

Governors General Meeting Minutes Worthing High School

Wednesday 10 July 2024
Classroom B9

Members	Sasha Scambler (SSC), Chair	Louise Davey (LDA), Vice Chair
	Amanda Allibone (AAL)	Neil Ambrose (NAM)
	John Bull (JBU)	Adrian Cook (ACO), Head of School
	Senay Ozdemirciler (SOZ)	Emma Taylor (ETA)
Clerk to Governors & Company Secretary	Tracy Reed (TRE)	
Invited Guests	Richard Cohen (RCO), Chair of Trustees	
	Ian Hughes (IHU), Vice Chair of Trustees	
	Pan Panayiotou (PPU), Exec Headteacher WHS/ CEO SDET	
	Sarah Jones (SJO), Chief Finance & Operating Officer	
	Nick Mariosa (NMA), Senior Assistant Headteacher	
	Alex Simpson (ASI), Assistant Headteacher, Leader of Inclusion	
Observer	Caroline Carroll, prospective co-optee	

1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Senay Ozdemirciler, Ian Hughes, Sarah Jones, and Alex Simpson.</p> <p>Pan Panayiotou had advised that he would be late.</p>	
3.	<p>Notice and Quorum</p> <p>Due notice had been served and the meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
4.	<p>Pecuniary Interests</p> <p>There were no pecuniary interests declared.</p>	
5.	<p>Resignations/Vacancies/Appointments to Governing Body</p> <p><u>Resignation</u>. Senay Ozdemirciler had resigned as Staff Governor.</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes of WHS LGB meeting 22 May 2024</p> <p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
7.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>JBU asked ACO about the visionary Ofsted report to Governors. ACO responded that he would share it at the first meeting of the new academic year, after it had been shared with key staff who had contributed to it.</p>	ACO

8. CEO's verbal update

[Taken later in the meeting but recorded here for ease of reference.]

PPU gave an overview of the Trust's current position.

C&P were bucking the current trend for primary schools and were oversubscribed with 61 pupils on roll. This was a reflection on the work of the Head of School and her team, as well as the support from the Trust.

Similarly, WHS was full, unlike some schools in the locality. Again, it was a reflection on the team at WHS and other quality factors such curriculum, and teaching and learning. The school was fully-staffed which was a considerable achievement in the current climate.

The SSC development was ongoing, with WSCC having committed £2.5m to the project.

There had been conversations with more primary schools interested in joining the Trust. The effect of having a new Government in place could influence the direction of those conversations.

Regarding the Glynn Owen Centre (GOC), the matter was with the Secretary of State in terms of the 100-year lease; there would be discussions in order to understand the situation concerning the development. PPU considered that the status quo with the short-term lease would continue for another year in the absence of any funding agreements.

The challenge for WHS and the Trust was to be aware of any financial constraints that were coming up.

WHS continued to look at working collaboratively, and had a joint venture project with schools in the west of the locality with the Bourne, Felpham and Cowplaw in Hampshire. The project looked at behaviour, teaching and learning, and curriculum. The aim was to build greater trust and collaboration through the project, and for the schools to reflect on whether they then wanted to be part of a Trust.

Verbal update on change to Staff Dress Code Policy. Due to the number of colleagues observed cycling to school without a cycle helmet, the following provision had been added to the Staff Dress Code:

'Safety equipment such as a cycle helmet should be worn in accordance with the school policy related to student cycling to and from school.'

Governors approved the addition.

9. Governor visit reports

SSC asked if there was anything from the reports received that should be highlighted, and if there were any queries.

JBU said that his meeting with SSW confirmed his good opinion of the behaviour management programme and that it appeared to be a very good system.

ACO thanked those who provided reports for the level of detail, which was much improved and was very useful from the school's perspective. RCO commented that the report forms were very good at eliciting the relevant details.

TRE would redistribute the report template to Governors when ACO had amended it to accommodate DP.

ACO /
TRE

ACO would assign governance areas to Governors before the start of the new school year; safeguarding would remain with the Chair.

ACO

10. 1. Head of School's Report

Quality of education.

ACO explained that he was able to give a further update on the mock exam outcomes based on final staff forecasts: these were collected after the last exam to allow reflection on the students' papers together with their performance across two years and the mock results. He said progress continued to look comparatively good, given that the forecasts tended to be quite conservative.

The forecast was +0.18, compared to -0.14 last year, which was a significant progress swing and would be above average progress. The DP (disadvantaged pupils) gap was still significant and had widened in terms of progress. At this point the prediction was -0.52 compared to -0.32 last year. Attainment 8 was in line with last year and was slightly better among DP children.

The group had been particularly affected by non-attendance and it included a number of outliers, amounting to 18%. This had a significant impact on a small group in terms of attendance and progress outcomes overall.

The attainment 8 forecast was 49.2 compared to 47.82 the previous year. The benchmark was 50.0 which, dependent on other schools' performance, would compare very favourably with the best locality schools.

The prediction for standard passes in English and Maths was: 9 to 4 - 71% compared to 63% last year, and 9 to 5 - 50% compared to 41%. The caveat was that forecasts in these two areas had been slightly too generous. There had since been a lot of intervention work in order to identify the students who were succeeding in English but not Maths, and vice versa.

SSC asked if the progress that had been achieved was down to the cohort or interventions from staff.

Acknowledging the fact that this was a cohort of 240, ACO believed that pedagogy had got better and teaching had become more adaptive. Some key students who had previously been unreceptive had started to show more ambition. There was considerable emphasis on careers, aspiration, and ambition with this Year 11 and particularly HPA boys, for whom they were predicting a very slight improvement in positive progress. There was also an improvement in their attitude to learning.

The cycle of school improvement visits had concluded and the SIP, Helen Gabrielides, had carried out a deep dive into every subject area except computer science, the reason being that this was so subject knowledge specific that it needed to be reviewed by a specialist.

One pleasing outcome was the use of the word 'transformational' in relation to how subject leaders and curriculum leads were able to articulate their own narrative and had the confidence to own it. This was invaluable in terms of dealing with Ofsted inspections. As a group the middle leaders had really stepped up and were now far more engaged with whole school processes and quality assurance, and much more collaborative with each other.

Curriculum sequences, curriculum intent, and curriculum design had withstood the scrutiny of the SIP. Helen Gabrielides had returned to a couple of areas, Art being one, and set some specific targets. These targets had been met and there had been curriculum modifications to ensure that the offering was the correct one for the students. ACO would share all the reports in September.

Governors needed to be aware that Philosophy and Ethics had been flagged as a concern. The subject had to be offered beyond Year 9 and into Key Stage 4 in line with the funding agreement. Doubling the hours at Key Stage 3 and widening the appeal at Key Stage 4 had not worked and so a second Philosophy and Ethics specialist had been appointed. Students in Years 10 and 11 would be taught Philosophy and Ethics in tutor time as there was not the capacity to include it in the curriculum. This would ensure that the school remained compliant although the policy did not yet reflect this and would therefore be reviewed.

ACO explained that students received about an hour and twenty minutes of tutor time over a half term. Students would have a literacy task to reflect upon in which they engaged with both philosophy and ethics. The self-contained session included a quiz-based assessment which automatically produced a spreadsheet giving an overview of the outcome. The philosophy and ethics elements would be built into the school's PSHE training.

In response to JBU, ACO said that not all schools in the locality were compliant. He confirmed that middle leaders had been given more time to share best practice and make sure curriculum reviews were carried out collaboratively.

RCO suggested the literacy tutoring could be once a week: ACO explained there was still the need to fit in numeracy as well as reading for Year 10, but it could be considered potentially. It would not be a huge amount of work to go to weekly from fortnightly. The level of engagement and the training impact could be assessed along with tutors' confidence and the reaction from the student voice. ACO suggested that Christmas would be the appropriate point at which to reflect and review. It was important to maintain the reading for pleasure beyond Year 9.

The last cycle of quality assurance (drop-ins, learning walks, lesson visits) had just ended and that would feed into the September performance management review of the year.

Attendance

NMA reported that attendance was 2% above the national average and persistent absence was 5% below the national figure which was quite significant.

The median figure of students actually in school was 95.07% which was really strong. There were twenty students below 50% attendance and significantly not in school. There were case studies for each of those individuals: NMA and the pastoral leaders visited and reviewed those students regularly. There were various reasons why a student might be below 50% attendance; they were revisited consistently in order to make sure they were being properly supported and if any changes needed to be made.

The focus now was on what had worked well and what could be done to improve figures moving forwards. There was a move to build relationships and to reach out to families if there was a need and a child was absent. There was more engagement with tutors and parents. Tutors would contact home after one day of absence and parents were advised to make tutors their first port of call with any concerns.

There was recognition that if a student's attendance had dropped to 93% the tutor would have contacted home on numerous occasions and it would now be appropriate to move to a different system. Half term attendance letters were introduced in May and these directly informed the family of the number and days and hours that their child's absence equated to: this gave a much clearer message than using percentages. NMA wanted to extend that by stating how many hours related to core subjects had been missed. On the other hand, 100% attendance was also recognised. What worked well was families knowing that they could approach the pastoral leaders and be supported by them.

In the next academic year, it would be possible to give an update on the EBSA (emotionally based school avoidance) programme and how that was impacting those students that were below 50% attendance. It would be beneficial for the attendance figures but more importantly for the students who had been absent from education. The EBSA worker would not be funded and therefore the cost had to be built into the staffing budget, but it would save money in respect of not having to pay per pupil for alternative provision.

The curriculum offer would be tailored to the individual student. The school had very good outdoor alternative provisions but it would be important that students engaged with elements of the curriculum in the hope that they would have some success academically. ACO said there was a sad correlation between those disadvantaged students in receipt of free school meals and those who were avoiding school. The school needed to be creative and do more to try and give those students something as they left WHS.

SSC asked if there was any form of reward for students who improved their attendance. The response was that improvement was recognised in private face to face meetings with progress leaders because students could actually be worried or concerned about it being broadcast in front of classmates/school.

ACO commented that despite best efforts, and that WHS was half a percent above the national average, attendance was just not good enough. In response to a query from JBU it was advised that regional attendance advisers had been replaced by regional attendance hubs but the situation at WHS was not bad enough to need help.

RCO said that having the median figure in addition to the mean was very useful and asked that this be included in future attendance reports.

Behaviour

ACO thanked JBU for his positive report on behaviour. Acknowledging that WHS was a behaviour hub school and that behaviour in the school was good, ACO announced that the focus would switch to behaviour for learning. There was too much tolerance of disengagement and low-level disruption in some areas of the school, and not high enough ambition for expectation in the classroom.

The idea was to employ a very consistent routine across the start of all lessons to ensure a positive start to the lesson. Staff would be supported in order to develop their formative assessment skills, their pedagogy, their ability to adapt lessons and to make sure that they were accessible. The crossover with behaviour and quality of education was important. Compliant students made for relaxed teachers. In other schools where there were higher challenges teachers had to be really sharp to achieve that sort of engagement. It was about 'safe risk' and sharpening practice for behaviour for learning.

SSC asked if there was a risk of losing the ethos and warmth of the school by becoming too rigid. ACO responded that it was about consistency (e.g. routine at the beginning of a lesson) rather than being rigid. It was about staff having the toolkit to be able to engage with students, and that linked to attendance. Behaviour for learning had to happen through the skill of the teacher.

JBU asked about the triad for learning. ACO explained that WHS was currently working with St Oscar Romero and Angmering as part of a triad for behaviour improvement. ACO explained that such school-to-school groups were quite common before Covid and it would be beneficial to re-establish them.

Personal development

ACO said he felt that the prominence of student leaders was a strength of the school and they were good role models. Credit should be given to Nick Mariosa for establishing the student leadership body, and for Liz Hopkins who had taken over in the last couple of years. The student leaders had helped out at school events such as intake days and parent/carer feedback was always very positive. Year 7s had played an ambassadorial role in accompanying the new Year 5 parents on school tours. It was important to be proactive amongst the primary schools to make sure WHS remained full next year and the year after. Senior leaders wanted to focus on moving more disadvantaged students into the leadership team. Overall, it was an area of improvement across the school.

There had been many trips this term and the practice was to share them widely across social media. However, when talking about trips to new parents, teachers were cautious not to over emphasise their importance because some would not be able to access them. ACO believed this could create a divide in the parental body. Consequently, there was always mention of focus days which were a very visible way of showing how inclusive the school was in terms of enrichment. In an effort to make trips as accessible as possible, parents were given an overview of trips for the whole five years that their child would be in school.

RSHE

NMA explained that the Relationships, Sex, and Education (RSE) policy to be presented for Trustee approval later in the meeting, would in time become the Relationships, Sex,

Health and Education (RSHE) policy, and Trustees should be mindful that there would be changes to the policy next year.

The school was complying with the RSE requirements in the policy, which fitted in to the PSHE programme. Having tutors delivering the programme had been of real benefit this year because they knew the individual students really well and could give advance warning of any issues or events that might trigger an individual. There were tutor and PSHE meetings once every half term so that they could be trained to deliver the programme.

ACO commented that the recommendations of the Cass Report were vague in that it said schools should reflect what the Report said.

There was no legislation over young people wanting to transition. There was only guidance, containing comments such as 'periods of watchful waiting'. The school was seeking training to make sure that its staff understood what their position was as educators in the school, but no suitable courses had been found as yet. ACO stressed there was a real sensitivity around this. Governors could be reassured that the school was aware of the issue and engaged with the services as best they could to make sure that students who may be transitioning, and their families, were supported.

JBU wondered if there was any academic research or a trial that the school could take part in. ACO was wary because when other local authorities had tried similar ideas it had backfired quite significantly. His stance was to wait for legislation with proper guidance that could be applied to policy.

SSC asked if there was a consistency of message from the staff. ACO advised that the front-facing staff such as counsellors and pastoral leaders had received training, and the school took a sensible and practical approach. The school would continue to seek training if it was felt to be appropriate, and keep abreast of any policies that came from above.

Governors thanked NMA, and he left the meeting.

Leadership and management

There was much being done to promote the school including a new promotional video. It was important to keep things fresh because other schools were putting more energy into recruiting students. WHS offered a unique educational experience and it was important to share that with the locality. Attendance at the taster sessions had increased and numbers in Year 7 showed that WHS was the locality school of choice.

There was discussion about recruiting parent governors with the new intake of students. The suggestion was to use social media to encourage expressions of interest from parents.

The school was writing a self-evaluation form for the year and finalising the school development plan. It was important that the Governors were familiar with the plan, and the areas of strategic development, particularly as the school may be going in to an Ofsted year. In terms of quality of education, the focus would be on embedding formative assessment and developing adaptive teaching. In terms of behaviour the focus would be on behaviour for learning, as well as ensuring that the lesson environment was conducive to really strong progress.

Personal development was around pupil premium, and leadership opportunity. Leadership and management elements would look at the development of middle leaders. ACO would bring the finalised report to Governors in September.

ACO

Regarding middle leadership, three of the current secondees would go on to a second year where they would shadow senior leaders to gain experience of holistic processes and areas where they would not necessarily have input.

Stakeholder voice

Student voice. The approach to student voice needed to be more conversational rather than based on data. There needed to be a focus on unpicking issues with key students.

From September, teaching support staff would undertake student voice exercises. SSC suggested using student leaders to do it and give them training in facilitated group discussion. ACO would explore peer student voice exercises.

ACO

CCA advised of an AI tool that could record a conversation and turn it into notes: she would email the details to TRE.

CCA

Staff voice. Staff surveys were approached more strategically with three different themes: how well-equipped do you feel, well-being, and a wash-up over the whole year. The surveys were benchmarked, allowing for comparison with national data.

Parent voice saw a similar strategic approach, and the introduction of a draw had increased participation.

2. Resource Management

Budget

In the absence of SJO, ACO provided Governors with some context on the budget, which had been approved by Trustees. It was based on an assumption of 4% salary increase unfunded. The deficit represented the worst-case scenario. Nothing was known about the situation with teacher or school staff salaries. It was hoped for more information in September.

JBU was concerned about the suggestion that provision for staff well-being might be cut. ACO advised that it was more a revisiting of the existing SAS package and seeing if there was a more effective option available. He assured that nothing would be removed without there being something else in place.

Following discussions about the various scenarios depending on pay awards and funding, it was acknowledged that the proposed budget was the best proposal that could be put forward at the time.

In response to a query, it was advised that falling numbers of children progressing through primary school would begin to affect secondary schools in 2029, and that there would be a slow decline between now and then.

JBU asked what had happened about the leak under the playground. ACO advised that it had been fixed and it had not been necessary to fell any trees.

Risk register

There were no changes to the risk register but ACO advised of a successful lockdown practice the day before.

3. Other business

Trips

The proposed Italy trip for 2025 had the same itinerary as the one that had recently concluded. Governors approved the trip.

Start of new academic year

2 and 3 September 2024 - all staff return for inset days 1 and 2.

4 September 2024 - Year 7s only

5 September 2024 - whole school returns

6 September 2024 - Year 7 PGL team building trip; focus day

AAL would run the Summer School in the penultimate week of the summer holiday. There would be 120 children this year.

There was a request for the complaints log and report on GDPR breaches to be brought to the next meeting.

SJO

11.	<p>Clerking matters</p> <p>TRE had sent information on safer recruiting to ETA. There had been no other training requests but TRE continued to forward items of interest from the NGA and The Key.</p>	
12.	<p>Policies for Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSHE and Citizenship Policy • Teaching and learning policy • Relationship and Sex Education Policy • Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Education Policy • ECT Induction Policy <p>Governors were asked to submit any comments on the policies. Governors agreed that once they had been amended, they were happy for the policies to be approved and uploaded to the website.</p>	
13.	<p>Chair's actions</p> <p>SSC had sent a thank you letter to Ricky Beasley and the Facilities team.</p>	
14.	<p>Any other business</p> <p><u>Proposal to move meeting day from Wednesday to Tuesday for the 2024 2025 year.</u> After discussion, Governors approved this.</p>	
15.	<p>Agreed actions from the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACO to present the visionary Ofsted report to Governors provisionally at the first meeting of the new school year, after it had been shared with key staff who had contributed to it. • ACO to assign governance areas to Governors before the start of the new school year, with safeguarding to remain with the Chair. • ACO to amend the report template and add a section specifically for DP. • TRE to redistribute the report template to Governors when amended for DP as above. • In future attendance reports, NMA to include the median figure for attendance in addition to the mean. • Use social media to encourage expressions of interest from parents in an effort to recruit Parent Governors. • CCA to email TRE details of an AI tool that can record a conversation and turn it into notes. • ACO to explore the idea of senior student leaders running facilitated focus groups for students. • Reports on GDPR and complaints to be presented at the next WHS LGB meeting. 	
16.	<p>Appointment of Chair 2024-2025</p> <p>A self-nomination had been received from LDA; supporting nominations for LDA had been received from SOZ and ETA.</p> <p>In the absence of any other nominations, and the willingness of the nominee to serve, LDA was appointed Chair of WHS Governors 2024-2025.</p>	
17.	<p>Appointment of Vice Chair 2024-2025</p> <p>A self-nomination had been received from NAM.</p> <p>In the absence of any other nominations, and the willingness of the nominee to serve, NAM was appointed Vice Chair of WHS Governors 2024-2025.</p>	

18. Dates and times of GB Meeting for Academic Year 2024-2025

All on Tuesdays, 1600-1800

- 1 October 2024
- 26 November 2024
- 4 February 2025
- 1 April 2025
- 20 May 2025
- 22 July 2025

SSC closed the meeting at 1750.

Richard Cohen, Chair of Trustees, thanked SSC for guiding the school in her time as Governor and then Chair of Governors. PPU said the school was in a better place thanks to her careful stewardship and guidance. All agreed that she would be missed, and wished her well.

Chair

Date