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

**WESTMINSTER NURSERY SCHOOL**

**HELD REMOTELY ON 18th NOVEMBER 2020**

(Commenced 4.30pm)

**Governors Present:**

F E Austin (FEA)

L Buchanan (LB)

D Reed (DR) Chair

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, Mrs Janet Jardine gave a short presentation to governors on the history of Westminster Nursery School.

1. **APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) ITEMS**
2. No apologies had been received as all governors were present.
3. Governors agreed to discuss the following items under AOB:
   1. Governor skills audit/Training
   2. Governor Development Plan
   3. Results of the staff survey.
4. **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.
* L Buchanan is also a governor at Shavington Primary School, Crewe

Unsure here Hilary if it’s the primary or secondary school

The Clerk reminded all governors to note their declarations of interest on GovernorHub.

**ACTION: All governors to list declarations of interest on GH.**

**ACTION: NS to ensure declarations of interest are shown on the school website.**

1. **MEMBERSHIP**
2. Governors noted the resignation of Mrs P Smith in July 2020.
3. Governors noted the following vacancies:

* 1 Parent Governor - No nominations had been received for the role, but EH had approached a parent directly and was waiting for the forms to be returned.
* 1 Staff Governor - No nominations had been received for the role, so it was agreed that EC should become the staff governor.

**ACTION: Clerk to amend designation on GH.**

* 1 Local Authority Governor – It was suggested that the Ward Councillor, Laura Smith, may be interested.

**ACTION: DC to approach Laura Smith regarding LA governor vacancy.**

* It was noted that the re-designation of EC also left a vacancy for a Co-opted governor.

1. No terms of office were due to expire before the next FGB in March 2021.
2. **COMMITTEES AND NOMINATED GOVERNORS**

Committee membership was reviewed and agreed as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Curriculum Committee | Elizabeth Hulse  Liz Austin  Donna Reed  Dawn Clark  Emma Connor  Shakie Khatun |
| Finance Committee | Elizabeth Hulse  Donna Reed  Emma Connor  Nathan Tice |
| Premises Committee | Elizabeth Hulse  Liz Austin  Nathan Tice  Linda Buchanan |
| Chair Committee | Elizabeth Hulse  Donna Reed  Dawn Clark  Liz Austin |
| HTPMP | Donna Reed  Dawn Clark  External Advisor: Katie Tyrie |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SEND | Shakie Khatun |
| Safeguarding | Donna Reed |
| Cared for Children | Donna Reed |
| Recovery Curriculum | Donna Reed |
| Pupil Premium | Dawn Clark |
| Health and Safety | Liz Austin |
| Governor Training | Donna Reed and Linda Buchanan |

The terms of reference for the standing committees had been reviewed in committee and were all approved by the board. Additional terms of reference for ad hoc committees had been reviewed on GH and were also approved.

1. **CONSTITUTION AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE HEADTEACHERS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INCLUDING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE EXTERNAL ADVISER**

Governors approved the ToR for the Headteachers Performance Management Panel, and agreed member ship as DR and DC.

The external adviser was approved as Katie Tyrie.

1. **GOVERNORS’ CODE OF PRACTICE**

Governors approved the code of practice reviewed on GH. The clerk reminded governors to confirm their acceptance of the code on GH.

**ACTION: All governors to confirm acceptance of the code on GH.**

1. **PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**
   * 1. Governors **approved** the minutes of the previous Board of Governors meeting on 15th July 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.

1. **IMPACT STATEMENT**

At the summer term meeting, governors had reviewed the Governance Development Plan for 2019/21 and agreed the production of the end of year governance statement which has been published on the school website. They had approved the staffing structure and reviewed the governance structure for the year ahead.

The board had also supported and questioned the Headteacher’s implementation of guidance around the Covid pandemic, including risk assessments, the recovery curriculum and the financial implications on the school from COVID. Noted that school are not applicable for COVID recovery money.

The Headteacher noted that she had greatly appreciated governors support, and was reassured that they were reading the documentation and questioning where appropriate.

1. **CHAIR’S ACTION**

The Chair informed the board that she and EH had met with Dr Kieran Mullan, the local MP, to discuss a long-term funding solution for nurseries.

EH noted that she had received an email from Dr Mullan on 16th November, updating her on progress. He had made enquiries with the DfE but was still awaiting a response. EH agreed to post any further updates on GH.

**Question**: As a nursery Headteacher, are you a member of a professional body that could put pressure on parliament over the funding issue?

Response: I am a member of the North West Association of Nursery Headteachers, but they have not met this term. The campaign is being led by the Early Education charity. EC also attended a meeting with Vicky Ford MP, a Minister in the DfE, but it was not very positive.

1. **PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

Premises

Governors heard that the work to install a bench in memory of Dorothy Flude had not been completed during half term as planned, as the contractor and his family had needed to isolate due to Covid. New dates for the work were being discussed.

A quote had been received from pentagon for work to provide a shelter for the outside area. EH and NS had adjusted the design and were awaiting a revised, and hopefully cheaper, quote.

Curriculum

The Curriculum committee had discussed the low numbers in the 2yr old class. EH had spoken to other nurseries and to Mark Thornton at Cheshire East, and other nurseries were in the same situation. CE would be publishing a leaflet in the near future, and agreed to include details of Westminster Nursery. The Nursery could then deliver locally and CE would help identify the areas to target. The 3 year old data had shown once again that communication – speaking and listening was a priority. The year on year data had shown that the number of SEN had increased and this was impacting on school staffing/timetable.

Chairs

The agenda for the Chairs’ meeting was available on GH, but minutes were not circulated. The Chair noted that areas discussed had included the SDP, staff appraisals, the Headteacher’s performance management and financial matters.

Finance

The Finance committee meeting had taken place on 9th November, but budget papers had not been available as the meeting with the budget officer had not taken place. The committee had reviewed the school fund, relevant policies and teaching staff pay recommendations. Noted that Spring and Summer meetings with budget officer would be made before termly finance meetings to enable budget to be presented to committee.

Safeguarding Link Governor

DR reported that she had met with EH and noted the following:

* She had received a termly update.
* The Section 175 audit had been completed.
* The Safeguarding action plan had been reviewed.
* Safeguarding was a weekly agenda item for staff meetings.
* There were currently 2 children on the register.
* The SCR had been checked
* DR had asked a member of staff a question about safeguarding and had been happy with the response.

1. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The meeting with the CE budget officer had taken place in the morning, and NS reported the following:

£27,769 had been carried forward from the 2019/20 financial year, plus earmarked reserves.

Current projections showed an expected in-year surplus of £22,720 for 2020/21, giving a total carry forward figure of approximately £50K.

Projections for Year 2 (2021/22) showed an anticipated deficit of £13K, but this would be covered by a reduction in the earmarked reserve if necessary.

Governors agreed that the finances looked healthy, but would review the situation in the spring term. NS had provided the dates for spring term governor meetings and asked CE to ensure that the budget meeting was scheduled before the governor Finance meeting.

1. **HEADTEACHER’S REPORT**

The Headteacher’s report had been shared on GH in advance of the meeting, and governors invited to submit questions:

**Question**: In terms of Staffing Matters it is concerning that there is inadequate SEND funding potentially putting pressure on staff and impacting on provision for children. Can governors raise this with relevant personnel at Cheshire East as well as Crewe South Ward Councillors, Laura Smith and Steve Hogben? In terms of remote learning what proportion of children do not have access to the internet? Under the heading pupils does the school need help in delivering leaflets? In terms of EYPP and 2 year olds not receiving EYPP, should we lobby our MP?

Response: In answer to your points:

- Donna and I met with Carol Sharples (head of EY for Cheshire East) and Alex Coomber in February about SEN funding to ensure that they were aware of this situation and to ask for them to review payments made.

- Currently we have 6.5% of our school who do not have access to remote learning and we have addressed this by making up work packs to take to their homes.

- Leaflets - when we have these and they are ready we would be grateful of any help to pop them through letterboxes!

- 2 year olds are not eligible nationally for EYPP. They are however eligible for a funded place at school if the family is on a low income. This funded place is not available to all 2 year old children.

Governors were pleased to note the progress already being made with the SDP, despite the pressures of the Covid situation. It was agreed that EC and EH would conduct regular learning walks as governors were unable to do this at present.

Although not included in the written report, the Headteacher also wished to share with governors the feedback she had received from parents on the Vision and Values statement. One comment had read:

*“I totally agree with the content of the vision statement I have read today.*

*X has thrived since attending the nursery and talks about the things she has learned each day, she really enjoys the song she learns with her teachers and friends and singing them at home is nice to hear.*

*I find the nursery a home from home setting, all staff are informative and helpful.*

*X loves going to nursery and it is the place she enjoys going to the most.*

*As a parent I can not recommended the nursery school enough to everyone I know.”*

Governors welcomed the feedback and suggested that the comment be used on the school website.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for a very comprehensive report.

1. **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

This item was covered as part of the Headteacher’s report and approved by governors.

1. **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

The Director’s report had been shared on GovernorHub earlier in the term to inform committee discussions. The following areas were noted:

* The need to ensure effective monitoring without increasing the workload for staff.
* The Safeguarding policy had been updated to reflect changes to Keeping Children safe in education.

Governors were encouraged to read the general news round-up at the end of the report if they had not already done so.

1. **POLICIES**

The following policies had been reviewed in committee and were approved by the Full Governing board.

* Child protection policy (revised to reflect updated statutory safeguarding guidance)
* Pay policy for teachers
* Admissions Policy
* Health & Safety Policy

1. **TERM DATES**

Governors agreed that the term dates for 2021/22 and 2022/23 would follow the CE dates, but Inset days would be reviewed at the spring term FGB. They are currently not published on website due to technical difficulties

**ACTION: Clerk to add term dates to spring term agenda for approval**

1. **MEETINGS**

Governors **confirmed** the date of the next FGB meeting as 17th March 2021. There would be a training session at 4pm, followed by the meeting at 4.30pm.

1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Skills audit/training**

The Chair had shared the results of the recent governor skills audit on GH and discussed outcomes with governors. Both she and LB had held a meeting to discuss results and plan, from the outcomes of the audit, whole school governor training sessions to be held prior to FGB’s.

The following full board training was agreed for the coming year:

Spring 21 – LB will update governors on Safeguarding matters.

Summer 21 - NS will provide an overview of finance, looking at ‘where we were’, ‘where we are now’ and ‘where we are going’.

Autumn 21 - EH will look at performance indicators under the new EYFS framework.

The Chair reminded all governors that online training modules were available through the NGA, and governors should email DR with details of any training undertaken so the training grid could be kept up to date.

The clerk also noted that training could be recorded on GH.

**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 Amber.
* 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

**Staff Survey**

Governors had reviewed the results of the staff survey on GH, and noted that the board needed to raise the profile of governors among staff.

Governor photos were already on the school website, but it was suggested that photos be placed in the school entrance, or on the new external noticeboard while parents were still unable to come into school.

**ACTION: NS to arrange for governor photos on noticeboard.**

Governors discussed the benefit of attending INSET sessions, and agreed that it may be useful to attend the first 20 minutes of so, perhaps to introduce themselves, or for a brief social chat.

**ACTION: Governors to attend start of February INSET**

As staff governor, EC was asked to feedback to staff on what governors were doing and the results of the staff survey. It was also suggested that she seek staff ideas on how governors could be more visible.

**ACTION: EC to feedback to staff on governor matters as appropriate.**

Governors were pleased that staff felt able to answer the questions honestly, and EH noted how proud she felt of the staff for what they were doing under very difficult circumstances.

There were part two minutes recorded at this meeting.

**There being no further business for discussion the meeting finished at 6:25pm**

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

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