

The Calcot Schools

Minutes of the

Full Governing Body Meeting 22.3.

Held on Wednesday 9 March 2022 at 9.30am via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Julia Kidd (JK) (Vice Chair)
 Florence Rostron (FR) (Headteacher)
 Hugh Baxter (HB)
 Andrew Marsh (AM)
 Katie Dean (KD)
 Shelly Higgins (SH)
 Nicky Bate (NB)

In Attendance:

Alice Elliott (AE) Clerk

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| Item | Minutes – Meeting chaired by Julia Kidd |
| 1. | <p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>1.1. Apologies were received from and Joe Lally (JL), Carolyn Purchase (CP), Mark Hazelton (MH) and Kath Howard (KH).</p> <p>1.2. Governors welcomed SH as the new parent governor. She outlined her experience with vulnerable children and child protection.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Declarations of conflict of interest</p> <p>2.1. SH has two children in school.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Matters to be raised under Any Other Business</p> <p>3.1. School Streets</p> <p>3.2. Supporting Ukraine humanitarian aid. The school wishes to support humanitarian aid for Ukraine families. FR requested governor approval on a letter to parents (which has been circulated). JK asked about Russian families in school. The school has been mindful about this. Year 6 assembly brought up the subject, explaining that Russian people were also protesting against the war. No political view was mentioned, just how to support families in crisis. SH said Russia and Ukraine were part of her Masters Degree, and as she can speak both languages, she offered her help in this area. Governors thanked her.</p> <p>3.3. Formal approval of Schools Financial Values Standard – to be discussed under Finance.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Minutes of previous meeting held on 8 December 2021</p> <p>4.1. The last line of minute 6.8. was amended to say : “However there is a high level of <i>SEND</i> and a huge number of non-verbal children.” Subject to this change, Governors then confirmed these minutes were a correct record.</p> <p>4.2. These minutes will be signed by the Chair as soon as COVID situation has been sufficiently eased to make this possible.</p> |

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| <p>5.</p> | <p>Matters arising from previous minutes (if not an agenda item)</p> <p>5.1. – 22.2.5.1. Business Interest Forms have been updated.</p> <p>5.2. – 22.2.11.5. AE to check if EK included the Working Apprenticeship paragraph in the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.</p> <p>5.3. – 22.2.7.1. The Strategy meeting will be held on Friday 18 March in school. FR will let Governors know if the COVID situation is safe beforehand. There has been a small breakout in the Juniors, but not more than 5 cases in any one cohort.</p> <p>5.4. – 22.2.8.1. The ToRs have been amended.</p> <p>5.5. – 22.2.15.4. Parent Governor recruitment has been successful.</p> <p>5.6. – 22.2.16.4. Personnel have discussed SLT workload and staff restructuring at their last meeting. The advert for the new AHT has gone out.</p> <p>5.7. JK asked for an update on the Afghan Refugee situation. 2 children in Year 6 and 1 in Year 4 have been taken in this term. The total is 14 refugee children. This is not turning out to be the short-term venture WBC said it would be, as some children have been in school since September. The families are still living in Calcot Hotel. The school has received funds from a charity in Newbury to support these children, and we have a TefL trained teacher teaching them every week. The children are settling in, listening and actively joining in, and the other children are also including them. FR has requested the 2 Year 6 children be disapplied for SATs, as they don't have enough grasp of the language or curriculum.</p> <p>5.8. JK asked how involved has WBC been. There was a presentation by an 'expert' school, and the school has purchased some suitable books for the children, but FR felt we were doing everything already. WBC have said there will be more children coming through.</p> <p>5.9. SH asked if the school could join the Sanctuary Movement. An association of 300 primary and secondary schools working on best practice for inclusion of refugee children. FR asked for more information. SH also mentioned the Bells Trust, offering resources for parents and staff training. NB said the school already uses the Bells Trust. JK thanked SH for this information.</p> <p>ACTION – SH to send details of Sanctuary Movement to FR</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>Committee Reports</p> <p>6.1. <u>Finance (10 February 2022)</u>: The school is essentially breaking even. There are still some question marks over the new PAN and the number of children on roll. Now that many experienced teachers are going on maternity leave, we need to recruit some more senior teachers to make the balance right. FR said the AHT advert was adjusted to seek a more experienced teacher, but she has received one response so far. The ECTs are all staying on, hence the need to increase the experience capacity.</p> <p>6.2. MH asked why was there an absence of experienced teachers looking for this role. FR reported a lot of people are leaving the profession, there is likely to be 10 headships available across West Berkshire by the end of the academic year. The profession is struggling to retain experienced staff, and others are staying put in their jobs. Other schools are experiencing the same problem.</p> <p>6.3. AM asked if people tend to go onto supply to not commit to a permanent position. If you are supply, and there are COVID problems, they choose not to work. There have been no supply teachers available at our highest need. Supply may prefer to not take accountability for working in a school, but without this accountability you're not invested in the children's education. Supply is used to cover teacher absence or to do catchup tutoring. Our aim is to be fully staffed for September and only use supply as and when needed.</p> <p>6.4. HB requested approval of the SVFS report. KD and JK said they felt it was a true reflection of the school's position and with no further queries Governors approved.</p> <p>6.5. JK thought the finances were looking much better than 2 years ago when we were predicting</p> |

deficits, the situation is now looking a lot more promising. **AM thought this was due to experienced teachers having moved on and younger teachers coming in**, which has a big impact on the budget in our favour. FR said this isn't something within our control. The pay freeze wasn't good for staff, but this has helped us financially.

6.6. Personnel (17 February 2022): This will cover agenda Item 11. Staffing Update. FR reported the resignation of an AHT to a headship role opens up the opportunity to look at the SLT structure. Her recommendation is to move from 3 to 2 x AHTs who will not have class teaching responsibilities, and increasing year group leaders from 4 to 7. This will free up FR, NB and EK's time by delegating tasks. As there are changed responsibilities within the AHT role, the AHT going on maternity leave needed to be consulted, but everyone involved is very supportive.

6.7. FR explained what is being taken away is classroom responsibility, and teach in every year group of their phase, a much better balance of input and support in every cohort. The remaining AHT is keen to do more of this distributed role with 3 days of leadership time. This will also help them to develop their role. This change in structure is slightly more expensive, similar to employing an extra teacher, but much more strategic, providing an opportunity to develop some younger staff in leadership as part of their professional development.

6.8. **AM asked if this was similar to other schools**. FR commented that this varies from school to school: Executive Heads, two Deputies, several people in part-time leadership roles. FR felt the DHT and Inclusion Manager structure is appropriate for Calcot as they work across both schools. Two x AHTs with more time gives them a larger ownership. There aren't many leadership roles in schools which aren't a Deputy, we are therefore offering experience in the leadership area.

6.9. **JK commented that we have been looking at how we can release FR, NB and EK to work more strategically rather than reactively**. As the school changes we need to review our approach to leadership, and this AHT role is an excellent opportunity for someone's personal development. **AM noted the salary wasn't that much more and trusted FR to put the best staffing structure in place**. JK noted this would also allow us to not spend so much on supply, which could offset the additional leadership team costs.

6.10. **JK asked if WBC will be consulting with the unions**. HR has been contacted but FR hasn't heard back from them yet. The AHT in role is happy with the changes.

7. Safeguarding Update

7.1. AM reported that he has visited the school to go through the Single Record Register, which is all in order. He also met with FR and EK regarding Safeguarding: 6 children in need, 2 Looked After Children and 5 with Child Protection orders, 2 of which have moved away but continue to stay on the register.

7.2. Referrals are being made with an increase in cases being seen. We have had 108 Safeguarding incidents since September. This takes up a lot of FR and EK's time, but the increase is due to the COVID Lockdown causing more stress on families. Staff continue to look out for situations they need to report, and systems are in place to look after these children as much as we can.

7.3. FR has renewed her designated training, which introduced the Youth Offending Team who outlined the support they can provide to primary schools. WBC asked us to meet in triad with other schools for Safeguarding audits, and we were partnered with Theale and Birch Copse schools. It appears Calcot has expertise most valuable to the other schools, because we have to do this so regularly.

7.4. The constant challenge is a high turnover of staff who have to be retrained and revisit the processes, including auxiliary staff like lunchtime and TAs. FR is slightly worried whether all staff would know enough terminology which would satisfy an OfSTED Inspector. She invited AM in his next visit to ask questions to random people about Safeguarding.

7.5. JK highlighted the Safeguarding Network meeting on 23 March, she will forward details.

ACTION – JK to send details of the Safeguarding Network meeting to Governors

8. Pupil Premium Update

8.1. The PPG form reviewed at the last FGB has been placed on the website. WBC's contact who advises about PPG praised Calcot for their dealings with PPG, and had a meeting with FR and EK to go through the targets. They are mindful of the numbers and need in our school. **JK said it was important to get an external viewpoint on our Safeguarding and PPG practices.** FR agreed this had been useful to be able to articulate about this to someone outside of the school.

9. Headteacher's Report

9.1. WBC has informed FR that OfSTED have been fast tracking to catch up with all schools who are overdue inspections, this includes Calcot. We are therefore likely to be inspected by the end of the academic year. FR commented that we will still have our AHT and History Leads in place (both going on maternity leave from September).

9.2. HB had visited regarding Maths, which was very useful, as Maths is likely to have a Deep Dive. We are accelerating our curriculum to suit because the impact reviews happen in the summer term. This means when OfSTED visit we will be further ahead than we would normally have been. Staff need to be equipped and ready for the discussions they will have to have.

9.3. This is also in line with the Governors' strategic discussions in place, which will be recent and up to date. FR has also circulated the School Development Plan with reviews. Hopefully the Interim Plan with COVID will be gone by the end of the year, but this has been updated, as has the Data Review from the December trawl, which is looking good, as it helps to direct our priorities.

9.4. The only area not showing improvement is Reading. Parents are finding it hard to do the online work on Reading as well as other homework, so we are working hard to redress this. Reading Week has been a success this year, with collaboration across school and the Book Fair taking £1k; it's so encouraging to see so much support from parents.

9.5. Much time has been spent reviving and updating the Junior Library, adding about 4-5k books on fiction, including focusing on modern fiction to replace older versions. FR's Masters Degree is focusing on Reading, which is helping restructure the Reading plan at school to centre reading in the curriculum by creating boxes of literature to match with all subject areas.

9.6. The school has been signed up to the Open University Reading for Pleasure project. This is to allow the new AHT to get to know the staff. The person who runs the project understands the need for teachers to advise children on what to read, and to discuss the recent texts with the children.

9.7. Staff training is up to date. We still haven't had full staff attendance this academic year. Several resignations have been received, and one experienced teacher is retiring. Currently there are 3 maternity teachers out and 3 more are going on maternity. Flexible working requests have been received, which FR is trying hard to accommodate. Job shares do create stress and difficulties within the staff, including paying extra for an overlap. HR says we need to adapt to this, as this is how working after the pandemic is developing, but this does reduce opportunities for leadership development amongst staff.

9.8. Partners and collaboration: we are still working with local schools in curriculum structure meetings. We have leaders in Literacy, ICT, History and RE.

9.9. We continue to do our own CPD in-house, and have signed up for the National College, which offer really good bite-sized CPD packages, allocated to specific staff. Staff are always encouraged to be proactive with their CPD and this will give them the opportunity.

9.10. Tutoring is ongoing, affected by staff absence, which we have tried to minimise.

9.11. COVID outbreak: in the peak in January there were 50 children and 20 staff out, and the Nursery had to be closed for a week. CP came in to help out during this period and parents were also very supportive,

telling us about cases in their households to try to prevent further outbreaks.

(NB left the meeting at 10.30am)

9.12. Feasibility Study: A meeting was held on 16 December 2021 with Ian Pearson, Head of Education and Mark Lewis, Head of Assets development, FR, MH and JK. FR also provided statistics on SEND and vulnerable children to WBC Education Assets who recommended changes to the accommodation schedule to reflect the school need. We are now waiting an update meeting with WBC and the architects. FR reported that a staff member showed her a newspaper article announcing £6m for redeveloping the Calcot Schools site. We were under the impression that this was still confidential. FR feels she has been left on the backfoot regarding publicising and WBC need to update her especially before parents start asking questions.

ACTION – JK to contact Mark Lewis regarding Feasibility Study

9.13. PAN and Pupil Numbers: We were expecting 447 children to be on roll in September. We are now 495 with 46 in the Nursery, certainly not tying with WBC's downwards projections. Cumulatively we were predicted to have lost 54 children this year, but our numbers are higher than they were in 2017, and yet the PAN for 60 is still going through from September. The cohort in Year 1 has now 78 children. It looks like WBC are not seeing the reality on the ground. Governors questioned where will all these additional children go if Calcot has a 60 PAN as other local schools are also full.

9.14. **JK noted the Nursery numbers and that WBC are still saying we don't need two Nursery classes.** Nursery is now completely full, even without the break-out group in the main building. A lot of these children start school in September, so it will be interesting to see if they have all got places.

9.15. FR is aiming for the school to return to normal operation for the summer term. KH is hoping to be able to visit to see the choir perform. Governors are welcome to visit any activities, especially the summer term with Sports, Arts and Carnival weeks. Remote assemblies still happen, but everybody eats in the hall and trips are being organised, such as Year 4 to London to visit the Science Museum and to see Lion King.

9.16. FR attended a SEND Tribunal last week, with a parent appealing against the EHC plan and provision their child has been given, as they are seeking AEOTAS provision, which is not in a school setting. Because Calcot is the named school on the plan, we had to be part of the tribunal in WBC's case. FR said Calcot could offer the necessary provision for the child if they actually attended school. There will be an outcome in about two weeks' time. Unfortunately this tribunal required a lot of reading time for FR from an immense amount of legal paperwork.

9.17. **JK asked about the outcome of the SEND child mentioned in the Part 2 FGB minutes of 8 December.** There were two children. One is now going to a special school. Another child was requested to attend higher up the school, and FR rejected this due to a very high level of SEND need already in that year group. Additional 1:1 support is needed to meet this child's needs, and it's very difficult to recruit for suitable TAs at the moment. Also because the top-up funding is so minimal, this has a huge impact on the school. FR is still waiting for a response from WBC.

9.18. School Streets: FR met with Cheryl Evans, WBC lead on this, at the school. MH had already emailed his thoughts. There is no objection towards this continuing, but enforcement is needed from WBC, not from the local community and the school. WBC is applying for traffic cameras, the deadline is May (which WBC won't make), but as 6 months are needed to do the work, we won't get any cameras until January 2023 at the earliest. Her traffic survey showed an increase in cycling and scootering of 83%. Parent feedback is mainly about displacement of parking, and more about the issues with the BP garage on the Bath Road. Barriers are now preventing cars from parking on the pavement and constant monitoring at the lights shows no increase in traffic, only parents who jump the lights. WBC are looking at expanding the School Streets zone. a pedestrian crossing is also proposed in this area. This proposal has to go back to the local Councillor before we know whether this will get the necessary funding to continue or not.

9.19. **JK asked SH for her opinion as a parent.** SH said she wasn't a driver, so always walks to school,

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| | <p>and she approaches school from the Bath Road side. She thinks this is an excellent venture, and extending it would be a good plan. FR said the garage will complain to the school, but are reluctant to involve the police. Hopefully the barriers will make a difference.</p> |
| <p>10.</p> | <p>School Development Plan Update</p> <p>10.1. <u>Feasibility Study</u>: This was covered in the Headteacher's Report.</p> <p>10.2. <u>PAN and Pupil Numbers</u>: This was covered in the Headteacher's Report, there are increases in every cohort.</p> <p>10.3. KD asked about the pupil numbers. Previously declining pupil numbers caused WBC to decide on the PAN 60. FR said WBC's predictions for falling birth rates still states we don't need more than 60 children for each year group, and there is more capacity in the local area that is needed. But we see more people visiting every week, and we have taken in more than 60 children into school. It feels we are taking in more children all the time.</p> <p>10.4. A lot of children who come in-year haven't had their needs met or have additional needs, and this rise of additional needs is hard to manage. Staff don't think the school will remain at 60. Governors can always choose to override the PAN and take in more children.</p> <p>10.5. Having 70-78 children in a cohort with less than 30 children in 3 classes is much better for them educationally, but in reality is not financially viable.</p> <p>10.6. KD noted WBC have announced £6m to be spent on this school, with the proviso that we would move to a PAN of 60. WBC will not agree to a 3-form entry school. This shouldn't have been announced publicly before it has been approved.</p> <p>10.7. KD worried about the lack of future proofing being built in. And even with the present 3-form entry we don't have enough capacity and are bursting at the seams. WBC haven't taken into account pupil movement, with more pupils coming into the school this year. The revised accommodation schedule for the feasibility study has included additional space for staff and SEND children, an extra 70m² which is what is we requested. However, in order to future proof, as much as possible of the land needs to be retained, so we don't lose play space if we go back to 3-form entry. They can build extra classrooms if necessary, but the field needs to be preserved.</p> <p>10.8. HB asked what's happening at other local schools. Are they also seeing an increase in numbers, or are all the extras coming to us because we have the space. FR said all the other schools are full to PAN, and as our PAN is currently 77, WBC have a legal responsibility to place children in school, so they send them to us. But most of these children are in catchment, and the school has to take them. We don't know if children are moving into catchment, or they are in catchment and choosing to come to us.</p> <p>10.9. HB asked if we become a PAN of 60, and other schools are also full to PAN, what happens to the extra children. FR has asked WBC about this; she feels they will make more use of pupil placement panel hearings which may take us over PAN.</p> <p>10.10. KD noted the new housing development opposite Sainsbury's. FR said we have taken at least 10 families in from there, with houses still being built. JK said they are not listening to what the reality is, as originally all children from the new development were supposed to go to Theale.</p> <p>10.11. FR stated the school is buoyant, Calcot is the school of choice, children from several Reading schools are moving to us, especially to seek more support for SEND needs, as they have heard about the provision we have in place. This year there are massive rises and we're not losing the numbers we are taking, which hasn't been the case historically. But it will be more difficult with a PAN of 60.</p> |
| <p>11.</p> | <p>Staffing Update</p> <p><u>Structure</u>: This was covered in the Personnel Committee and Headteacher's Reports.</p> <p><u>Wellbeing</u>: JK attended a Staff Wellbeing webinar on Monday, led by a teacher from a Multi-Academy</p> |

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| | <p>Trust (notes circulated to all governors). Wellbeing shouldn't be a tick box exercise, and with recruitment so hard, schools have to advertise many times to get one applicant. JK was happy Calcot was doing everything that was suggested.</p> <p>11.3. FR said the school regularly refers staff to counselling services paid for by the school, and last term WBC have said the school will not be charged for this. But a lot of the stress is akin to long-COVID fatigue, people are exhausted by it, and it's hard to know when we can move on to the state of being normal. Running as a normal summer term will make people feel better. Staff absences created stress on other people and managing without a TA is very wearing. Planning and work to support children cannot be implemented. It's a constantly changing workload for staff.</p> <p>11.4. During the COVID Lockdown parents were very caring about staff, but this is not the case now. Teachers are finding it harder to cope when parents are angry about something, because they are so run down.</p> <p>11.5. An ECT at her interview said the reason why she wanted to stay was because of the relationships between the staff, children and families, and the open-door policy we have at school. It's good this has been recognised and demonstrates the school has a good atmosphere.</p> <p>11.6. JK asked about support for staff involved with Safeguarding cases. Dealing with Child Protection can be emotionally draining. Is there anything available from WBC FR and her colleagues could take part in when feeling stressed about what's happening? FR said it wasn't support as such, but more advice when needed and someone to offload to. The ELSAs who do the family support work in school have supervision and they have sessions every term, but there is nothing particularly aimed at designated leads.</p> <p>11.7. JK noted FR can have confidential discussions with other headteachers. It is possible to talk to other professionals using a no-name basis just in terms of the situation, but unless they are dealing with something similar there isn't any support for this. The headteacher support role was never replaced. Having said all this FR doesn't feel unsupported, as there are governors and other external personnel and other headteachers who provide a listening ear, and of course NB is her right-hand person.</p> |
| <p>12.</p> | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>These items had been covered within the meeting.</p> <p>The Strategic Follow Up Meeting is Friday 18 March 9.30am at the school.</p> <p><i>The meeting closed at 11.10am.</i></p> |
| | <p>ACTIONS</p> |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>5.9. SH to send details of Sanctuary Movement to FR.</p> |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>7.5. JK to send details of the Safeguarding Network meeting to Governors.</p> |
| <p>9.</p> | <p>9.12 JK to contact Mark Lewis regarding Feasibility Study</p> |