

The Calcot Schools

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting 24.2.

Held on Thursday 7 December 2023 at 9.30am at the school

Present:

Julia Kidd (JK) (Joint Chair)
 Joe Lally (JL) (Joint Chair)
 Florence Rostron (FR) (Headteacher)
 Hugh Baxter (HB)
 Katie Dean (KD)
 Nicky Bate (NB)
 Nabila Azam (NA)
 Clive Taylor (CT)
 Carolyn Purchase (CP)
 Mark Hazelton (MH)

In Attendance:

Alice Elliott (AE) (Clerk)

Item	Minutes – Meeting chaired by Julia Kidd.
1.	<p>Apologies for absence and completion of attendance sheet</p> <p>1.1. Apologies were received from Akeelah Shadoobuccus (AS) and Miriam Sheikh (MS).</p> <p>1.2. Welcome to Nabila Azam, Parent Governor, and Clive Taylor, Co-opted Governor.</p> <p>1.3. JK informed on the situation regarding clerking. Alice Elliott has returned temporarily, as Helen Ayo-Ajayi had been unable to carry out her role to the required standard. JK confirmed the school had given a high level of support and meetings had been held with her. All agreed it is important to have effective clerking support.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of conflict of interest</p> <p>2.1. NA has children at the school; JL has a daughter working at the school.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting (28 September 2023)</p> <p>3.1. Governors confirmed these minutes were a correct record; they were signed by the Chair.</p>
4.	<p>Matters arising (if not an agenda item)</p> <p>4.1. – 24.1.6.2. FR contacted The Ridge, who are happy to continue supporting the school with reading, but not in a governor role.</p> <p>4.2. – 24.1.7.5. AE to liaise with JB regarding Register of Business Interests and Code of Conduct to ensure these are completed by Governors.</p> <p>ACTION – AE to liaise with JB regarding Register of Business Interests and Code of Conduct</p> <p>4.3. The Safeguarding Audit has been submitted with agreement from AS as Safeguarding Governor.</p> <p>4.4. – 24.1.6.3. Governors unanimously agreed to Clive Taylor joining the Governing Body as a Co-opted Governor. His term of office will run from 7/12/23 - 6/12/27.</p> <p>4.5. – 24.1.7.3. A meeting will be arranged next term to discuss improvement to Governor Induction.</p>

	<p>ACTION – Meeting to be arranged next term regarding Governor Induction</p> <p>4.6. – 24.1.9.1. <u>OfSTED</u>: Press releases have been published in the Reading Chronical and Newbury Weekly News. An article has been sent to the local community's Holybrook Parish News. JL asked if this was reported on Facebook. Yes.</p> <p>4.7. – 24.1.12.2. JK has circulated information regarding accessing Governor Hub, which includes online training for Governors and Safeguarding networking. JK will contact WBC Governor Services regarding reinstating AE as admin.</p> <p>ACTION – JK to contact WBC re admin on Governor Hub</p>
5.	<p>Items for Any Other Business</p> <p>5.1. Annual Pupil Premium Statement.</p>
6.	<p>Ratify Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>6.1. Committee Chairs confirmed that no changes were made to these, JK will re-date them accordingly.</p>
7.	<p>Committee reports</p> <p>7.1. Apologies were given for the lack of minutes. Committee Chairs gave verbal reports.</p> <p>7.2. <u>Curriculum</u>: The committee met on 25 September 2023. Following on from OfSTED, the main focus for the next academic year is monitoring of Foundation Subjects. Design Technology (DT) is prominent this term, the committee visited the Infants to observe DT provision. CP reported this follows the curriculum and the skills taught are very good, such as joining a variety of materials together with different techniques and construction. Year 1 focused on the Billy Goats Gruff and bridges using vocabulary such as flanges and slots and constructing free standing bridges. Year 2 focused on fixed and non-fixed axles to design a vehicle, the lesson used very good vocabulary. The committee noted the difficulties in assessing these activities as a progressive programme.</p> <p>7.3. NB was pleased Governors saw quality teaching in DT with the emphasis on how and why. JL acknowledged DT had been carefully thought about, but noted some teachers were more comfortable with the knowledge base rather than the skills. NB noted resourcing material was a major issue, items such as axles and wheels are costly. CP inquired how these materials are funded. The school has an overall curriculum 'pot'. FR will approach The Ridge for funding for DT, last year they donated funding to the polytunnels. JL inquired about repeating the railway trip. This project was seen as having no gain. CP suggested this should be discussed at the next meeting as part of the review of 2022-23. Governors were invited to attend to monitor samples from the Juniors and look at moderation with the staff. NA asked about the Nursery perspective of DT. NB said lessons had a similar approach, but were more free-flow, using tools and wood and screws.</p> <p>7.4. FR highlighted that the school has invested in an additional writing group which happens every day from 9.15am - 10.15am. CP asked whether the Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) has been received. FR will forward this. CP emphasised staff should be allowed to 'breathe' again after the last couple of years.</p> <p>ACTION – FR to forward IDSR to CP</p> <p>7.5. <u>Finance</u>: The committee met on 9 October 2023. NB had been unable to attend due to teaching commitments and FR was only able to attend the first half of the meeting. It was agreed JB will draft some minutes, she asked those Governors who were present at the meeting to help inform these.</p> <p>7.6. MH reported JB has impressed governors on H&S issues, putting many systems in place, and monitoring trends. She regularly asks for more information, and regularly attends school events to inform risk assessment and future organisation. All strategically based activities now produce improved supporting paperwork. NB reported staff have noted her visibility around the school and her willingness to</p>

help, and are happy to ask her for support. **KD noted her new way of reporting was straight forward** as it effectively pre-empted questions, and FR reported she regularly provides solutions to financial problems by being thorough and efficient. **KD noted staff are now reporting near misses after JB had explained their importance.** Several have already been reported this term.

7.7. **HB reported the school is in a financially stable position.**

7.8. FR reported the new Head of Service at WBC is now in place, she has met with Headteachers. She informed that WBC may go into bankruptcy, it is currently £9m in deficit, and may be £15m in deficit by 2024. She will therefore be making some decisions which will be controversial. Following the recent consultation on how to support SEND, some schools who are carrying contingencies above 10% will have claw backs. During her recent visit to Calcot, FR spoke with her about SEND provision and exclusions.

7.9. FR reported the Feasibility Study committee has allowed Calcot to keep the land under a leasing arrangement with WBC. The new school is on hold because of the financial difficulties which has resulted in a lack of recruitment in Property Services, and Education Assets which is affecting this project. Governors discussed that with the likelihood of WBC going into bankruptcy, some schools may opt out of the Local Authority. SEND provision is in such dire need, with WBC unable to provide the necessary services to support schools. **JL noted the lack of any speech and language provision being given to Calcot,** if we were to provide our own unit, this means we will get children from other schools without the resources to fund our own children better.

7.10. WBC now has no strategic leadership for Safeguarding as this key post has gone as a cost saving exercise. Safeguarding is now the responsibility of the school managed by the Safeguarding Lead. FR will continue to fight for the support she feels the school needs.

7.11. **CP asked whether any RAAC has been found in the school.** Nothing has been identified.

7.12. Personnel: The HTPM panel met on 17 October 2023 with Tim Kuhles, School Improvement Partner, to review FR's performance against 2022-23 objectives and to set objectives for the forthcoming year. The main committee meeting held on 31 October 2023 focusing on the teaching staff performance review, with all data anonymised to make it fair and consistent. The WBC updated Teaching Staff Pay Policy was issued late this year. The committee agreed that the school's Pay Policy should be brought into line with the WBC model to offset the school falling out of sync with WBC. The school can adapt the policy and it was agreed to include elements of the school's existing policy which we find useful, such as how we rate performance. **JK reported our policy has been sent to WBC for approval, who in turn have sent it to unions before it can be fully ratified.** The 6.5% annual pay increment was formally approved. Staff have had written pay statements. The 3-year budget projections will be revised accordingly alongside lower than projected Reception intake. The budget is showing an increased in-year deficit of £90k due to a £30K backdated electricity bill. WBC had been basing invoicing on estimations despite the school submitting monthly meter readings. The finance team have now set up a spreadsheet to cross reference invoicing and meter readings to offset this happening in the future. Additional costs for SEND support and staff absence supply have added to the deficit.

7.13. NB reported the support staff pay rise has caused some issues, particularly for lunchtime staff. This increase has lifted some staff out of the low-income level, making them ineligible for low-income grants and housing support. **CP asked if they could refuse the pay rise.** This is not possible, even though the pay rise is not enough to support them. Some are losing money because of the high cost of childcare. **NA confirmed childcare is very expensive. CP agreed it was a balancing act with so many parents needing to work. NA agreed it was difficult finding work within school hours.**

7.14. Pay Committee: Covered under 7.12.

8. Headteacher's Written Report

8.1. Baseline data is very poor this year compared to last year. Nursery has children significantly lower on track for age related. Reception baseline is better but pupil intake is lower. The cohort is strong with two

small classes. The refugee children moving away when Calcot Hotel closed has impacted numbers, but not the Budget as they were present on Census Day.

8.2. PPG percentage is still low in the Infants, but increases as children go up the school. Juniors are over 30% which means we are eligible for extra funding.

8.3. The whole school has been given targets for behaviour and attitude. OfSTED marked this area as Outstanding, but this needs to be sustained to help with staff well-being and how they are managing with SEND; some children continue to really struggle, which impacts staff. **CP noted behaviour in Year 6 is much better this year.**

8.4. JK explained the SEF gradings to new governors..

8.5. Safeguarding audit has been completed and submitted.

8.6. Professional development was highlighted with allocated time for staff to proactively identify their own targets and provide examples relevant to their classes. **JK asked how did this relate to the OfSTED grading of 'Outstanding' in staff training.** FR reported staff write a series of reports targeting their personal achievements; something they found difficult as it includes reflection to development for pedagogy. Early Years require continuing provision to enhance learning and development for Early Years children.

8.7. A Lunchtime Controller is resigning after 27 years' service at Christmas. There will be a little presentation at the end of term. She will be returning voluntarily to hear children read.

8.8. NB reported on the ECTs; four in first year and one in their second, so are in different areas of development with support needed with timetabling and accessing training. All have made progress. **JK and CP asked if they are likely to stay after their training.** They all give positive responses about the school. They are fully supported when they are with a cohort with high level needs. **JL had spoken with them to check on their welfare, and the feedback he received was very positive.**

8.9. The new Sports Lead will report on sports funding and the uptake on provision. A husband of a TA coaches the football matches with a volunteer from Tilehurst Panthers. Volunteers are doing twice as much and the children now have football three evenings a week.

8.10. NB reported on attendance; the Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) have reduced their involvement so AHTs have taken on the role to support attendance. There are still lots of families taking holidays in term time without permission. Persistence absence is now strategically analysed, with targets set and letters sent home before an EWO agrees to give support families who fail to achieve targets.

8.11. **JL reported Karen Smith is doing a great job in Forest School.**

8.12. FR reported on a bullying incident in the Infants: this has not been corroborated but is still reported and investigated. **CP asked if this was a racist incident.** This relates to verbal and physical assaults and provision has been put in place to rectify this.

8.13. **JK highlighted the high number of child protection referrals this term:** 69 since September for Safeguarding. These happen on a daily basis across the school with a significant number of children who don't meet the threshold for social services intervention. **NA asked if social workers have done welfare checks.** Yes. **MH expressed concern at the large numbers of referrals.** The school has to deal with these carefully as it has to follow protocol without fracturing relationships with families.

8.14. **CP noted WBC is the highest for exclusions in Berkshire.** High level needs means many younger children are struggling, which increases the need for more support staff. All agreed it is important to prevent exclusions as this is detrimental for all concerned.

9. **Governors Strategic Plan and School Development Plan priorities for 2023-24**

9.1. Governors reviewed the overall Strategic Plan in line with the SDP and how the school priorities for the forthcoming academic year will aid with delivery. JK is keen not to lose sight of the Governors

	<p>Strategic Plan, she doesn't want it to become just another document. Governors agreed it is a living document and should be reviewed on a termly basis as to progress.</p> <p>9.2. JL suggested Forest School should have a bigger impact for the wider school community, properly funded so the Junior school can get involved in outdoor education. This is good for well-being and mental health and to take advantage of our grounds. NB agreed, but questioned how this could be fitted into the curriculum. Staff are already struggling to fit everything in, and the day has already been extended to 3.20pm to improve reading. JL said funding needs to be defined in line with curriculum need . CP outlined some of the resources needed: compost, seeds, equipment, etc. Unfortunately garden centres are not willing to offer support. Forest School is important for interaction skills and peer support, including activities such as messy play. Governors agreed Forest School should be included in the overall Strategic Plan.</p> <p>9.3. NA offered her skills in asking companies for funding to afford extra-curricular activities in the school, such as writing letters for specific items rather than monetary donations. A lot of companies have a quota to donate for charity. NA will liaise with FR and NB.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>10.1. Governors reviewed the report provided by AS alongside the completed Safeguarding Audit. AS worked with the SLT to deliver governor due diligence. She spent time talking to EK to understand it better. She has identified a number of areas she would like further information on. JK highlighted the whole Governing Body is responsible for Safeguarding, not just the Governor Lead. Governors should have read the most recent KCSIE document (found in SharePoint) and DBS checks are on a rolling programme.</p> <p>10.2. JK asked about use of the reflection rooms and nurturing rooms. There are two nurturing rooms available every lunchtime staffed by ELSAs. Reflection rooms are for children who struggle to regulate and need extra support and those who struggle to behave at lunchtime. These are staffed by an SLT rota each day.</p> <p>10.3. FR reported the number of Safeguarding referrals had increased since the 69 reported in her Headteacher's Report. MH asked what kind of support was offered. Conversations are held between parents and school before the school decides whether a referral is eligible; families are offered advice first or the chance to go to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or go straight to assessment for a CP plan. Families can reject this..</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Policy approval</p> <p>11.1. <u>Pay Policy 2023-24</u>: This had been covered earlier.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Review reports from Governor visits</p> <p>12.1. JL had submitted his report into SharePoint on time spent this term in school.</p> <p>12.2. AS report covered earlier under 10.1.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Receive feedback from Governor training</p> <p>13.1. JK had circulated her report via email on Exploring the OfSTED Leadership & Management Judgement.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>14.1. <u>PPG Annual Statement</u>: This was circulated for Governors to read and has been uploaded to the website. FR highlighted that it includes new items such as staff well-being. JL noted the importance of identifying PPG eligibility earlier to ensure finance is in place. Currently the school receives £180k a</p>

	<p>year in PPG. FR noted there are a number of families who need support and although they work multiple jobs they don't qualify for PPG. KD asked if it was still a struggle to get families to sign up. The school works relentlessly to encourage families, they highlight that this funding can be used to give children experiences they wouldn't normally have, such as trips out. NA asked how many outings are there each year. This depends upon the cohort and the curriculum.</p> <p>14.2 FR highlighted the school choir is participating in a number of events this Christmas. As winners of the 'Lets Sing' competition this year, the choir will be performing alongside adult choirs in the NHS Christmas Concert in Reading Minster.</p> <p><i>The meeting closed at 11.50am.</i></p>
	<p>ACTIONS</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>4.2. AE to liaise with JB regarding Register of Business Interests and Code of Conduct. 4.5. Meeting to be arranged next term regarding Governor Induction. 4.7. JK to arrange for AE to be reinstated as admin on Governor Hub.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>7.4. FR to give IDSR to CP.</p>