



Date: 5th October 2023 at 5.30pm (meeting held in school)

Governors Present:

Rachel Cornes (Staff Governor)
Kim French (Staff Governor)
Margaret Frost (Parent Governor)
Paul Phipps (Parent Governor)
Mark Stowe (Chair)
Sally Whitehead (Headteacher)

In attendance:

Holly Horton (Assistant Principal)
Allan Howells (Director of Quality, The Learning Partnership)

Clerk: Lisna Bibi (Entrust Clerk) (Virtual)

Apologies:

Janet Diamond (Appointed Governor)
Kate Windle (Appointed Governor)
Sheila Manzano (Appointed Governor)

Administration

1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

Apologies for absence was received from Janet Diamond, Kate Windle and Sheila Manzano.

Resolved

That the apology for absence is received and accepted from Janet Diamond, Kate Windle and Sheila Manzano.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

3. Membership and Effectiveness Update

The Chair confirmed Sheila Manzano had been appointed as a Governor and that there were no other vacancies available on the Governing Board.

Mr Howell from The Learning for Life Partnership (TLP) was invited to attend the meeting. He briefly discussed the merger of The Learning for Life Partnership (TLP) and the Learning for Life Alliance to form one single partnership known as The Learning for Life Partnership (TLP), what new changes will arise due to this merger and how it will affect Wheelock Primary School (WPS).

The key points of his presentation were as follows: -

- The Models of Governance have been amended.
- A new Scheme of Delegation has been implemented by TLP.

- Changes have been made to the Terms of Reference (TOR) across all the different layers of the governance structure.
- The Local Advisory Board will now be known as the Local Governing Board (LGB).
- The role of the LGB has changed and will now focus primarily on the standards for education, the welfare of students and staff, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provisions and the relationship with the local community.
- The objective of TLP is to:
 - Support schools within the Trust in terms of school improvement and school infrastructure.
 - Ensure each school within the Trust has its own identity within the community it serves.
 - As a Trust have standardised documents such as policies and Headteacher’s Report to ensure a high quality of governance.
- The LGB will have 4 meetings per academic year.

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

4. Vision, Values and Ethos

The Headteacher referred Governors to the Headteacher’s Report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. She discussed the three core values of Wheelock Primary School, which are: -

- Believe.
- Belong.
- Be kind.

Governors were informed that both students and parents had participated in the selection of the three values. Staff have worked hard to ensure students understood the meaning of each value and implement these values throughout their academic life.

5. Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)

The Headteacher informed Governors she is in the process of re-writing the SEF following an inspection by Mike Cladingbowl (Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) Inspector and former CEO of the Learning Alliance). The updated SEF will be available for Governors’ perusal once it has been finalised.

The Headteacher stated in terms of the priorities for the SEF, these have already been completed and were extracted from the evaluation and based upon the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Governors were informed of the findings of Mr Cladingbowl’s inspection and that there is a risk Wheelock Primary could receive a “requires improvement” judgment from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) because of the phonics data from the last academic year. The Headteacher explained the reasons for such a judgement would be due to: -

- Last year’s Year 1 children were introduced to the new phonics scheme midway into their Reception academic year.
- Staff completed training for the new phonics scheme at the end of February.
- Staff required additional time to prepare assessments, resources etc after having completed their training.

The Headteacher explained that because of the data and depending on how the issue of the progress towards achieving the school improvement priorities for phonics from last year is articulated to Ofsted and what they

see during an inspection, Wheelock Primary could avoid receiving a “requires improvement” judgement as they are on track to achieve 85% of Year 1 students passing phonics screening check this year.

The Governing Board briefly discussed the findings from the Headteacher’s meeting with fellow Headteachers from Sandbach earlier that day, in relation to the significant rise of children with SEND and the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for SEND students.

6. School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The Headteacher discussed the school’s improvement priorities for Wheelock Primary. These remain the same objectives as last year and is a continued focus on phonics, curriculum, and writing.

The key priorities are: -

Priority 1:

- To continue implementation of an ambitious curriculum that caters for all learners including SEND and more able learners.
- To ensure effective teaching and learning strategies are consistently implemented across the school.

Priority 2:

- To ensure and promote high levels of progress in phonics and early reading.
- Ensure the Year 1 phonics data check and the Year 2 phonics re-sit data is above national outcomes.

Priority 3:

- To ensure and promote high levels of progress in writing.
- To continue implementation of an ambitious writing curriculum that caters for all learners including SEND and more able learners.

Education

7. Admissions and Pupil Numbers

Governors were referred to the Headteacher’s Report and given a brief update on admissions. It was noted that: -

- Six new students have joined the school since July 2023:
 - One new student in Year 3 which brings the total to 50 students in the whole year group, a very high number.
 - Two new students in Year 6.
 - Three new students in Year 5.
- There is a legal limit of thirty students per Reception of KS1 classroom.
- There are several ongoing admission appeal cases.
- Two students have left to go to different schools.
 - One student moved to a school out of the area.
 - One student left but it is not known why.

Question

Governors asked why it was important to know the reasons behind a former student leaving the school?

The Headteacher explained knowing it was so the school was informed of any possible issues the former student may have experienced and what action could have been carried out to resolve any such issue.

8. Attendance.

Governors were provided with a copy of the attendance data which had been collated by Fisher Family Trust (FFT), an organisation that provides education data to schools on matters such as attendance, attainment targets and national trends. The Headteacher reported that: -

- Attendance for the period 4th September 2023 – 22nd September 2023 was 97.2%, above the national figure of 95.5%.
- Historically there is an increase of pupil absence during week three of the new academic year and this continues to be the case, due to cheaper holiday costs outside of peak holiday time and being so close to the half-term break.
- Parents are fined for unauthorised absences.
- Miss Pamela Prince, the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), to continue monitoring attendance.

Question

Governors asked who was responsible for fining parents in respect of unauthorised absences and was it effective?

The Headteacher stated that the Local Authority is responsible for fining parents for unauthorised absences. She explained that the fine is not a deterrent to those parents determined to take their child on holiday during term time; this is because the costs of going on a holiday abroad during official school breaks is much higher than the costs incurred for a fine for unauthorised absence.

Governors were informed that the attendance data is reviewed termly, and that Wheelock Primary School has both a higher attendance rate and less persistent absence than nationally.

Challenge

Governors questioned the validity of the data and stated the figures does not show percentage shifts, furthermore the figure of 16.67% is not accurate.

The Headteacher explained the attendance data had been provided by FFT and any queries over the information would need to be raised with the company.

The Headteacher informed Governors that the Pupil Premium (PP) Strategy Review is not due until December and has therefore been deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: The Headteacher will review the PP Strategy at the next LGB meeting.

9. Behaviour

The Headteacher stated she had omitted to include an update on behaviour in her Headteacher's Report as the school is undergoing a change in respect to how they record this on their Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS). Wheelock Primary is implementing changes to the categories used in their CPOMS and this is being implemented across all schools in the Trust.

The Headteacher informed Governors, there had been no serious incidents at the time of writing her report and although she had some case studies, these could not be shared for confidentiality purposes as they contained students' names.

The Headteacher confirmed she will be able to utilise the updated CPOMS categories to give a more in-depth report on incidents of behaviour, including how many children were involved, at the next Board meeting.

The Headteacher briefly mentioned the changes they had implemented in the school's bullying policy, as discussed in the previous meeting. There is a new procedure to follow when it comes to bullying as upon review it was determined that the term "bullying" was often overused and inaccurate.

Definitions for bullying for both children and adults have been put in place and these can be found on the Anti-bullying procedure document on GovernorHub.

The Headteacher informed Governors that the Anti-bullying procedure document contains forms that staff members are required to complete after they have investigated incidents of alleged bullying.

Governors were informed that midday staff were being provided with bullying training by Miss Emma Sheridan, the Safeguarding and Mentor Lead, following feedback from students that midday staff were not dealing with allegations of bullying. The training is ongoing.

Question

Governor asked if the newly implemented Anti-bullying forms have reduced teachers' workloads?

The Headteacher explained the forms allow teachers to deal with incidents of "bullying" much more immediately and resolve the situation more quickly; thereby freeing up more of their time.

10. Curriculum – Progress

The Headteacher reminded Governors they had discussed the attainment data breakdown by year group at the previous Board meeting. She explained that the reason the combined results for reading, writing and maths had been greyed out was because there is no greater depth for this.

Question

Governors asked if the attainment results met the expectations of the school.

The Headteacher stated the writing results needed to be higher, particularly at greater depth; Wheelock Primary should be aiming for 80% at a minimum. The maths results together with the overall results for Key Stage 1 (KS1) could also be improved.

Governors were informed the current Year 2 children had been in a mixed classroom of combined Year 1 and 2 students throughout their KS1 education. She explained it is far easier to teach mixed age classes at a Key Stage 2 (KS2) level as the children are at a stage where they can access learning independently to varying degrees. With Year 1 students, there are a significant number of children who start the year having not achieved early learning goals; therefore, they are not ready to access the national curriculum. This issue has been addressed and going forward Year 1 and Year 2 will not be merged.

11. Curriculum – Attainment

Governors were provided copies of the data compiled by FFT for aspirational targets for end of key stage for each year group. The results were as follows: -

- Year 3 – not updated as the school is waiting for their data from last year to be validated by Department for Education (DfE).
- Year 4:
 - Reading – 82%.
 - Writing – 80%.
 - Maths – 87%.
- Year 5:
 - Reading – 82%.
 - Writing – 77%.
 - Maths – 91%.
- Year 6:
 - Reading – 89%.
 - Writing – 81%.
 - Maths – 84%.

The Headteacher reported that these were aspirational targets for some of the year groups, but the school will work hard to ensure it does everything it can to meet those targets and strategies have been put in place.

Governors were informed that Wheelock Primary are using the services of the National Tutoring Program (NTP), an initiative partly funded by the Government, and a tutor was visiting the school once a week to support children in Year 6 with their writing.

Welfare

12. Safeguarding

The Headteacher referred to the data in her report in respect of the number of safeguarding cases Wheelock Primary had. Since writing her report, an additional 2 families had been added to early help and it is expected those numbers will continue to rise.

The Headteacher discussed the rising safeguarding cases possibly having a correlation with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Staff are aware of more and more families at a “crisis point” because children are masking their behaviours to varying degrees in school, but then go home and are unable to continue masking which can lead to incidents of violent behaviour from some of children that are not necessarily displayed in school.

The Headteacher stated there is very limited help for such children and families. Whilst the school will refer cases to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), there is a long waiting period before a case will be reviewed. Furthermore, there is an extremely high threshold for eligibility for CAMHS due to high demand.

Challenge

Governors asked whether it would not be appropriate for schools to take a step back if children are not displaying violent behaviours at school, to protect the wellbeing of their staff who the Board are responsible for?

The Headteacher explained supervision sessions have been implemented to support teachers, this involves staff discussing their caseload with another member of staff to ease their worries and ensure they do not go home feeling anxious. However, there is difficulty implementing supervision sessions as often teachers are too busy to attend.

The Headteacher informed Governors that Wheelock are in a unique position whereby the school has a lot of children in need, but parents are reluctant to engage with early help. The school has received numerous correspondence from solicitors, from Family Courts and other parties because families are privately paying for their own lawyer/barrister. This creates extra work for staff as they must be careful as to how things are worded as their correspondence could be presented in front of a Judge at a Family Court hearing.

The Governing Board briefly discussed Mental Health Day. Governors noted that there seemed to be initiatives being implemented within Sandbach and several holiday clubs have been set to address childrens' wellbeing. The Headteacher confirmed that these wellbeing holiday clubs are being subsidised by Government grants and may be why there are so many of these clubs.

Challenge

Governors asked if the Government are providing grants for these holiday clubs, why does the school not take part and run these wellbeing holiday clubs?

The Headteacher explained that staff had discussed the possibility of running holiday clubs at Wheelock Primary; however, the structure of the school would have a negative impact on the staff. The placement of the toilets means children would have access to all classrooms and staff do not want to be responsible for unaccompanied children running around during holiday time.

The Headteacher referred Governors to her report and strategies that were being implemented to ensure pupils and parents not only have a voice, but also know what is going on. She informed Governors about the Friends of Wheelock School (FOWS) group that was set up run and by parents; she praised them for all their hard work and for raising money for the school.

The Headteacher reported that: -

- All staff had completed their Level 1 Safeguarding training in September and the school is compliant with their safeguarding training.
- There are upcoming reviews/audits booked in for December: the Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) audit, Emma Hooley from the Trust and audit with Janet Diamond.

13. Wellbeing and Welfare – Students

As noted in the Headteacher's Report.

The Headteacher briefly stated an update regarding the welfare and wellbeing of both students and staff, how this was being implemented, had been uploaded to GovernorHub and this information is available for Governors' perusal.

14. Wellbeing and Welfare – Staff

As noted in the Headteacher's Report and reported above.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

15. Stakeholder Engagement - Parents/Carers

The Governing Board briefly discussed stakeholder engagement and how Wheelock Primary would initiate parent/carers engagement.

The Headteacher stated the school will be hosting information evenings for parents/carers to attend, to attract attendees and make the event more appealing.

One of the main topics planned for this year's information evenings is a review of online safety. The school will invite SCiES and the police to attend and present facts and figures to highlight the importance of online safety.

The Headteacher explained she is planning to invite parents to submit their feedback regarding information evenings. She will submit a Microsoft form with a list of options that parents can vote on and what other topics they would like to see discussed at these information evenings.

ACTION: Headteacher to submit Microsoft forms to parents to obtain their feedback on information evenings.

The Headteacher discussed the SEND parent coffee mornings the school hosted last year. There was a brief discussion regarding the SEND support plan/targets and Governors were provided with an update as to changes being made this year to support staff and other key stakeholders to produce high quality, effective support plans for SEND students.

16. Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community

The Headteacher reported: -

- Wheelock Primary are part of the Sandbach and Haslington Sports Group which runs competitions in:
 - Cross country.
 - Netball.
 - Tag Rugby.
 - Football.
 - Cricket.
- Attended SEND meetings with all Sandbach EIP cluster schools including 2 high schools.
- The Headteacher confirmed she has regular meetings with other Headteachers to discuss matters such as transitions, speech and language and matters that are not to do with EHCP numbers.

17. AOB

The following matters was raised by the Governing Board: -

- School uniform:
 - Governors discussed the school uniform and how not all students follow the uniform regulations.
 - The Board agreed consistency was key.
 - Reminders to be circulated to both pupils and staff of the importance of adhering to the school uniform/professional workwear.
- Christmas trip:
 - There was a general discussion regarding the upcoming Christmas field trip.
 - The Board discussed the pros and cons of the children attending a Christmas pantomime.
 - KS2 children will be attending the Nutcracker performance at the New Vic Theatre.
 - A Christmas trip for KS1 children has not been finalised.
- Chairs forum:
 - Mr Howell provided an overview of the Chairs forum, the function of the forum, their objectives and how the sessions were organised.
- GovernorHub:

- Mr Howell informed Governors that this is the main program the Trust will be using to implement governance.
- GovernorHub gives the Board the ability to record their compliance to regulations which can easily be produced during an Ofsted inspection.
- Easy to access resources and information.
- Declaration of Interests – Mr Howell requested all Governors complete this information on the GovernorHub website and a brief guidance will be uploaded on to the noticeboard to explain how.

Challenge

Governors asked why was there a discrepancy in the school uniform and the school dress code not followed?

The Headteacher clarified there were a couple of reasons why it might appear that pupils at Wheelock are not all wearing school uniform. The students that participate in forest school are required to wear clothes that are okay to get dirty, tops that have long sleeves and long trousers. In addition, students who are neurodiverse and have sensory issues are permitted reasonable adjustments when it comes to their school uniform.

ACTION: Headteacher to send letter out to parents regarding the school uniform policy.

ACTION: All Governors to complete the Declaration of Interest on GovernorHub.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: 15th January 2024 at 5.00pm

Meeting Closed at 7.28pm

Minutes approved:

Date:.....

Action Log

Minute	Action	By	When	
8	ACTION: The Headteacher will review the PP Strategy at the next LGB meeting.	HT	15/01/2024	
15	ACTION: Headteacher to submit Microsoft forms to parents to obtain their feedback on information evenings.	HT	ASAP	
17	ACTION: Headteacher to send letter out to parents regarding the school uniform policy.	HT	ASAP	
17	ACTION: All Governors to complete the Declaration of Interest on GovernorHub.	ALL	ASAP	