

## OTLEY WESTGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of the full governing body meeting held on **Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 6.00pm**

<b>PRESENT</b>	Andrew Ross (Chair)	Helen Carpenter (Headteacher)
	Laura Bibby	Laura Boddy
	Christina Copperthwaite	Susie Day
	Matthew Fortune	Jessica Hignett
	Helen Hooper	Philippa Jervis
	Neil Richardson	

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Shanna Madden (Clerk – Governor Support Service)

<b>1.00</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.01	Apologies were accepted from L. Shackleton, B. Cunningham, and V. Mirfield.	
<b>2.00</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP MATTERS</b>	
2.01	As discussed at the previous full governing body (FGB) meeting, it was agreed that V. Mirfield would be appointed the Local Authority (LA) governor position. The Clerk agreed to update this on Leeds for Learning.	<b>Clerk</b>
2.02	The Headteacher (HT) mentioned that committee membership had not been decided for the new governors on the board. It was agreed that they would attend and observe a few before deciding at the organisational meeting in September 2024.	
<b>3.00</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
3.01	All new governors had already declared any interests and there were no additional ones for this meeting.	
<b>4.00</b>	<b>QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</b>	
4.01	The Chair highlighted that the national data provided in the report was different compared to the data which was used on the self-evaluation form (SEF). The HT agreed to check and update this.	<b>HT</b>
4.02	The HT mentioned that there had been an increase in the amount of Pupil Premium (PP) eligible students. This would mean that those students would have access to more resources and support.	
4.03	There was a pupil who was formerly looked after in a complex situation. The HT explained that the school may be able to access some support for them through social care.	
4.04	<b>Q</b> – Is reception full for September 2024? <b>A</b> – Yes, we have 30 confirmed places with two on the waiting list.	

- 4.05 The Chair mentioned that there had been a predicted low intake for 2024 in Otley a few years ago.
- 4.06 **Q** – Was that because of the COVID-19 Pandemic?  
**A** – It does typically fluctuate because it is a small community. The gaps across schools can vary. It all depends on where children live and where siblings are.
- 4.07 The HT stated that the safeguarding audit in February 2024 had been helpful, and progress had been made on the concerns raised.
- 4.08 **Q** – Are there any trends in safeguarding incidents?  
**A** – They have been fairly consistent over the years. We have only started using CPOMs this year, so we do not yet have any data to compare with. All students with Child Protections Plans have left the school.
- 4.09 All governors confirmed that they had read the Annual Report on Monitoring (ARM) and agreed that it was accurate.
- 4.10 **Q** – Is V. Mirfield involved in the ARM return as the safeguarding governor?  
**A** – No, it takes some time to complete, but everything has been discussed with her previously.
- 4.11 **Q** – Have the new governors completed the safeguarding training?  
**A** – Yes, they all have accessed the online safety and child protection training.
- 4.12 S. Day stated that she had completed a monitoring visit for the recent Year Six SATs tests. She confirmed that there was no hard helping happening.
- 4.13 The HT added that the school would find out the results in July 2024.
- 4.14 The report included the school's attendance data and compared this with the national data. The Department for Education (DfE) had started to invite schools to submit their data with their live attendance data system. The HT stated that she had done this but that this comparison did not show the same reflections as the national data comparison. The data from the DfE system would be shared at the next FGB meeting. Attendance was a significant issue across the country. Westgate Primary's attendance was above the national average but there were areas of concern. There was one pupil who had not attended the school in person since December, but the school was working hard to rectify this.

- 4.15 A governor noted that the levels of persistent absences seemed high. The HT explained that this included all pupils with less than 90% attendance.
- 4.16 A governor mentioned the relaxed attitude that some parents had about the term time holiday fine. The HT agreed that this had been seen in recent months and explained that since the pandemic, the social obligation for parents to ensure their children attended school had been broken. This was frustrating for teachers as attendance was vital for pupil's development. The cost-of-living crisis had also had an impact as it was cheaper to go on holiday during term time. The HT assured governors that it was very rare that those holidays were approved.
- 4.15 There had been no exclusions since the last FGB meeting.
- 4.16 The Online Safety Group had organised a parent workshop for June 2024.
- 4.17 **Q** – Will the changes to the Educational, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) increase the workload for staff?  
**A** – Leeds City Council (LCC) are in the process of making changes to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding system. The city is an outlier because of how they allocate the SEND funding – this method is not the same as most other areas. There had been some questions about the legal compliance of how this is done in Leeds, so the new Director for Education is investigating this. The school has very high needs in Year Two and below, but there is a lot less need in Key Stage Two (KS2). At the last meeting with the LA, they said that they expected that 60-80% of students who currently receive extra funding without an EHCP would be able to receive one in the new system. This will be a time-consuming process. Students typically have to reapply for funding every two years, but this has been delayed this year because of the changes. We have applied for three EHCPs this term and have another one in progress. Our overall funding for SEND children is predicted to decrease.
- 4.18 The Chair shared concerns about the lack of money and the impact this would have on the school's ability to fully support SEND pupils.
- 4.19 A governor added that their school sometimes struggled to get EHCP applications approved because they argued that the school could support the pupils without the additional funding.
- 4.20 Further concerns were raised about the impact this would have on transitions into secondary education.
- 4.21 The HT emphasised that there were many children with very high needs who would not manage without the additional funding. She

explained that the LA had listened to concerns raised by HTs and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and that those issues were being taken seriously. The HT felt that the situation was being managed as best as possible.

4.22 **Q** – There are significant waiting lists for neurodivergent diagnoses, is there anything that can be done to support them in receiving their diagnosis?

**A** – Children do not need an official diagnosis to apply for an EHCP, however the waiting lists for them are concerning. CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Services) have stated that their waiting lists are up to 14 years. Even the ‘right to choose’ option through the private sector is up to two years.

4.23 A governor mentioned that the climate crisis section of the report was very interesting. The Chair explained the reasoning for the structure of the HT’s report and added that it was a useful format for Ofsted inspections.

## **5.00 GOVERNOR MONITORING OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

5.01 The SEF had been circulated to governors prior to this meeting.

5.02 The HT stated that the School Leadership Team (SLT) had met on Tuesday 21 May 2024 to review the school improvement priorities (SIP). Overall, there had been good progress made over the past year. The mental health strategies priority had been challenging as the school had not been able to secure staff training in that area. The four new priorities for the next academic year had been agreed and the first draft would be available at the next FGB meeting.

**FGB  
Agenda**

5.03 The first priority focused on increasing students’ capacity for learning. This would include work on adult’s roles in the development of this priority, overhauling the behaviour policy, introducing the ‘scrap shed’ for use at playtimes, and further training for staff.

5.04 **Q** – Is this for Key Stage One (KS1) or the whole school?

**A** – This applies to the whole school. We hope to support their collaborative and cooperative skills and encourage less turn-taking games/play.

5.05 The second priority was based on English skills. The school would aim to raise standards through continuing coherence and progressions. The subject leader for English was in the process of developing an action plan for this priority.

5.06 The third priority was to increase progress and understanding, especially through knowledge retrieval. Lessons would include more

science-based strategies as well as moving learning into children's long-term memories.

5.07 The fourth priority was to meet the needs of all learners. The school would analyse how support staff were utilised around the school and strategically place them according to need. The HT explained how support staff were currently organised.

5.08 **Q** – Will this include upskills Teaching Assistants (TAs)?  
**A** – Yes.

5.09 **Q** – There has been a high percentage of absences from support staff compared to class teachers – will there be a risk to those with higher need because of this?  
**A** – There have been two long term absences from support staff this year, however they no longer work at the school so this should improve. It was an issue to the point where we struggled to cover their responsibilities within school.

5.10 **Q** – How many support staff members can the school afford to lose while still being able to run classes?  
**A** – The two main absences have meant that we have had to prioritise support staff based on where the biggest need in the school is. For short-term absences, some TAs can act as Higher-Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and cover lessons, however this will be less possible with potential cutbacks. When we cannot afford to employ supply staff, I end up covering classes.

5.11 The staff governor identified that the changes and absences could have knock-on effects which would be more challenging to reorganise.

5.12 All visit reports had been circulated.

5.13 There had been no NOVACs (Notice of Visit and Contacts) since the last FGB meeting.

## **6.00 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

### **6.01 Resolved:**

- That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and the Chair was authorised to sign them subject to the following amendments which were handwritten on the signed copy:

Minute 8.09 – repetition of “had not been discussed”.

6.02 The HT confirmed that she had sent a thank you card to R. Smith, S. Mumford, and S. Clough for their roles on the governing board.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
7.01	<b>Membership Matters (minute 2.09 refers):</b> Action closed; the Clerk had confirmed that the draft letter to R. Smith was appropriate.	
7.02	<b>Governor Day Reflection (minute 4.02 refers):</b> Action closed; concerns raised by governors on their visit to school were sent to the HT via email.	
7.03	<b>Governor Day Reflection (minute 4.05 refers):</b> Action closed; governors had sent their summaries of the day's events to the Chair.	
7.04	<b>Q –</b> Where can we find the newsletter on the website? <b>A –</b> It has not been uploaded onto there yet however I will ensure this is done.	<b>HT</b>
7.05	<b>Questions about the HT's Report (minute 5.17 refers):</b> Action closed; the HT explained that the discrepancies in the data on the previous report were due to a formulation error as there was a student who had joined from overseas, so the school did not have their data.	
7.06	<b>Governor Monitoring of SIP (minute 6.05 refers):</b> This action remained outstanding; the HT had not been able to arrange mental health training yet.	<b>HT</b>
7.07	<b>Governor Monitoring of SIP (minute 6.06 refers):</b> Action closed; all governors had completed the online safety training.	
7.08	The Chair highlighted to all governors that there was a training log where governors could track what they had completed. N. Richardson agreed to share the link to this with all governors. Governors were reminded that they could include training from their work or outside of the governing body to highlight the skills of the board.	<b>N. Richardson</b>
7.09	<b>Governor Monitoring of SIP (minute 6.09 refers):</b> Action closed; the Emotional, Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) governor role would be addressed at item 13 of this meeting.	
7.10	<b>Governor Monitoring of SIP (minute 6.10 refers):</b> Action closed; the Resources (R) Committee had reviewed the recruitment list for new governors at their last meeting.	
7.11	<b>Governor Monitoring of SIP (minute 6.11 refers):</b> Action closed; the HT and Chair had organised for potential governors to observe committee meetings.	

7.12	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting (minute 7.02 refers):</b> This action remained outstanding; the Chair agreed to arrange a time to visit the school to sign the minutes from the meeting on Thursday 23 November 2023.	Chair
7.13	<b>Matters Arising (minute 8.02 refers):</b> This action remained outstanding; the Chair agreed to send the Clerk the amendments needed for the minutes from Wednesday 20 September 2023.	Chair
7.14	<b>Matters Arising (minute 8.04 refers):</b> Action closed; governors had completed and sent the certificates for the online safeguarding training and the child protection training to the HT.	
7.15	<b>Matters Arising (minute 8.05 refers):</b> Action closed; the Pupil Premium (PP,) Sports Premium, Geography, and History monitoring visits had been scheduled.	
7.16	<b>Matters Arising (minute 8.06 refers):</b> Action closed; the Chair agreed to arrange a visit to the school to sign the minutes from the meeting on Thursday 23 November 2023 and this was already an action at item 7.12.	
7.17	<b>Matters Arising (minute 8.07 refers):</b> This action remained outstanding; the HT agreed to create a list which outlined the composition of the governing body and bring this to the next FGB meeting.	HT / FGB Agenda
7.18	<b>Matters Arising (minute 8.12 refers):</b> Action closed; the HT had checked the data from the meeting in November 2023. This had been corrected and made available to governors.	
7.19	<b>Matters Arising (minute 8.14 refers):</b> Action closed; it was decided that a section on the SIP on leadership structure was no longer necessary.	
7.20	<b>Committee Reports (minute 9.03 refers):</b> Action closed; the school financial value standard (SFVS) had been completed and submitted to the LA.	
7.21	<b>Committee Reports (minute 9.06 refers):</b> This action remained outstanding; the HT explained that the stakeholder surveys were ongoing, so this would be reviewed at the next Pupil Support (PS) meeting.	PS Agenda
7.22	<b>Committee Reports (minute 9.08 refers):</b> Action closed; the Early Years governor responsibility would be assigned during this meeting.	

- 7.23 **Policy Approval (minute 11.03 refers):** Action closed; the review of the Behaviour Principles Written Statement was on this meeting's agenda at item 14.
- 7.24 **Review of Information on the School Website (minute 12.02 refers):** Action closed; the accessibility compliance regulations had been sent to the HT.
- 7.25 **Review of Information on the School Website (minute 12.03 refers):** This action remained outstanding; the HT explained that the Accessibility Plan was due for review, so the website accessibility compliance check would be completed then as well.
- 7.26 **Q –** Do the accessibility regulations apply to other apps which parents use when interacting with the school?  
**A –** Yes, it should. We will not be using SIMs Parents for much longer and may be transferring to the School Gateway app instead.
- 7.27 A governor stated that each app would have its own accessibility statement as well.
- 7.28 **Any Other Urgent Business (minute 16.01 refers):** Action closed; the Chair stated that he had read the Governor Handbook but there had not been many changes. Governors were encouraged to also review it as it was a useful tool.

## 8.00 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 8.01 The Chair of the R Committee explained that at their last meeting they reviewed the budget in detail and there were no significant variances. They also reviewed the three-year budget plan; the next academic year looked positive, but the following two years indicate a deficit budget. A deficit action plan was developed as a result of this.
- 8.02 The Chair clarified that the deficit was due to the assumptions made in the current year's budget and this typically appeared more negative than it turned out to be. The HT confirmed that there had been no significant changes to income or expenditures.
- 8.03 **Q –** Are we in a deficit or not?  
**A –** We are carrying forward a surplus into next year, however the predictions indicate that we will be in a deficit in the future.
- 8.04 The HT clarified the details of the surplus budget and the deficit which was predicted. Governors were reminded that all of the details of the budget discussions were available for them to review in detail.
- 8.05 The Chair reassured governors that the school was in a more positive position than it was in the previous year. The HT explained

**FGB  
Agenda**



that it was best practice to submit a deficit action plan, and the Chair agreed to sign this.

8.06 Other points of note from the R Committee:

- Nursery and catering costs would be passed onto parents/carers.
- The school would not be increasing music lesson fees.
- The School's Financial Value Standard (SFVS) had been submitted.
- The outcome of the governor premises inspection would be passed onto the Superintendent to work on the actions.

8.07 A governor raised concerns about some issues with the catering provided and dietary requirements. The HT asked that this be taken to the school office to address.

8.08	<b>Resources committee statutory requirements:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
	The budget had been approved including the price of school meals.	Yes
	Health and safety policy had been approved.	Yes
	Charging and remissions policy had been approved.	Yes
	Mid-year performance management for teachers had been completed.	yes

8.09 The Chair for the PS was not present at this meeting, so another governor who was present provided an overview of what was discussed:

- All relevant policies were reviewed and approved.
- The PP Strategy was under development.
- It was agreed that the Equalities Governor would be agreed at the organisational FGB in September.
- It was suggested that 'wellbeing' should become a standard item on the agendas as not many visits in that area had been conducted.

8.10	<b>Pupil support committee statutory requirements:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
	The annual safeguarding self-assessment has been completed.	Yes
	School meets equalities requirements.	Yes

8.11 The Chair of the Curriculum committee went through what had been discussed at their latest meeting. Several policies had been approved, school reports to parents were discussed, and governors were given an update on the Whitby trip.

8.12	<b>Curriculum Committee statutory requirements:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
	School will be providing an annual report to parents.	yes

## 9.00 REPORT OF BUDGET FOR 2024-2025

9.01	The budget had been approved by the R Committee and discussed in detail earlier in this meeting.	
<b>10.00</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING UPDATE AND APPROVE ANNUAL RETURN</b>	
10.01	The safeguarding governor was not present at this meeting to provide a comprehensive update. The HT's report had included a detailed update on safeguarding within the school which all governors were happy with.	
<b>11.00</b>	<b>POLICY APPROVAL</b>	
11.01	The Staff Disciplinary Policy was not due for review until November 2024.	
11.02	The Staff Grievance Policy was reviewed in January 2024.	
11.03	The Staff Code of Conduct would be completed in September 2024.	
<b>12.00</b>	<b>EVALUATION OF GOVERNING BOARD EFFECTIVENESS</b>	
12.01	This item was deferred to the next FGB meeting.	<b>FGB Agenda</b>
<b>13.00</b>	<b>GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING</b>	
13.01	The training governor confirmed that the tracker was regularly updated. It was agreed that the link to the National Governors Association (NGA) would be shared with all governors as it had a lot of useful information.	<b>Training Gov</b>
13.02	There were some queries on how to access the Governor Hub Knowledge page as some governors were having difficulties getting their account approved. The Clerk agreed to investigate this.	<b>Clerk</b>
13.03	The HT suggested that a governor development afternoon should be organised to discuss the skills audit. It was decided that this would be discussed at the first meeting in September 2024.	<b>Sept FGB Agenda</b>
13.04	The HT agreed to share a link to the Governor Hub sign up page with all governors.	<b>HT</b>
13.05	It was agreed that J. Hignett would be the EWMH Governor and that C. Copperthwaite would be the Early Years Governor. The Clerk agreed to amend this on Leeds for Learning.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>14.00</b>	<b>BEHAVIOUR PRINCIPLES AND WRITTEN STATEMENT REVIEW</b>	
14.01	This was scheduled to be discussed in the PS Committee meeting in June 2024 and would be brought to the next FGB meeting.	<b>FGB Agenda</b>
<b>15.00</b>	<b>CHAIR'S BUSINESS</b>	
15.01	The Chair had no business to discuss.	

**16.00 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

16.01 It was agreed that committee allocation would be decided at the organisational FGB meeting in September.

**Sept FGB  
Agenda**

16.02 The skills audit would be completed before the summer holidays.

**HT**

16.03 The 'buddies' for new governors were agreed as follows:

- S. Day – L. Bibby.
- L. Boddy – J. Hignett.
- M. Fortune – P. Jervis.
- A. Ross – C. Copperthwaite.

**17.00 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

17.01 The HT agreed to email the Clerk with the dates for next year's meetings.

**HT**

17.02 The HT suggested that the committee dates should be set annually. A governor said that this would mean less flexibility. It was agreed that the meetings could be changed when necessary. The HT agreed to map out when the dates could be and send these to governors.

**HT**

17.03 The next meeting of the full governing body will be on Wednesday 17 July 2024 at 6.00pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.38pm.