

Governors General Meeting Minutes Worthing High School

Wednesday 24 May 2023
Classroom E1 Worthing High School

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

1.	Welcome In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence had been received from SSC, JBU, JOR, and IHU.	
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 None.	
6.	Minutes of WHS LGB meeting 22 March 2023 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.	
7.	Matters arising from item 6 <u>Financial monitoring report.</u> <i>Renew the request to parents for donations with the advice that certain subjects needed extra funds for equipment etc.</i> ACO confirmed that the request had appeared in the weekly newsletter. In the interests of managing expectations the message aimed to be generic enough that parents understood that the request was all-encompassing, not focused on any particular subject. The request message would appear again in the weekly newsletter from September and promulgated at welcome events and transition events. <u>Donations.</u> <i>Finance team to provide breakdown of distribution of donations from parents by year groups.</i> To be provided at the next meeting. <u>Lettings.</u> <i>SJO to circulate summer rates.</i> Circulated and approved. <u>Behaviour and attitudes.</u> <i>Communicate information about consequence cards to parents more frequently in order to avoid a gap in perception.</i> ACO advised that consequence cards were featured fortnightly in the newsletter and he felt that there was no longer a gap in perception.	Finance

SJO explained that the Trust had proposed to WSCC that the current rolling 24-hour lease on the GOC should be amended to 1500 to 1700 to enable SDET to manage lettings on the site. Those funds would be ring-fenced for any capital repairs, deducting a management fee, and therefore give mutual benefit.

In response to a query from LDA, PPU confirmed that WHS had looked at collaborating with other schools to provide a centre for alternative provision but WSCC appeared reluctant to consider it.

Trust Open Day, 18 May 2023. PPU reported that the event was very well received with a couple of schools showing interest including The Vale School. He thanked colleagues for supporting what was a busy day.

Catering contract. PS Catering had been appointed as the new catering provider with effect from September 2023. There was not likely to be a huge reduction in costs but PPU was reassured by their willingness to listen to what the school wanted. WHS was the first school they had been contracted to in West Sussex thereby putting a little pressure on them to perform well.

HoS report

Disadvantaged pupil performance. Referring to page 38 of his report, ACO reminded Governors that this was the first year of GCSEs since 2019 without concessions, added to which it was also the first time that a significant number of teachers and subject leaders had been through the process. The concessions of the past years made it difficult to benchmark the data. ACO would bring Year 11 data to the next GB meeting.

ACO

ACO felt that the Year 11s had done well despite nervousness around attendance given the number of outliers in this group who had not been able to engage with school for various reasons including mental health issues. Pastoral leaders had gone above and beyond to support those students during the exams.

Referring to the Year 8 strategic overview NAM asked about the gap between HPA boys and girls and the fact that the boys were 12% below expectation. ACO explained that the enrichment interventions would begin in Year 9 and there was a need to make sure that expectations were clearly set in Year 7. The aim would be that the gap closed in Year 9 and would continue to do so in Year 10 and Year 11. The current Year 11 was the first Year 11 to go through an enrichment programme, which included the Brilliant Club and engagement with universities. The data from this year would show whether the enrichment aspect was having an impact and if the quality first teaching was supporting the students sufficiently.

NAM asked if there would be any benefit in starting the enrichment programme earlier. ACO responded that it was difficult to identify which students were HPA in Year 7 until they were better known to them. The initial focus was on transition and settling the children into the school. It was acknowledged that there was a need to be better at identifying HPAs and to share the strategies that worked with those students.

Inclusion. The key focus was on quality first teaching. ASI was working on best practice, developing a manageable approach to SEND teaching enabling teachers to monitor and ensure consistency across all lessons. This would be launched from September 2023 and SEND would be a key focus throughout the school development plan.

In response to DOA, SSW advised that the ratio of SEND students was increasing with a prediction of thirteen EHCPs in the 2023-24 Year 7 alone, which would equate to the total number of SEND students in the whole school in some cases.

Behaviour and attitudes. Attendance was still a significant area for improvement. WHS attendance was higher than the national average, but the national average was well below government expectations. WHS was well below the school's own expectations at 0.8% above national average. There was no one single solution and a lot of work was being done to make incremental improvements. Progress leaders had worked hard to understand how

to interrogate the Fisher Family Trust data and then work with their tutor teams to find patterns, to be proactive and, where appropriate, to impact the curriculum.

Evaluation of the assistant progress leaders' (APL) work showed that they reduced persistent absenteeism. There would be a strategic change to the way in which they worked by transferring their line management to progress leaders. Working with pupil premium students would remain the APLs' main focus but having a wider remit meant that hopefully they could impact more students. Weekly tutor awards for improved attendance helped to raise the profile of the issue, and it was a consistent message for parents. The value of the minibuses was that it got pupils to school on the day but did nothing to change behaviour.

RCO commented that the 7.4% attendance difference was the biggest pupil premium / non-pupil premium gap, greater even than attainment. He wondered what the impact on results could be if that extra 7% was to attend school. ACO responded that with a large number of those students the issue was the lack of positive parental engagement despite the efforts of pastoral leaders and APLs in reaching out to parents.

It was suggested that other factors included a hangover from lockdown and home working. Parents were unwilling to have difficult conversations with their children about attending school and asking the school to come and speak to them. SSW advised that significant numbers of GPs were providing medical notes citing anxiety and making unfounded educational recommendations, based purely on parental perspective, with no input from school, around the school reducing the timetable and supporting home learning.

RCO asked if there was any data showing the pupil premium / non pupil premium split in attendance data. ACO explained that the Fisher Family Trust flagged pupils that had significant absence in their primary school years, or if they had moved from school to school or any other red flags, and that there was definitely a correlation with pupil premium students. ACO said it was definitely a piece of work that could be looked at.

ACO

SSW advised of a definite increase of students with lower than 20% attendance post Covid. There were students that would not engage despite staff interaction such as meet and greet when being dropped off at school. Parents would say they could not force their child to go to school and therefore there was stalemate. If Pupil Entitlement pursued a prosecution, parents would take the child to the GP who said the situation was causing the child anxiety, and Pupil Entitlement would drop the matter. SSW said there were about five children on 0% attendance but Pupil Entitlement would not proceed because it could affect the child's wellbeing. It also had a detrimental effect on attendance figures, as well as being resource heavy for little or no gain. All the while, measures must be taken to fulfil the safeguarding element even if the child was not in school.

It recently came to light that WSCC had a blended learning package of fully-funded online tutoring. It could apply to certain students and by accessing it they would count as being educated on-site.

DOA asked if these students were poor attenders pre-Covid or whether it had exacerbated it. SSW advised that some students really enjoyed working from home. The school was seeing an increase in students that were probably at 40% attendance pre-Covid that used to be persuaded to attend at least half the time but were now hardly coming in at all.

Student matters. SSW referred to page 27 of the report and updated the total on roll to 1075. Student churn continued. He explained that dual registration (DR) meant that a student may be out of WHS on a managed move at another school or coming in from another school. A fresh start by moving out of a particular social area often worked well for students.

There had been a spike in fixed term suspensions Spring 2 which was out of character. These were not occurring in lessons but outside in certain social situations due to social pressures involving, for example, vaping, CBD and drugs. The school would continue to maintain strict boundaries around these issues and as a result Governors were likely to see the number of suspensions increase.

SSW said he would work on a breakdown of suspensions over the last three years so that Governors could see the types of incidents that were increasing.

DOA asked about one particular incident. SSW explained that it was around students being able to access alcohol on a school trip who made some poor choices around the trust that they had been given by the professionals on that trip.

SSW advised how the school was looking to educate students on social norms and understanding social settings. The number of racist incidents in the data was indicative of the fact that a number of students were not using language appropriately. The majority of incidents occurred through ignorance and not malice, influenced by what students have experienced through the media. Where students had been referred to the prevent service, that service had raised the bar as to when they would intervene and support because of the escalation there had been in extreme behaviours. Consequently Governors may see an increase in racism and derogatory language incidents in the data. It was noted that there was a spike in incidents (bullying, derogatory language, and racist) in November 2022 when Andrew Tate was featuring frequently in the media.

In response to a query from LDA, SSW said there were very few repeat offenders thanks to the work of the therapeutic behaviour support assistant and the behaviour manager. SSW also confirmed that there were no racist incidents recorded for spring term 1. He added that LBA was undertaking an action research project with WSCC around misogyny and gender based violence and had found that no female students were involved in racist incidents. This was something the school would address through its PSHE, assembly, and tutor programmes. JFE was working with single gender groups with boys around acceptable behaviour and what misogynistic behaviour looked like.

Safeguarding. The low number of safeguarding cases indicated that interventions were having an impact and that the need was being addressed either by the school or through WSCC.

In response to queries SSW advised that there had been no benefit from MAHMET. CAMHS were getting quicker to triage; students who had made two or three attempts at suicide were being seen within three months.

ACO advised Governors that staff had started to use CPOMS to record incidents of bullying. Historically it was monitored through the sanction given to the perpetrator. By using CPOMS any reported incident was recorded centrally as well alongside the perpetrator's outcome. This provided a holistic view of bullying incidents, whether founded or unfounded, because it was important to have an overall view of what was going on in school and if there were patterns emerging. The safeguarding team would work with the progress leaders and pastoral leaders to ensure that any issues or patterns were identified and acted upon proactively.

Personal development. The new student senior team of head boy, girl and deputies had been appointed following a rigorous process. LHO had developed an accreditation programme to give student leaders a benchmark for their achievements.

ACO referred Governors to the Compass report on page 20 of his report, dealing with Gatsby benchmarks for adequate careers provision. WHS scored 100% for 'learning from career and labour market information' compared to the national average of 77%. The scores reflected the work of the in-house careers advisor. The other areas in which the school scored 100% were:

- Encounters with employers and employees - 78% nationally
- Experiences of workplaces (businesses etc. giving talks at school) - 60% nationally
- Personal guidance - 72.2% nationally

MFI and NMA had carried out impressive work to make sure the school achieved the Gatsby benchmarks. It was felt that the careers experience gained through the focus days had been very beneficial to the students: the final focus day in summer term 2 would concentrate on careers.

Ofsted parent view. ACO commented on the fact that following a subject review evening, 100% of parents would recommend the school, with the exception of Year 11. The result was similar following an academic review evening but not quite 100%. ACO believed that the message behind academic review evenings needed to be managed better so that parents understood that it was a light touch meeting compared to the detailed subject review evenings. On the whole, the parental voice represented a positive view of the work that staff were doing.

ACO confirmed that if a parent asked a subject-based question of a tutor at an academic review evening, the tutor would pass the query on as appropriate.

For the next academic year, in response to parental feedback, the subject review evenings would be face-to-face and the academic review evenings would be virtual.

Personal CPD. ACO advised that staff were well engaged with the National College. Some of the courses had been quite impactful and it had been possible to ensure that best practice from the courses was implemented through departmental meetings. It was easy to track that personal CPD was being used appropriately as BlueSky provided transparency with a shared record of the appraiser and the appraisee's comments.

Resource management: COO's Report

Indications were that there would be an in year net zero budget but SJO believed there may be a minimal deficit. There was still some contingency and there had been in year savings. Additional funding projects included approval for the library to purchase some non-fiction books, resources for the John Muir project, and funds for PE because their budget had been overspent re paying for external coaches.

DOA asked if the deficit would be covered by reserves and SJO confirmed that it would. She referred Governors to the SDET reserves table in the report and explained that the Trust had £500k in reserves.

The reserves target was currently one month's operating costs. The suggestion had been put to Trustees that the target should be one month's staffing costs. The reason was to be able to use funds in a smarter more flexible way: it was unlikely that the DfE would not pay the monthly GAG and provided the staff costs could be covered, everything else could be scaled back very quickly. It would allow some flex and enable some projects that would be coming up to be actioned.

With regard to the possibility of an unfunded pay rise, SJO advised that the Government could not do that in year and would have to advise the 2023 24 budget by August. There was discussion around the consequences of an unfunded pay award and the possibility of schools posting deficit budgets.

Draft budget 2023-24. SJO had prepared a draft budget to give an idea of what she would present next month. The budget assumptions document was a work in progress but it gave an indication of the types of items being modelled within the budget and the types of assumptions being made. SJO advised that in terms of the FMR there were no significant material changes: the Trust was cutting down where it could and deploying resources as effectively as possible. Assumptions that SJO was making within the budget included:

- full adoption of the national funding formula
- the mainstream additional grant
- 4% rise to teachers.
- pension rates
- a number of staffing movements

SJO had allocated resources to meet the premises development plan and the ICT development plan. She was working on modelling SEN funding income with ASI, and a big piece of work on the curriculum, linked to SSW's timetable, pupil contact hours and

number of pupils, and weighted according to the resource requirements. The next version of the document would include a full picture of the reserves, staffing numbers, and the breakdown of staffing by department.

SJO advised that the initial deficit was £91k but that £55k of that was for refurbishment of the toilets. This had been approved for this year but would not now happen until October 2024. The money would come out of next year's budget and had been ring fenced within the reserves.

SJO advised she was already working on the second version of the budget and the deficit was almost down to zero. The aim was to submit as close to zero as possible so as not to add to the narrative that there was a lot of money in schools.

It was fortunate that the budget for year 1, 2023-24, was a bubble year due to the additional pupils in 2022-23 that left in Year 11 and consequently the school would receive the funding for them in the formula for 2023-24. But the school no longer had that number of students which is why 2024-25 would be a lot less healthy. The school would have a year to look at what it wanted to do and how to take things forward.

To help inform those decisions, the school would be running integrated curriculum financial planning metrics, which would show, based on the national guidelines, where funding and income and expenditure should be, whether the school was high, medium or low, and which areas to look at. SJO explained that the table showed that the situation was fine this year, but proportionately fell down in the following years because costs went up and because of the lag funding with the students, the income went down.

There was discussion around the shifting pupil numbers and the impact of the falling birth rate on primary schools, on PAN, and therefore on staff numbers. Also considered was the need to be flexible in recruitment in terms of full time, part time or term time only appointments.

Pupil premium. An additional amount of pupil premium had been received with the result that there would be a carry-forward of about £3360. This would be ring fenced and added to next year's budget unless there was a project that needed to be done this year.

On other matters, SJO advised that the HR system had been purchased: she was in the process of updating it and it was starting to be populated. The premises management system was being looked as a better way of managing policies.

RBE and his team had been given an award for supporting safety excellence which was a huge credit to them and to the commitment to safety in the school. Facilities were also doing excellent work on reducing energy bills.

With regard to staff absence, the industrial action had a big impact on the spring term. The autumn term was more significant for illness. Covid continued to have an impact on staff and their dependents. SJO advised that once the HR system was in place it would be possible to cost absences.

Lettings income had almost reached last year's total already thanks to RBE and EWH's hard work; it would certainly surpass last year's income. They could realise even more income if the Trust had a stronger lease on the GOC.

Governor enquiries. SSC's report would be carried over to the next meeting.

Trips and visits for approval. All the trips listed below had been discussed at SLT where it had been agreed that they had clear curriculum links and added significant value.

	<p>Governors approved the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy 2024- annual Year 10 Geography trip • German exchange • Euro Space camping 2024 - biennial science trip • Ski trip 2024 • Paris 2024 - awaiting an updated itinerary. • London2024 - annual media trip for Year 10 (may not run) • Berlin 2024 - History trip <p>LDA asked that the table of trips in the report be updated for each meeting. SJO advised that it was planned to put all the trips on Every which would produce a grid of all the dates and destinations.</p> <p>NMA was looking at the school's trips over the next three years. It was agreed that it would be useful for Governors to see this so that they could be aware of some of the cost implications which were becoming prohibitive for some trips. It was agreed that this would be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p><u>GDPR data breach log</u>. Two incidents had been logged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal information was sent to a parent in error. They were asked to delete it which they did and sent confirmation that they had done so. • New intake packs were sent to the wrong feeder school and they were asked to destroy them. 	NMA
9.	<p>Clerking Matters</p> <p><u>Governor training requests</u>. None received.</p>	Clerk
10.	<p>Policies for Review</p> <p><u>Curriculum Policy</u>: ACO thanked NAM for his feedback which had been actioned and the policy could be published.</p> <p><u>Most Able Policy</u>: carried over to the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Offsite Activities Policy</u>: SJO had updated the formatting. NAM would send through his feedback for NMA via the Clerk. The policy could be published once NAM's amendments had been made.</p>	
11.	<p>Chair's actions</p> <p>Nothing to report in the absence of the Chair.</p>	
12.	<p>Any other business</p> <p><u>LGB meetings 2023-24</u>. The proposal to bring forward the start time of meetings to 1530 was discussed. Suggestions included having a blended meeting of virtual and face-to-face. It was acknowledged that a 1530 start time would be a challenge for a number of reasons. The issue would be carried over to the next meeting to enable the Chair to engage in the discussions.</p> <p>PPU raised the idea of different members of staff attending meetings on the grounds that it might be more impactful for Governors and there might be other members of staff that they would like to speak to.</p> <p><u>Thanks</u>. PPU thanked NAM for his time and contribution to the school's dance evening in providing lights and a PA system.</p>	

13.	Agreed actions from the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACO to bring a full report on disadvantaged pupil performance for Year 11 to the next LGB meeting • ACO to investigate any correlation between poor attendance and pupil premium / non-pupil premium children • SSW to work on a breakdown of suspensions over the last three years so that Governors can see the types of incidents that are increasing • NMA to look at the cost implications of trips and visits over the next three years • Finance team to provide breakdown of distribution of donations from parents by year groups • Clerk to chase and then collate responses to the skills audit 	
14.	Dates and Times of GB Meetings for Academic Year 2022/23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 July 2023 	
	The Vice Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 1755.	

Vice Chair

Date