

Governors General Meeting Minutes Worthing High School

Tuesday 1 October 2024
Classroom B9, Worthing High School

Members	Louise Davey (LDA), Chair Amanda Allibone (AAL)	Neil Ambrose (NAM), Vice Chair John Bull (JBU)
	Adrian Cook (ACO), Head of School	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 Alex Simpson (ASI), Assistant Headteacher, Leader of Inclusion Nick Mariosa (NMA), Senior Assistant Headteacher	
Prospective co-optee	Caroline Carroll (CCA)	

1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting followed by a round of introductions.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Ian Hughes, Pan Panayiotou, and Sarah Jones.</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> <p>Governors were reminded to submit their returns as soon as possible.</p>	Govs
5.	<p>Resignations/Vacancies/Appointments to Governing Body</p> <p><u>Co-opted Governor.</u> The appointment of Caroline Carroll was confirmed.</p> <p><u>Parent Governor vacancy.</u> Of the six expressions of interest received, three had submitted nomination forms and there would now be a ballot of parents/carers.</p> <p><u>Teaching Staff Governor vacancy.</u> The appointment of Lorna Sinsbury was noted.</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes of WHS LGB meeting 10 July 2024</p> <p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
7.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p><u>Clapham & Patching capacity.</u> JBU asked about temporary classrooms or other measures to accommodate students as the school was full to capacity. There followed discussion in which it was explained that C&P was in one half of what was the vicarage, and the implications for the forest school of installing temporary classrooms in the grounds.</p>	

Trust Establishment & Growth (TEG) funding. JBU asked why the Trust had formed a group with schools located so far away (Bourne Community College, Felpham Community College, and Cowplain School). ACO explained that it was a DFE-funded way in which to grow the Trust.

Quality of learning: philosophy and ethics. The previous minutes recorded that teaching philosophy and ethics in tutor time (there was not enough capacity to include it in the curriculum) ensured that the school remained compliant but the policy did not reflect this and would be reviewed. In response to JBU, ACO confirmed that the policy had been renewed and would need to come to Governors for approval

ACO

CASS Report. NMA responded to JBU that there had been no further updates or training available and the matter was still under review.

Triad for learning. JBU asked about the current situation. ACO explained that WHS was currently working with St Oscar Romero and Angmering focusing on behaviour and attitudes: Scott Swift was managing it. ACO explained that school-to-school visits were quite common pre-pandemic and provided useful learning and feedback. ACO added that a positive development was that teaching and learning leads across the area were now meeting again at Durrington.

LDA went through the actions arising table.

Visionary Ofsted report. This was included in the agenda papers.

Areas of Governance. ACO distributed copies showing the revised distribution of areas and explained the changes and additions. Governors approved the new areas of governance.

Governor's enquiry visit form. ACO presented the new online enquiry form. The aim was to support a consistent approach to Governor visits. The visit would look at the same areas as before, as well as at the ability of the subject leader to articulate the curriculum and action plan. Governors should be mindful that they were not going into lessons as specialists. ACO explained how the form had been designed to guide the questioning. He was concerned that the Governor/subject leader relationship should be as critical friends - not one or the other. Subject leaders were keen to receive feedback so that they could identify areas that needed to be developed.

ACO advised that Governors would need to bring a device with them in order to record their visit (or one could be provided for them). The report would then be uploaded centrally to allow access to it. In response to a query from NAM, ACO advised that it would be the SLT lead for the relevant department that would fact check any reports. He also confirmed that there was a section regarding disadvantaged pupils and that tied in with the school development plan re the focus through teaching to support those pupils.

It had previously been agreed that one meeting should be face-to-face, preferably before Christmas, and subsequent sessions could be via Teams. Governors could obviously come into school more often if they wished, it would all help build readiness for Ofsted. JBU asked about the timing: ACO replied that there had been a shift in the Ofsted framework and it would come to Governors when SLT had reviewed it.

ACO

Include the median figure for attendance in future attendance reports. This had been done.

Encourage EOIs re recruit Parent Governors using social media. This had also been done.

AI tools to record meetings and produce notes. There were various options.

Senior student leaders running facilitated focus groups for students. Already happening.

Present reports on GDPR and complaints to the next WHS LGB meeting. There had been twenty stage 2 complaints since April. One had escalated to stage 3 and there was a possibility of another.

	<p>The volume of complaints had increased throughout the year in common with all schools. ASCL was trying to provide support with the complaints process because it took up a disproportionate amount of time.</p> <p><u>Stab trauma kits.</u> RCO advised that the free allocation had been used up. The kits were available to purchase at between £130-£500 depending on size. ACO suggested the matter should be taken to the Trustees.</p>	RCO / TRE
8.	<p>CEO update</p> <p>In the absence of PPU, RCO and ACO advised the following:</p> <p><u>Pay awards.</u> Trustees had agreed to honour the teaching staff pay awards in full. The support staff pay award had not been settled, and should have been implemented in April.</p> <p><u>Open Day / open mornings.</u> The Open Day went well and there had been very positive feedback about the behaviour and attitude of the students. The plan for next year was to shorten the time and go down to two talks, but with the flexibility for a third if deemed necessary. The open mornings were similarly well-received.</p> <p>There was discussion about tickets for the talks being booked well in advance and not taken up, whilst people without tickets were turned away from the hall.</p> <p>It was suggested that the displays about enrichment activities should either be brought into the main presentation space, or at least signposted so that people were aware.</p> <p>The amount of behind-the-scenes hard work by staff to make the school look as good as it did was acknowledged and it was agreed to send a message of thanks from the Governors.</p> <p><u>Special Support Centre (SSC).</u> The bid for new 21st century level inclusion provision had been approved and surveyors had carried out inspections. In terms of timelines, it was hoped building work would have started by this time next year.</p> <p>ASI advised that the school had finally received a service level agreement from the local authority and provision descriptor even though the SSC had been open and running for three years. He added that the Centre was full and supported 18 students.</p>	GOVS / TRE
9.	<p>Governor visit reports</p> <p>Please see above under item 7, <u>Matters arising</u>.</p>	
10.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>ASI had produced an executive summary comparing the last academic year to the previous academic year. It showed the shift in safeguarding and how the new safeguarding team had addressed the increased need. The way in which child-on-child abuse was recorded had changed during the reporting period with the effect that last year's results appeared higher than the previous. The CPOMS recording process had changed to include bullying unfounded which clarified the decision process for incidences of bullying.</p> <p>Students were given reflection booklets and there was an educational approach to bullying etc. to help students to understand the impact of bullying on both parties and hopefully work towards mediation.</p> <p>There had been an increase of self-harming and suicidal ideation, in common with schools across the county and in line with data from integrated front door (IFD) and single point of access (SPoA). This was being addressed with increased pastoral and inclusion interventions, and through assemblies. The local authority was very impressed with the curriculum map which showed where safeguarding topics occurred within the curriculum.</p>	

There were very few recommendations following the WSCC safeguarding audit. The relevant recommendations had been included in the safeguarding development plan and actioned. One recommendation concerned Governor oversight of the single central record (SCR) and this was carried out by Dr John Bull. There had since been reviews of the external caterers and alternative provision, as well as spot checks on personnel files.

The school was looking to be innovative in its safeguarding practice and advised of collaborative work carried out in the locality with Davison's, in keeping with the school's aim of being outward facing with its safeguarding practice.

ASI explained the three-layer quality assurance process for CPOMS and how this contributed to the situation whereby at 1700 each school day there were no outstanding safeguarding concerns in need of immediate action. Staff low-level concerns were managed effectively in Google drive.

Cause for concern had increased from 463 in 2022-2023, to 854 in 2023-2024. One reason for this was that students felt comfortable speaking to staff when they had issues. If these instances had been escalated, a disproportionate amount would have become safeguarding cases. Students sharing their problems with staff allowed them to identify issues early and prevent them escalating into a safeguarding concern. Pastoral leaders sent out weekly pastoral reports highlighting any particular concerns and this helped them to be resolved without the need for multi-agency work. About 60% of safeguarding concerns were mental-health related.

JBU was impressed that there was now a combined referral group which included CAMHS. ASI clarified that the single point of access was West Sussex mental health services which included several different mental health professionals e.g., YES (the Youth Emotional Service), and YMCA Dialogue: very few cases reached the CAMHS threshold.

LDA advised that TRE had sent round the link for the annual safeguarding training which was accessed by logging on to The Key. Governors were asked to aim to complete the training before their first visit to school.

Govs

11. 1. Head of School's Report

Quality of education: At this time of year, the results were unvalidated. Thirty-two students had received upward grade changes following marking appeals submitted by the school, and there were some appeals still outstanding. ACO explained that there would be changes between the report he wrote for this meeting and the detailed report. As a result of some of the appeals, WHS results were above the national average which was very positive in terms of marketing and justified the funds spent on interventions.

The results for attainment 8 English and Maths 9 to 4, and English and Maths 9 to 5, were good, especially when compared to national averages. There was significant growth internally apart from the English and Maths 9 to 4 measurement compared to 2019. There was no more leniency as the Government had returned to 2019 benchmarks. Unfortunately, broad-brush approaches to marking had led to unreliable results across all exam boards.

ACO said he would find out the total number of appeals submitted by the school. It was acknowledged that the school had to pay for appeals; there was discussion looking at how other schools in the locality recouped these payments and that WHS was considering a similar approach for next year. It was clarified that payments were reimbursed if the appeal was upheld.

ACO

Focusing on the HPA students, there had been some growth in the 9 to 7s based on comparison with the national average and with 2019. Progress as a school was disappointing. English outcomes were better than the national average, but not good enough compared to the school's other buckets. Both Ebacc and non-Ebacc subjects achieved really strong progress this year, but English was negative and therefore a significant area of focus. ASI explained that the results were from the Fisher Family Trust, not the Government, and therefore there could be some disparity when the results were finally released.

DP attainment was broadly in line with DP attainment nationally. However, progress measurements would disappear for two years due to a lack of key stage 2 data as a result of the pandemic, and schools would be judged on attainment 8. This would give WHS a degree of flexibility around where it could place its interventions and thus benefit the students; ACO gave examples.

The new Year 7s were slightly above national average and were very different to the previous Year 7s. Those that had the most complex needs were making some very good choices and there was a different dynamic to this Year 7.

Referring to the data in his report, ACO advised that the numbers in Year 8 would increase by one because of an in-year admission. The school continued to take unaccompanied asylum seekers which was why the school was slightly above its PAN.

Attendance: ACO highlighted the impact of attendance and specifically those students with 90% attendance and lower, which the government set as the threshold of persistent absenteeism. The number of persistently absent students in the year just gone had decreased quite significantly but the number of students with extreme absenteeism, below 50%, had considerably impacted that cohort. Although fewer students were absent, their progress was -0.8 compared to -0.34 the year before.

Median attendance was 100%, overall attendance was 94%; this showed the impact that a small number of students had on overall attendance, and that the median figure was useful. There were students within that small group that did not sit any exams and that significantly affected outcomes. There was a suggestion that some of those students could probably have sat the full eight subjects and that would have positively impacted the data, illustrating the importance of attendance.

ACO explained that the school development plan reflected those areas and said that the main way in which the school would improve DP and SEND outcomes was through adaptive teaching. He distributed copies of the posters that would be displayed in classrooms, listing the key priorities in a language designed to engage teachers and encourage them to improve their practice regarding the most vulnerable students. There was a concerted effort to develop adaptive teaching and make it consistent across all subjects in all lessons. EFA (embedding formative assessments) was closely linked and it was hoped that the CPD course would have a significant effect on those areas where outcomes needed to improve.

JBU asked if progress was still the principal measurement or whether the emphasis was now on achievement, adding that it was much easier to show progress in the less able students. ACO agreed that showing progress was more difficult with the bright students but he added that the Fisher Family Trust were reporting WHS at +0.13 progress. However, it was frustrating not being able to improve on that score and that it was because of key groups: it boiled down to teaching and learning, and getting it right in the classroom.

There was further discussion about the negative effect on progress data and outcomes of a small group of persistently absent students, and the absence of mitigating factors. ACO acknowledged that targeted interventions in to 9 to 5 English and Maths had been successful but to do that for all subjects, particularly if students were absent, was much more challenging.

In response to a question from RCO, ACO confirmed that targets for the current Year 11s and 10s, who did not have Key Stage 2 data, had been based on their CATs outcomes. This had highlighted that there was a big FSM gap and a big DP gap. Since the pandemic, cohorts had become less and less able, but it was beginning to pick up with this year.

ACO noted that attendance had dipped slightly to 93.7% since he had written his report, adding that half a day off at the start of term had a significant impact on a student's overall attendance. He reminded Governors that the median was 100%.

It was too early to see any patterns emerging but there were issues in a couple of year groups that had rolled over to the next year. Year 9 was a key area of focus and a small number of significant EBSA students was affecting attendance. However, the staffing

situation was such that the school could offer a more robust alternative provision including access to an extra worker and a slightly modified curriculum. Last year the local authority allowed ESBA students using the school's remote package to be marked as present as long as there had been visual contact but this year WHS would have to use the local authority's expensive service for the student to be marked present. However, the school's internal programme had evolved from last year, being more structured and hopefully making an impact more quickly, with students slowly building back up to accessing the curriculum.

Referring back to the issue of absences so early on in the term, ACO advised that the role of the tutor in reaching out to the family was key, but was not necessarily welcomed by all. ACO outlined the process in response to comments from the Governors. He assured Governors that the school was not ignoring absences just because they were occurring in the first week of term. Part of the problem was re-introducing those children to the mainstream school environment and so the Glynn Owen Centre would be used as a physical stepping stone to help support them. Students could be marked as present for attending the GOC, which obviously impacted attendance positively.

The current Year 11s had started extremely positively and were attending their interventions despite the smallest of incentives. Students in Year 10 who had exhibited significant attendance issues had made a positive start and were attending interventions.

There were some drops in attendance following the mocks last year and so this year reasonable adjustments would be made for students with genuine issues. There would be another set of mocks in February.

Behaviour: There had been a big focus on consistency in lessons. WHS was a behaviour hub school and that was reflected by the behaviour in school generally: there was a positive culture and the school was a safe, calm, purposeful environment.

However, there had been inconsistency in tolerating low level disruption, culminating in a major focus on classroom consistency. This included the way in which students should enter the classroom, and how they should start a lesson. It had already had an impact, and the local authority school improvement partner commented that behaviour in lessons was much better than on her previous visit.

ACO explained that these measures were intended to create a predictable environment in which students were more responsive because they were not overwhelmed or overloaded. There had been a positive impact with the numbers of C2s and C3s decreasing compared to last year. It was essential to establish good behavioural practices first before introducing EFA and adaptive teaching. ACO gave examples of other modifications that had been introduced, adding that it was about maintaining high standards and thereby creating an environment in which teaching could improve.

Feedback from the staff forum indicated a feeling that SLT support at C2 level took away a degree of autonomy and was slightly disempowering. Consequently, staff could now request SLT support if they wished. The test was whether a C2 escalated into a C3 where no support had been requested, but this had not been the case so far. These were all strategies to minimise the impact of low-level disruption.

The Year 8 group had been excellent ambassadors at the school's open mornings.

Stakeholder voice: There had been tweaks to the student voice with progress leaders being more aligned with their year group councils and leading a meeting for the first time. This all linked back to SIP comments that surveys were not the answer in creating a robust student voice, rather it was face-to-face conversations. LSAs had been trained to conduct student survey activities such as have a bank of questions over all subjects. Students were more likely to be honest with LSAs than with their teacher or a member of senior staff. The LSA would feedback to the subject leader who would feed that information into their action plan. The aim was to train as many LSAs as possible. This featured in the school development plan and would eventually provide a much better understanding of the lived experience for students.

	<p><u>Leadership and management</u>: All subject leaders had met with ACO and ASI (and PPU for core subjects). The purpose of the meetings was to check that they understood their data and their area's focus, and to make sure that what their data indicated was fed into their subject development plan. ACO explained how subject leaders were being equipped to be more strategic and relevant. The meetings had been positive and productive on the whole, with the need to instil some urgency in a few cases. ACO would share the reports at the next WHS LGB meeting and hopefully Governors would see how they triangulate with the development plan ahead of their visits.</p> <p>ACO reported that there were four secondees. Each one had a coach and a bespoke programme of shadowing experience with the aim of building them holistically as senior leaders. As a consequence, the secondees were making progress and having significant impact. ACO gave a little more detail of individual projects following a query from JBU, and confirmed that they would give a project update at a future Governors' meeting.</p> <p><u>CPD</u>: ACO advised that the CPD launch had taken place and the whole school focus was the SSAT embedding formative assessment. Learning was organised in small, non-hierarchical groups across the school known as teaching and learning communities. ACO explained how this drip-fed new practices over the two years of the project adding that it had seen a significant impact in schools that had engaged with it two years ago. It was fundamental to the adaptive teaching strategy. It was noted that there were also personal and core CPD programmes.</p> <p>2. Resource Management</p> <p><u>Budget</u>: In SJO's absence, RCO confirmed that the teachers' pay award was fully-funded and that the formula used actually did match the funding.</p> <p>3. Other business</p> <p><u>Trips</u>: It was established that all trips shown on the spreadsheet had been approved by Governors at previous meetings.</p>	<p>ACO</p> <p>ACO</p>
<p>11. Clerking matters</p>	<p>TRE would forward the Learning Link details to SJO.</p> <p>It was agreed to undertake a skills audit when new Staff and Parent Governors were in place.</p>	<p>TRE</p> <p>Govs / TRE</p>
<p>12. Policies for Review</p>	<p><u>Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy</u>. JBU had several comments on the Safeguarding Policy: ACO advised that it was a WSCC model policy and as such the school could not really deviate from it.</p> <p><u>Network Policy</u>. NAM commented that there appeared to be some outdated information in the Policy. LDA said much of it read like guidance, which was very useful, but perhaps could be separated from the policy part. She also mentioned that the format was not the same as the other policies and queried whether it was for internal use only. ACO said he would take the policy back to the author and noted that it was not approved.</p> <p>JBU remembered that there had been an undertaking to standardise the format of all policies, and noted only one of the those submitted to this meeting had page numbers. These points were acknowledged.</p> <p>NAM recalled a discussion about adding a comment to say that a policy had been checked to ensure that it complied with the Discrimination Act, adding that the school had an obligation to ensure that all new policies were assessed against protected characteristics.</p>	<p>ACO / PRO</p>

Worthing High School Visitor Policy. RCO commented on Section 4, the Unknown Uninvited, which said that any visitor to the school who was not wearing a badge must be challenged. He advised that reports suggested it was much more effective to report than to challenge: where somebody might not want to challenge uninvited visitors, they would feel much more comfortable reporting. ACO said he was more comfortable with challenge because all staff had an equal responsibility to safeguard.

The Safeguarding and Visitor policies were approved, together with the Attendance Policy for Students and the Provider Access Policy Statement.

The Network Policy would be brought back to the next WHS LGB meeting.

13. Chair's actions

LDA had no actions to report.

14. Any other business

There was no other business.

15. Agreed actions from the meeting

- The issue of stab trauma kits to be referred to Trustees.
- Governors to send a message of thanks to staff for their hard work with the Open Days / mornings
- Governors to complete the online safeguarding course before their next visit to school
- ACO to ascertain the total number of appeals against exam grading submitted by the school
- ACO to share departmental meetings overviews
- Skills audit to be conducted when the new parent and staff governors are in place
- Network policy to be reviewed /amended, and brought back to Governors
- Ensure that all new policies are assessed against protected characteristics
- TRE to resend the invitation the July 2025 LGB meeting, now on the 8th rather than 22nd

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

All on Tuesdays, 1600-1800

- 26 November 2024
- 4 February 2025
- 1 April 2025
- 20 May 2025
- 22 July 2025 - NB changed to 8 July 2024.

LDA closed the meeting at 1737.

Chair

Date