

Governors General Meeting Minutes Worthing High School

**Wednesday 12 July 2023
Classroom E1 Worthing High School**

Members:	Sasha Scambler (Chair) Amanda Allibone John Bull Adrian Cook - Head of School	David Oakton (Vice Chair) Neil Ambrose Louise Davey James Oram
Clerk to Governors:	Tracy Reed	
Invited Guests:	Pan Panayiotou - CEO SDET / WHS Exec HT Scott Swift - Deputy Headteacher Sarah Jones - Chief Operating Officer	Richard Cohen - Chair of Trustees Ian Hughes - Vice Chair of Trustees

1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence had been received from JOR.	
3.	Notice and Quorum Due notice had been served and the meeting was declared quorate.	
4.	Pecuniary Interests There were no pecuniary interests declared.	
5.	Resignations/Vacancies/Appointments to Governing Body DOA resignation. [Taken later in the meeting but recorded here for continuity.] On behalf of himself, the Governors and Trustees, PPU said a huge thank you to DOA for all his help and support, it was greatly appreciated and he would be missed. DOA responded that he had enjoyed his five years as a Parent Governor and the journey from SAT to MAT. He was stepping down as he had been given the chance to do a postgraduate diploma in leadership and management and something had to give.	
6.	Minutes of WHS LGB meeting 24 May 2023 The minutes were approved as an accurate record. Clerk apologised for the state of the agenda partly due to formatting issues. SJO provided printed copies.	
7.	Matters arising from item 6 With the exception of the skills audit, all the matters arising were dealt with elsewhere on the agenda. <u>Skills audit.</u> RCO advised that next year there would be a combined training programme based on the skills audit involving the Trustees, and Governors from both Worthing High School (WHS) and Clapham & Patching (C&P). The aim would be to fill any skills gaps through training. Trustees and Governors would be asked what topics they would like covered, and what format they would like training to take.	

CEO's verbal update

Industrial action. The industrial action on 5 July 2023 did not impact upon transition day: PPU reported that all but one of the schools across the locality agreed to go ahead. Feedback showed that parents were very supportive of the day and the aim was to look at creating a model: it proved to be a really beneficial transition experience for the Year 6s.

The second day of action on 7 July 2023 coincided with a scheduled focus day and therefore most students were out of school on offsite activities with only vulnerable children in school.

Staffing. The school was fully staffed for the next academic year. PPU thanked everyone for their help and support, adding that AAL had done an incredible job as cover supervisor. The school was in a robust situation but it was not the same across the locality or nationally. The shortage of applicants made it important for the school to be as attractive to them as possible and this highlighted the importance of CPD and growing staff internally.

Behaviour Hub. WHS was working with a school in Eastbourne and another in Southampton; this would conclude in 2025.

Trust and School Improvement Offer (TSIO). PPU advised that the DfE had just assigned WHS a school in Brighton to work with as part of the TSIO. Such work was only assigned to other schools if the DfE thought the school was coming from a strong trust. This was a good reflection on the work being carried out at WHS and C&P. PPU expressed his thanks to senior colleagues ACO, SSW and SJO, saying that the positive outreach work was not effective without a really strong team.

In response to a query from JBU, PPU explained that schools were assigned on a termly basis for eight days of support. Once that programme had concluded, WHS would be assigned another school.

Special school bid. The Trust was working on an application for a special school bid now that it had been decided that the facility would be in Worthing. PPU acknowledged the hard work that SJO and ASI were doing for this: gaining a special school would contribute greatly to the development of SDET and it was unlikely that the opportunity would arise again.

8. Head of School's Report

Quality of education. ACO referred Governors to the final forecast May 2023 table and explained the data, which predicted the same progress as at the equivalent point last year. He explained that the final column applied a formula because last year's final predictions were misleading.

In terms of national indications, the data showed good progress. The focus on HPA boys appeared to have had an impact. LPA progress among girls was also predicted to be above average.

Referring to pupil premium, Ever 6 had improved but the pupil premium cohort was very different. The current year's Ever 6 made up 76% of those in receipt of pupil premium. Disadvantaged progress was down on last year because of two significant outliers in the free school meal students. Their progress affected the whole progress of the disadvantaged students. The biggest area of decline was among the HPA girls, but the prediction was for extremely positive progress.

The Chair asked if the predictions that the school made this year were also very conservative. ACO said there were issues over the reliability of the data. There were no concessions this year and consequently a lack of clarity around which grade boundary would be used. However, the biggest challenge was that a number of the subject leaders had never been through the process as it had been pre-Covid.

ACO wanted to highlight that the current Year 11 was the first year group to experience the HPA extracurricular enrichment offers such as the Brilliant Club, the impact of which was reflected in the outcomes he described earlier. The graduation results from the Brilliant Club included nine firsts, which was amazing.

The way in which the curriculum was sequenced was a key factor in helping students learn better, remember more, and achieve better outcomes. Referring Governors to page 10 of his report, ACO said this was an example of a department curriculum sequence. By virtue of this, staff and students were clear about what they were doing, where they had been, and where they would be going. Ofsted would have sight of such documents and would be looking for subject leaders to be able to talk confidently through that journey and to explain why it builds knowledge and skills, and helps students develop as individuals.

Helen Gabrielides, WSCC, had visited twice this academic year to look at key curriculum areas and would be producing a third report which ACO would share with Governors at the next meeting. Since discussions with Helen in October, key curriculum work in Maths, English, and PSHE, had come to fruition.

ACO

The other key part of developing the curriculum was for WHS to own and control the narrative. It had become apparent that there was disparity in the confidence of subject leaders in owning that narrative. ACO gave examples of how that confidence was building now. ACO was quite confident in the way in which they were sequencing the curriculum: the work being done on it was time well-invested and would have a significant impact.

With regard to curriculum intents ACO said there was now clarity between what was done as a school and within each department.

Responding to a query from JBU, ACO confirmed that other schools practised curriculum planning and intent and that school leaders did compare ideas.

Student voice (page 20). The aim was to develop student voice for September to make sure that it was laser-focused and reflective of need, as well as for each subject. Staff were working on models so that they could ask the right questions and target the right students so that they understood the student experience more clearly across all curricular areas.

In response to a query from the Chair, ACO said that staff would feedback to students where appropriate. PPU advised that one of the areas to be developed next year would be to have a specific departmental student voice on school council, and to look at focus groups with middle leaders.

CPD observations. The cycle of quality assurance had been completed. In comparison with this time last academic year the identification of strengths was stronger. Teaching and learning had improved but there was a small percentage of issues not being observed such as behaviour for learning. There would be follow-up training to ensure the correct observations were being made and recorded accurately.

Literacy. This continued to be a key focus as did the explicit teaching of key words. The school would continue to use Accelerated Reader because with it every year group made good progress and the school was above national average, including positively disproportionate progress with pupil premium students. However, the school wanted to investigate ways of supplementing this, and planned to look at the relationship of AR engagement with a positive relationship with books; this could be seen through book borrowing in the library.

The school used the Bedrock programme to help with comprehension. It had a positive impact on lower and middle ability students in Years 7 and 8 but it did not stretch the HPA students. There was one year of funding remaining and the school would continue to monitor it.

JBU asked if students recommended the books they wanted to read. ACO explained that there were various book clubs and the Librarian and her assistant were extremely adept

at recommending books to students and finding exactly the right level. The LRC was invaluable during the strike days and had been awarded extra resources to buy more books'

RCO commented that the difference between pre- and post-testing data did not seem huge. ACO responded that not every literacy lesson was completely focused on testing because the purpose of the book was being lost slightly. There were a few more literacy elements to the teaching in those timetable sessions. ACO took as an action to consider more comprehension and possibly fewer tests.

ACO

JBU asked about reading assessment for Years 7 and 11. ACO said curriculum time was used elsewhere but the amount they read in English lessons increased. The engagement of reading outside of school was a national challenge. There was discussion about the efforts that were taken to address this, which included reintroducing students to the Library.

Attendance. SSW reported that NMA and his team had done phenomenal work around attendance in the context of a notable increase of mental health and anxiety-based absence from school. He attributed this to the NHS having a description of generalised anxiety disorder on its website. As a consequence, GPs would write to the school diagnosing generalised anxiety disorder, stating that the child needed to have a reduced timetable and various different adjustments which then impacted their attendance.

There had been a lot of work around the high rate of persistent absenteeism: WHS set persistent absence as being less than 90% attendance. In discussion it transpired that it was more likely to obtain an EHCP on a mental health basis than it was on a cognitive or disability basis. ACO explained that a student with an EHCP would then leave the school roll and move to specialist rather than individual provision.

IHU asked if a broader approach from the Governors or Trustees would have more of an effect. ACO said they had looked at earlier intervention and focussing on the data to ascertain that mental health was a key reason for the absence and then coding it in order to monitor the individual.

PPU advised of a letter from secondary schools to the local authority suggesting that some GPs needed to be more robust in their diagnosis and in finding a relative solution, whilst acknowledging the challenge of achieving that in a ten-minute appointment. IHU asked to see a copy of the letter.

PPU

Behaviour. SSW advised that there had been a lot of work on behaviour culture and the school vision of 'getting it right'; Trustees would receive a copy of the report. SSW referred to a previous meeting when JBU queried why the Rewards Policy was not in with the Behaviour Policy. This had challenged the school's thinking about culture and now it no longer referred to sanctions or punishment but rather positive and negative consequences, ultimately focusing on the positive consequences for students. Consequence cards had been in use for a year now and were well embedded in school culture. SSW reported that some students already had twenty or thirty positive cards for this year which was really remarkable and he was looking for a way to capture that. Only four parents had queried the idea at the beginning, and there had been no further comments.

In response to JBU's query SSW said that parents did understand that a negative consequence was not a punishment but rather a way for the student to reflect on what they had done. He confirmed that the target to reach 6000 positive consequence cards by the end of the school year was still on track.

Targets for next year. Behaviour at low level had been really positive this year. There were still issues around social interaction which could be attributed to the hangover from Covid whereby Year 7 and 8s who would normally have been at primary school in Years 5 and 6 had not had teachers telling them what was acceptable social behaviour.

The key focus for next year would be around students with EHCPs and students that were SEN-K: this was the link between teaching and learning and behaviour and curriculum. The school was looking at behaviour intervention programmes such as chess therapy as chess was seen to have had a positive impact on young people.

Leadership and management. The new staff that join the school reflect that the CPD offer is very broad and built on layers. Moving forward it would be developed further so that there was a logical implementation cycle. A key change that would shift the school from good to outstanding would be to develop middle leaders and distributed leadership.

IHU asked what was meant by 'developing middle leaders to lead improvement cycles in their primary areas'. ACO explained that instead of an initiative being shared, it was understood, implemented, and evaluated. There was time in the meeting cycle to make sure that things were properly embedded rather than bolted on.

Safeguarding. Child on child abuse appeared to have spiked but this was a reflection on how bullying was being recorded rather than a reflection on the culture in the school.

[AAL left at 1730]

9. Resource management

Budget 2023-2027. The consolidated budget had already been to Trustees. SJO had produced PowerPoint slides to give Trustees a summary of WHS in context within SDET.

The forecast deficit of £81k for next year included the £55k already committed out of the reserves for the toilet refurbishment project. It also stripped out the SDET costs so whilst there was not an actual central charging model, there was a notional model built in.

The situation with the teachers' pay award was still unknown and SJO was reconciled to revisiting the budget in September. However, she had built-in a lot of contingency and produced clear and detailed assumptions for 2023-24. 2024, 2025, and 2026 would be revisited. Unusually for schools, the reserves were very strong and higher than the DfE benchmark. In response to a query from JBU, SJO explained that the level of capital and ICT investment had been kept the same every year and there was built-in contingency. Cuts could be made if necessary but the Trust would take the capital out of the reserves so as not to take revenue out of the reserves.

SJO referred to the presentation which showed the overall reserves position, starting at £635k for SDET, WHS and C&P combined. She was only relatively confident with 2022-23 and 2023-24 (years 1 and 2).

The capitation budget tightly linked the contact time and pupil numbers to subjects; there were weightings for the more resource heavy subjects. SJO detailed the information and training that would be given to budget holders.

The teacher contact ratio had increased and there was a lot of internal cover which meant the actual use of supply in the budget was low. The reason for higher supply costs was because the school used agencies for LSAs and that was linked to SEN funding in year.

Curriculum support staff members were increasing but that was linked to SEND. The school had high levels of pastoral staff for student support: there was much greater need for support post-pandemic. There was a need to look at additional income sources, and as a result SEN funding was being tracked carefully.

NAM referred to the predicted fall in pupil numbers. PPU advised that it would probably take effect in about three years but the Trust was keeping a close watch and would make adjustment as and when it was needed. SSW said people in west Worthing should be made aware that they would probably now be able to get into WHS where it had not been possible before.

There was discussion around the issues involved in potentially naming schools as part of the admissions process

COO report. The current forecast in-year deficit was approximately £41.5k. There would be additional in-year expenditure (e.g., new prospectus) but also additional journals could be made for allocated cost of pupil premium etc.

	<p>The reserves would reduce this year from £712k to £603k of which £67k should have been spent last year but was carried forward. Referring to her report, SJO pointed out the graphs showing actual reserves and forecast reserves. The lines were getting closer together which was a positive and as expected.</p> <p>There was a huge underspend in pupil premium but there were journals to be made to allocate spend according to the budget. Some items had not been allocated to the correct cost centres. The aim was to reduce the carry forward of pupil premium.</p> <p>SJO said there was nothing particularly remarkable about the staff absence data. She would run a full report for last year termly compared to this year, for the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Staffing</u>. Looking at staff changes and detailing some leavers and starters, SJO said the school was practically fully staffed which was quite an achievement in the current climate.</p> <p><u>Lettings</u> had performed extremely well in beating their target and generating £65k in revenue.</p> <p>There was nothing to report on <u>health and safety</u>.</p> <p><u>GDPR breaches</u>. Some new intake packs were sent to the wrong school, and some personal information was disclosed to the wrong person: both incidents were dealt with.</p> <p>IHU asked if the new TLRs listed in the report had been to Trustees. SJO responded that they were existing TLRs going to new people. It was agreed to check that all TLRs had been approved by Trustees.</p> <p><u>Governor enquiries</u>. The Chair asked Governors to provide summaries of their enquiry reports from the last year for the first meeting of the academic year on 4 October 2023.</p>	<p>SJO</p> <p>SJO</p> <p>Govs</p>
10.	<p>Clerking matters</p> <p>There had been no recent requests for visits. The Clerk continued to circulate information about courses to Governors.</p>	
11.	<p>Policies for Review</p> <p>Governors were asked to provide email feedback on the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most able policy carried over from 24 May 2023 • PSHE and Citizenship • Relationships and Sex • Travel plan <p>The Clerk would email the policies to Governors as pdfs.</p>	<p>Govs</p> <p>Clerk</p>
12.	<p>Chair's actions</p> <p>The Chair had nothing to report.</p>	
13.	<p>Any other business</p> <p><u>Meeting room</u>. JBU asked if meetings could be held in classrooms in future rather than the Conference Room due to the acoustics. This was agreed.</p>	
14.	<p>Agreed actions from the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACO to look at comprehension in more detail with regard to literacy teaching. • SJO to provide a full report on staff absence. • Governors to provide a summary of their enquiries. • SJO to check whether TLR allowances need trustee approval. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to email separate PDFs of the policies for approval to Governors. • Governors to provide feedback on the policies by Monday 17 July 2023. 	
15.	Dates and Times of GB Meetings for Academic Year 2023/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 October 2023 • 6 December 2023 • 7 February 2024 • 20 March 2024 • 15 May 2024 • 10 July 2024 <p>All meetings commence at 1600.</p>	
	The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 1758.	

Chair

Date