**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF**

**WESTMINSTER NURSERY SCHOOL**

**HELD REMOTELY ON 17th MARCH 2021**

(Commenced 4.30pm)

**Governors Present:**

D Reed (DR) Chair

L Buchanan (LB)

D Clark (DC)

E Connor (EC)

E Hulse (EH) Headteacher

S Khatun (SK)

N Tice (NT)

**Also in attendance:**

H Cummings (HC) Clerk

N Smith (NS)

**PART ONE**

Before the meeting commenced, Linda Buchanan gave a short presentation to governors on Safeguarding and Child Protection.

**ACTION: Clerk to send presentation to those not present and upload to GovernorHub.**

1. **APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) ITEMS**
2. Apologies were received and accepted from Liz Austin and Lettitia Woolley.
3. Governors agreed to discuss the following item under AOB:

* Cheshire East Education Service Teams Review

1. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Governors were asked to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interests with the business to be discussed during the meeting. The following potential conflicts were declared:

* D Reed is also a governor at Beechwood Primary School, Crewe.
* D Clark is also a governor at Pebble Brook Primary School, Crewe.

The Clerk confirmed that all governors had confirmed their declarations of interest on GovernorHub, and had accepted the Code of Conduct.

1. **MEMBERSHIP**
2. Governors noted the election of Lettitia Woolley as a parent governor.
3. Governors noted the following vacancies:

* 1 Local Authority Governor – Ward Councillor, Laura Smith, had been approached, but was unable to commit sufficient time to the role at present.
* 1 Co-opted Governor – Governors heard that Neil Smith had been approached and had agreed to join the Board as a C-opted Governor. The Clerk noted that this would take the board to the maximum number of 3 governors employed by the nursery.

Governors **approved** the Co-option of Neil Smith to the Board.

**ACTION: Clerk to update GH.**

1. Governors noted that Dawn Clark’s term of office was due to expire on 12th July. DC confirmed her willingness to continue, and governors were pleased to Co-opt her for a further term of four years from 12th July.
2. NS confirmed that he was still awaiting paperwork from LW and would proceed with the DBS and Section 128 checks as soon as it was received.
3. Governors confirmed that NS would update GIAS (Get Information About Schools) to reflect changes to the Board membership.

**ACTION: NS to complete DBS checks and update GIAS**

1. **PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**
   * 1. Governors **approved** the minutes of the previous Board of Governors meeting on 18th November 2020. Due to the virtual nature of the meeting, the Chair would enter a typed signature on the minutes, and these would be signed once the school was re-opened.

* + 1. All part 1 actions had been completed. Governors particularly noted that EC’s feedback to staff had been welcomed.

1. **IMPACT STATEMENT**

At the autumn term meeting, and throughout the lockdown period, the board had supported and questioned the Headteacher’s implementation of guidance around the Covid pandemic.

The board had discussed SEND funding and provision, and ensured that concerns were escalated with Cheshire East.

The Governance Development plan had been reviewed, and measures agreed to increase engagement with parents and staff.

Governor training for the coming year had been agreed.

1. **CHAIR’S ACTION**

No decisions had been taken under Chair’s action, but DR noted that she had attended part of the INSET day in February. The early part of INSET had focused on Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse, which was felt to be particularly timely in light of the impact of the pandemic.

The attendance of the Chair was felt to have been valuable in building connections with staff. The Chair had been able to express the support of governors and demonstrate that actions had resulted from the staff survey they completed.

It was agreed that an informal meeting between staff and governors should be arranged when possible; perhaps in the autumn term.

DR also noted that she had had weekly calls with the Headteacher during the lockdown, often focusing on Safeguarding issues.

1. **HEADTEACHER’S REPORT INCLUDING COVID 19 UPDATE AND SDP**

The Headteacher had provided a detailed report on GH ahead of the meeting, but noted that it had been written before the re-opening of schools and updated as follows:

* Attendance during lockdown had been approximately 46%, but since schools had re-opened fully on 8th March, almost all children had returned.
* Parents were being reminded of the need to wear a mask, and for only 1 adult per child to come onto the school site.
* The general wellbeing of staff seemed good.
* The children were settling well, but needed a lot of reminding about their routines.

**Governor question**: How is staff testing going?

Response: All but 1 member of staff are doing the tests twice a week, and will continue through the Easter break. It provides additional reassurance for staff.

The Headteacher explained that progress with the SDP had been impacted by the lockdown, but governors were impressed to see that all areas were either on track or complete, despite Covid.

All governors agreed that the report was extremely informative, and the detail was appreciated at a time when governors could not visit the school.

1. **PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

Premises

The committee meeting had not taken place due to the illness of the committee Chair, and the national lockdown which prevented any school visits. However, EH, EC and NS had conducted a Health & safety walk-around on 25th January, and their report had been posted on GH.

Curriculum

The Curriculum committee had examined data and noted that the percentage of 2 year olds achieving Age Related Expectations had increased. Remote learning had gone well with those children who did not attend during lockdown and parental feedback had been very positive.

Chairs

The agenda for the Chairs’ meeting was available on GH, but minutes were not circulated. The Chair noted that areas discussed had included wellbeing, online learning and Safeguarding.

Finance

The Finance committee meeting had taken place on 10th March, and budget papers were available on GH. See Item 8 below.

Headteacher’s Performance Management

The Headteacher’s Performance Management committee had met on 10th March for the half-yearly review.

There were no reports from link governors, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Governors noted that the Section 175 return had been submitted in the autumn term and an action plan was in place.

1. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**
   * 1. Governors had reviewed the budget papers on GH and were pleased to **approve the draft budget**.
     2. The School Fund for 2019/20 had been audited over the summer break 2020, and the audit discussed at the Finance committee meeting in November 2020. The clerk asked that the accounts and audit certificate be brought to the FGB for formal approval.

**ACTION: NS to upload the audit certificate to GH for the summer term FGB.**

Governors had discussed the following in the Finance committee and agreed that the documents would be reviewed as part of the SFVS process and brought to the summer term FGB for approval:

* Business Continuity Plan (BCP)
* Asset Register
* Scheme of Financial Delegation
* Manual of Internal Financial Procedures (MIFP)

1. Governors noted that the deadline for submission of the SFVS had been delayed until 28th May. The Finance committee would complete, and the completed SFVS would be circulated for approval before submission.

**ACTION: NS to circulate SFVS for email approval before submission.**

Governors heard that the school was undergoing an Internal Procurement Audit, and had been asked to provide paperwork related to specific transactions.

1. **STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE – CLERKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2021/22**

Governors approved the appointment of the Cheshire East Clerking service for Full Governing Board meetings in 2021/22. Committee meetings would continue to be clerked internally.

1. **CONFIRM TERM DATES AND INSET DAYS FOR 2021/22**

Term dates and INSET days for 2021/22 had been reviewed on GH and were approved

1. **GOVERNANCE NEWSLETTER SPRING 21**

The Governance newsletter had been shared on GovernorHub earlier in the term to inform committee discussions. The Clerk noted the updated requirements for what schools must publish on their websites.

**ACTION: NS to audit website with reference to updated guidance.**

Governors discussed the benefit of monitoring specific areas of the website to ensure it was up to date, and agreed that it would be useful as long as it was clear which areas governors would look at.

**ACTION: DR to allocate areas of the website to individual governors.**

1. **GOVERNOR TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

Governors noted that DR and LB were currently sharing the role of Training link Governor, but LB would take over from September.

DR and LB had both completed the NGA online Safeguarding Training, and asked that all governors complete the module before the summer term FGB.

**ACTION: All governors to complete NGA online safeguarding training before summer term FGB.**

Governors were encouraged to undertake training, and keep DR and LB updated, but were advised that the Early Years module did not reflect the new framework.

Training prior to FGB meetings was agreed as follows:

* Summer term - Finance (NS)
* Autumn term - The new Early Years Framework (EH & EC)

Governance Development Plan

Governors reviewed progress against the priorities and outcomes in the Governance Development Plan:

Priority 1 – Engage effectively in supporting the nursery during the pandemic

* All policies conform to local and national guidance – rated **Green**.
* Governors have an overview of all staff’s well-being – rated **Green**.
* For all visits/meetings for school, governors adhere to LA and national guidance – rated **Green**.

Priority 2 - To improve communication and engagement of parents and all stakeholders of the nursery

* Systems are in place to consult all stakeholders and identify actions needed – rated **Amber**
* Evidence is available about how nursery responds to any consultation outcomes which is used to influence decision making – rated **Red**
* Clear procedures in place alongside an annual schedule – rated **Red**

It was noted that plans were in place to complete the actions, and all areas should be rated green by the end of the summer term.

1. **POLICIES**

The following policies had been reviewed in committee and were **approved** by the Full Governing Board:

Chairs Committee:

* Dealing with Allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff
* Lockdown
* Adult volunteers
* Classroom observation protocol
* Critical incident
* Data protection
* Drugs education
* First aid
* Leave and time off
* Medicines
* Recruitment and selection
* Social media
* Staff induction
* Supporting pupils with medical conditions
* Whistleblowing

Curriculum:

* Behaviour
* Bullying
* EYFS
* Inclusion
* Planning
* Play
* Teaching and learning

Finance:

* Cheque administration
* Internal finance

1. **MEETINGS**

Governors **confirmed** the date of the next FGB meeting as Wednesday 14th July. There would be a training session at 4pm, followed by the meeting at 4.30pm.

1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cheshire East Education Service Teams Review 2019/20

Governors heard that Cheshire East would not be categorising schools as they normally would, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but all areas had been asked to contribute to a review for all schools.

Westminster Nursery School had received an excellent report in all areas, with only 3 development points. Two of these were generic to all schools, and the third related to a forecast deficit budget in 2022/23.

Governors wished to congratulate the school on this outstanding achievement.

There were part two minutes recorded at this meeting.

**There being no further business for discussion the meeting finished at 5.35pm**

Signed: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_