



# St George's Primary School

## Full Governor Body Meeting

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017

Lower Site Main Hall 5:30pm

### Present

#### Community Governors

P. Walters	FGB Chair
B. Clark	FGB Vice Chair
K. Wadcock	
A. Ward	
M. Wiggins	
N. Sullivan	

#### Parent Governors

P. Dunning  
C. Scott  
R. Olsen  
S. Slater  
A. Fisher

#### Staff Governors

L. Horton	
B. Cassidy	Head Teacher

#### Also Present

K. Choudhary	Clerk
M. Chambers	Assistant Head

#### Apologies

C. Roberts	Business Manager
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### Item 1 Using Governing Body Platform

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K. Choudhary introduced FGB to the newly created (Governor focused) shared platform for file sharing.

FGB informed that the school will no longer be producing hard copies of papers for meetings given the school has recently acquired iPads and Governors can access meeting papers electronically.

FGB also informed that papers will not be sent to personal email accounts moving forward as this is now seen as best practice in relation to data protection.

## **Item 2 Welcome, Apologies and AOB of previous meeting**

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Apologies accepted as above.

K. Choudhary welcomed FGB members, giving special mention to the schools newest Governors attending their first Full Governing Body meeting.

K. Choudhary informed FGB that a number of Governors will need to have their photograph taken at the end of the meeting to produce their school ID badge.

## **Item 3 Confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors**

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FGB agreed (and formally recorded) that the roles of Chair and Vice will continue until September 2018 as per the Scheme of Delegation introduced in January 2017. As such, P. Walters will Chair and B. Clark will Vice Chair FGB until September 2018.

## **Item 4 Declaration of any business or pecuniary interests**

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B. Clark reminded FGB that he is a Governor at Weatherhead High School.

## **Item 5 Minutes of previous meeting and action points**

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Minutes accepted as a true and accurate record.

All actions points from previous meeting have been completed or are to be discussed in the meeting.

## **Item 6 Committee Roles for 2017/18**

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FGB identified that there are Governors that have not yet been assigned to subcommittee groups which led to a brief discussion on Governor 'fatigue' given that some are members on all three subcommittees.

B. Clark informed FGB that he is still waiting on a few Governors to complete their Skills Audit paperwork. As such, this is hindering process in assigning Governors to subcommittee groups (based of their skills identified from skills audit).

**ACTION FGB1 (11/17):** B. Clark to share proposed table of committees based on Skills Audit paperwork received to date.

**ACTION FGB2 (11/17):** Governors to ensure that those that have not already done so, complete their Skills Audit paperwork as a matter of urgency with the view of ensuring parity of subcommittee duties.

It was suggested to FGB that being assigned to a subcommittee group doesn't not limit them to that group only and Governors will still be welcome onto any group of their choice.

SLT reminded FGB that there the Vice Chair role is currently vacant for the C&PC.

**RESOLUTION:** P. Dunning suggested he would be willing to take on the role given he is the Lead Governor for Pupil Premium. B. Clark nominated and P. Walters seconded. **P. Dunning as approved as Vice Chair for C&PC until September 2018** (when Chair and Vice Chair for all subcommittee groups will be revisited as per the Scheme of Delegation agreed in January 2017).

It was suggested that FGB looks should invest time in looking at a more effect Governor Induction Process and investigate quicker ways of giving new Governors insight into the workings of the subcommittees?

**RESOLUTION:** FGB informed that new Governors had received an induction prior to the FGB meeting. This is the first time the new induction process has been carried out by the school and will hopefully provide further insight into the workings of subcommittees.

#### **Item 7 Nominated Governor Roles**

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As per ACTION CP2(10/17) from the C&PC, B. Clark informed FGB that the Nominated Governor role for English is currently vacant with all other curriculum area being filled. As such, nominations were sought.

**RESOLUTION:** S. Slater suggested she would be willing to take on the role given her previous professional experiences. B. Clark nominated and P. Walters seconded. **S. Slater approved as English Lead Governor.**

#### **Item 8 Period 6 update with 3 year projections**

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C. Robert is currently on sick leave. As such, his item is deferred to the next FGB meeting.

P. Walters informed the group that he and C. Scott had recently met with C. Roberts and that the figures looked promising within the context of a challenging landscape.

B. Cassidy suggested that there has been a very slight amendment to the report tabled at R&PC however C. Scott (in her capacity as Vice Chair to R&PC) had not seen it.

**ACTION FGB2 (11/17):** C. Roberts to send latest version of Period 6 to C. Scott

#### **Item 9 Complaints Policy**

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The Complaint Policy was circulated in the papers.

FGB informed that SLT was asked to draft a Complaints Policy to ensure that the school was compliant with any external requirements. The Policy closely mirrors advice produced by National Governors Association (**NGA**) and National Association of Head Teacher (**NAHT**). The document outlines procedure and guidance which highlights the need for transparency within the school, valuing complaints and makes sure people are signposted towards a clear process on how this can be done.

It was suggested that most complaints are not actually recorded as they are informal concerns and resolved very quickly – they are a matter of informal resolution.

SLT keen to highlight what people should expect in the schools Complaints Policy, in terms of response and what the role of Governors is in the process (whilst recognising that the role is not an operational one). Generally, the role of Governors is to identify if policy has been followed and to give advice back to SLT in responding to a complaint.

It was stated that if a complaint is escalated to Governors, the complainer will be informed that they will be complaining about policy not being followed or be complaining about conduct of the Head Teacher.

FGB stated that the complaint policy signposts complaints directed towards FGB towards Chair however the contact email is the schools clerk. Is this an administrative error?

**RESOLUTION:** No this is intentional to ensure that the clerk is about to provide advice and guidance where appropriate.

FGB asked is there is anything in the policy with regards to repeated complaints against an individual?

**RESOLUTION:** FGB informed that there is a Vexatious section in the policy which addresses this.

SLT stated that (from previous experiences in other schools) there is a concern about the amount of times there is a long history of issues or complaints that have not properly formally recorded and effective procedures around that. As such, SLT very clear moving forward that processes will be followed.

SLT informed FGB that school office staff have received training in how to deal with complaint and identified Tara Knight as Complaints Manager.

#### **Item 10 Website Compliance**

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Website compliance documents circulated in the papers.

FGB informed that SLT has conducted a full compliance check on the school's website. This process started from 4<sup>th</sup> Sept '17. The school has endeavoured to update every section and document on the website however where they have been unable to provide information, the school has been transparent that this is the case. For example, on the PE report, the school is supposed to publish the number of pupils who can swim to the minimal national swimming standard but the school has not been collecting the data until recently. As such, the school has identified a **target** in the absence of data - 85% of young people by the end of year 6 to meet the minimal national swimming standards.

SLT have stated that where there is missing data, the school will post figures in due course.

FGB informed that the Parents Section goes live by the end of December '17.

SLT stated that they welcome governor feedback on the website developments.

#### **Item 11 Governing Body and Academy Options**

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FGB informed that B. Cassidy, B. Clark and P. Dunning recently attended a Wallasey Alliance **(WA)** meeting aimed targeted towards SLT and governors to discuss Academisation options moving forward. It was suggested that there was varying levels of debate within different schools and as such differing levels of understanding.

At the end of the meeting all 5 WA members (St Georges, Liscard, Mount, New Brighton and Greenleas Primary Schools) were asked to consider whether or not they are actively pursuing the option of a Multi Academy Trust **(MAT)**. It was suggested that schools are all in differing positions.

FGB informed that the Local Authority will no longer be overseeing maintained schools from April 2018 and as a maintained school, St Georges will only be accountable to the Regional School Commissioner. As such, the school longer will be part of a network of 120 local primary schools but rather a larger network of circa 2500 primary schools across the region.

The meeting debated whether WA members should become an academy together or what the other options are.

B. Cassidy was asked by Chair and Vice Chair to look at what is happening locally and as such, met with **Neil Dyment** (Head of Weatherhead Teaching School Alliance (**WTSA**)). WTSA recently launched the Peninsula Academy Trust and are actively looking for schools to join their academy trust. B. Cassidy stated there are local academies locally citing that two local schools recently joined the Chester CoE Diocese Academy Trust.

B. Cassidy suggested that he is hesitant moving forward with either option as there is a lack of primary school involvement in the existing models which raises questions around pupil, staff and curriculum.

FGB asked is B. Cassidy exploring options for all WA members?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that he is only exploring the options for St Georges Primary as per Chair and Vice Chair request and other heads have been tasked with the same task by their Governors.

B. Cassidy suggested there is a lot of merit in what Peninsula are trying to establish however he does not believe that is the right course of action at this time for the school.

Another question raised at the WA meeting was 'what's the model of Governance?' It was suggested that the Federation option was seemed popular at the meeting with, for example, two schools merging into one school and one governing body. B. Cassidy stated that he did not see the benefit in this model given the schools ethos and community engagement aims moving forward.

FGB asked what is the difference between federation/ one governing body and an academy?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that within an academy, schools would still remain autonomous, sharing as much or as little as they like. The academy would have a Board of Directors that meet infrequently and would typically discuss school strategic direction – not operational matters however they do have executive powers (currently held by the local authority) and if the school is underperforming, they would be empowered to engage with the schools Governing Body and provide strategic direction to ensure school success. B. Cassidy suggested that he (after exploring the options) believes that WA is still the most beneficial and positive option.

FGB asked are there any other local primary schools considering the Peninsula Academy Trust option?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated (to his knowledge) that the other WA members are not considering this option.

FGB asked can we just 'coast along' with the WA moving forward keeping the status quo?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that the status quo is not an option as aligning with the WA would mean the school would have to formally enter into MAT arrangements. B. Cassidy will send governors briefing papers in advance of that meeting.

FGB informed that there is an open meeting for all governors and Head Teachers on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 5:45pm at Liscard Primary School.

**ACTION FGB3 (11/17):** K. Choudhary to send diary reminder to FGB.

FGB asked whether or not there is an option for the school to gain academy status by itself with partner schools join St Georges further down the line?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that this is not an option as the Regional Schools Commission is not supporting single academies trust – only MAT. It was suggested that this is one of the main reasons Weatherhead HS moved into the Peninsula Trust Academy.

#### **Item 12 Questions on decisions made by other committees**

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No questions were raised.

K. Choudhary informed FGB that current best practice is to ratify all subcommittees minutes at the Full Governing Board meeting given that all Governors attend this meeting.

All subcommittee groups' minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record. **Ratified**

#### **Item 13 Staff Survey feedback**

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FGB reminded that at the last meeting, FGB asked SLT to engage with school staff and ask them to consider what can SLT and governors do to help them do their role more effectively?

SLT have produced a document that they find extremely useful as it more clearly outlines what school staff concerns. SLT stated that staff really valued the fact that they knew governors where getting sight of their feedback.

SLT stated that the school has invested considerable sums into curriculum resources and any savings made in the schools' budget is being reinvested into curriculum resources. For example, the school has very recently invested a further £6.5k on books, circa £7k on maths equipment, £62k on ICT equipment and £3.5k on PE equipment.

SLT stated that the school will be making similar financial investments into foundation curriculums next year; History, Geography, Music, Art and Design Technology.

#### **Item 14 Policy Ratification**

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SLT stated that the Social Media Policy and Missing Child Policy had been missed out of the ratifications at recent C&PC.

SLT have had to clarify a number of issues with school staff with regards to privacy settings and not talking about work related issues on social media. FGB informed that circa 50% of staff disciplinary issues involving school staff and local authority where related to social media. As such, SLT stated that this policy is not about being punitive – it is about being **proactive**.

**VOTE TAKEN AND APPROVED:** Social Media Policy **ratified**.

FGB informed that there is nothing new in the Missing Child Policy and it should have been attached to Attendance Policy and in future these two documents will be merged.

**VOTE TAKEN AND APPROVED:** Missing Child Policy **ratified**.

## Item 15 Head Teachers Report to Governors

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Head Teachers Report to Governors circulated as part of the papers.

B. Cassidy that the report is very transparent and there is nothing to specifically highlight. He has tried where possible not to recreate the School Development Plan. B. Cassidy suggested that the report meets all statutory requirements.

B. Cassidy stated the report does not contain enough detail with regards to safety and behaviour however FGB is already aware that procedures have recently been implemented to record this data and that will allow an annual breakdown (by year group and term) highlighting this information. B. Cassidy will report this termly for 2017-18.

FGB commented on page 1 of the document which suggests there is a critical issue in year 6 with regards to how far the cohort is off national standard levels and asked how confident are SLT that the school can narrow the gap before they leave the school?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that the reports suggests just below 60% but acknowledged that this is far too low but every effort is being undertaken to address this issue with the cohort, on average, scheduled to make circa 20 months progress with in 1 academic year. It was suggested that if FGB had been informed about the number of exclusions and high staff turnover within this cohort in a transparent Head Teachers Report the issue would have been highlighted and addressed much sooner. B. Cassidy stated that the schools' year 6 pupils are a fantastic cohort whose behaviour is now excellent, who are working really hard and would be a real credit to any school – as are the staff. While SLT are confident they can turn it around moving forward, they are in a difficult situation and the catch up gap is massive – and made even challenging given the short time remaining.

Anecdotally, FGB suggested that the feedback they have received is really positive but recognise the challenging situation.

FGB asked is there anything that the group can do to assist?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that the support is welcome but operationally the school has allocated resources appropriately and SLT are supporting school staff in delivering further sessions.

FGB asked what have the cohort been told?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that parents and pupils have been told that there are things that they have missed out on in the past and as such the school has introduced new curriculums.

It was reiterated that there was is no issue with the year 6 cohort and the suggestion is that they were failed.

## Item 16 SENDCO Governors Report

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R. Olsen delivered a verbal update.

**ACTION FGB4 (11/17):** B. Cassidy to forward copy of report created by SENDCO (S. Huxley) to K. Choudhary for circulation amongst FGB.

FGB informed that R. Olsen (in his capacity as SEND Lead Governor) regularly meets with SENDCO. It was suggested that there are a number of issue with the SEND cohort and S. Huxley and her team are endeavouring to address these issues across the school.

R. Olsen stated that while the direction of travel is promising, the school staff have suggested that it is going to take a while to embed best practices.

It was stated that every teacher is now able to deal with SEND pupil with learners no longer being signposted exclusively towards specialist teachers. There are now rigorous procedures in place and early intervention is seen as a key to success given that if pupils are identified sooner, their needs can be identified earlier. There is a graduated approach predicated on assess, plan, do and review.

FGB reminded that the SEND Report 2017-18 was circulated to C&PC for information as part of the papers and stated that the document clearly signposts parents towards addition support from the school. SEND Report 2017-18 is on the school's website. FGB reminded that this is a statutory document.

FGB thanked the schools SEND staff for their endeavours.

K. Wadcock gave apologies and left the meeting.

#### **Item 17 Governors Training and Support**

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K. Choudhary signposted Governors towards the following training tools and support;

- National Governors Association (**NGA**)
- The Key
- Educare Training
- Wallasey Alliance

Some FGB members stated that they could not remember their usernames/ passwords.

**ACTION FGB5 (11/17):** C. Robert to send reminder log in details for NGA, The Key and Educare.

#### **Item 18 Workload Group meeting**

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SLT stated that the school needs 2 governors to move forward the Workload Review (conducted with staff towards the end of last academic year).

FGB suggested Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December '17 2:30 pm – 4:00pm. **S. Slater and R. Olsen to attend.** P. Dunning will act as a reserve.

#### **Item 19 AOB**

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None

#### **Item 20 Date and Time of next meeting**

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Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018 @ 5:30pm

The meeting finished at 7:30pm

Chair Sign Off:

Date:

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Item	Summary of actions from meeting	Whom	Date to be completed
6	<b><u>FGB1 (11/17)</u></b> : B. Clark to share proposed table of committees based on Skills Audit paperwork received to date.	B. Clark	Dec '17
6	<b><u>FGB2 (11/17)</u></b> : Governors to ensure that they complete their Skills Audit paperwork as a matter of urgency with the view of ensuring parity of subcommittee duties	All	Dec '17
8	<b><u>FGB3 (11/17)</u></b> : B. Cassidy to send latest version of Period 6 to C. Scott	B. Cassidy	Dec '17
11	<b><u>FGB4 (11/17)</u></b> : K. Choudhary to send diary reminder to FGB re WA open meeting.	K. Choudhary	Dec '17
16	<b><u>FGB5 (11/17)</u></b> : B. Cassidy to forward copy of report created by SENDCO to K. Choudhary for FGB circulation.	B. Cassidy K. Choudhary	Dec '17
17	<b><u>FGB6 (11/17)</u></b> : C. Robert to send reminder log in details for NGA, The Key and Educare.	C. Roberts	Dec '17