to the forthcoming parent governor election. Her aim is to publish one issue before the end of April and another at the end of term.

### 9.5 Contact details on reception notice board and website:

Most governors did not wish to give out their phone numbers. Reference to contacting governors via the school office has already been added. Phone numbers will be added for the three governors who were happy to provide them.

**UI** to update all governor lists to reflect changes to FGB and HPR chairs, and amend notice board contact details as agreed, and provide all these to Jo Carr and

Lisa Penton as well as to governors. Lisa Penton to update governor details on the school's website.

**9.6** Governor Photographs for reception and newsletters:

All those who have not provided photographs to attend when the School photographer visits in May.

**9.7** Governor training:

The following courses had been attended:

- Quality of teaching – JC
- Engaging with the community – RG
- Governor Induction – BS
- Safeguarding also CB's assessment information training – all governors

UI would be attending the April 2016 clerk's briefing.

**BS** needs to undertake the online Prevent training.

No other current training needs were identified.

**10. Urgent other business**

none

Meeting ended at 8.40pm

Date of next meeting: 5.30 pm Thursday 23 June 2016

**Tabled papers**

- FGB2 draft minutes from 10.12.15
- HPR2 draft minutes from 2.3.16
- Staff well being policy
- Head Teacher's report (including Peter Cox's inspection report)
- School Vision