



**Governing Body of the Winchcombe School  
Minutes of the Governing Board  
Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 5.00pm**

**Present:** Richard Blofeld (RB) (Chair) co-opted governor; Liam Anderson (LA) (Vice Chair) co-opted governor; Matt Percy (MP) (Head teacher) Hannah Peto (HP) co-opted governor; Dani Clay (DC) elected staff governor; Sarah Whatmore (SW) LA governor, Alex Hawkins (AH) co-opted governor; Gary Smith (GS) parent governor

**Apologies:** Kathryn Bowers (KB) parent governor

**Absent:**

**In attendance:** Sheilagh Peacock (SP), School Business Manager (SBM); Harriet Skinner (HS), Clerk, Elode Scarlett (ES) Deputy Head teacher

**Key:** Strategic direction/Challenge or Question/Answer/Action/Extract

**1. Apologies & Introductions**

Kathryn Bowers (KB) sent her apologies

Sarah Whatmore (SW) and Gary Smith (GS), newly elected parent governor introduced to the GB

*The meeting was quorate*

**2. Declaration of any other business**

(i) School Improvement Plan (SIP) AH

(ii) LA term of office (clerk)

(iii) Health & Safety Policy (clerk)

(iv) 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (MP)

(v) website (RB)

**3. Declaration of interests**

(i) HP disclosed that she is holding peripatetic piano lessons at The Winchcombe School.

(ii) SW notified the GB that she is also a member of John Rankin Schools Governing Board.

Both have been declared on annual register of business interests. **Clerk to update register and upload to school website.**

**4. Minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting and were signed by RB.

**Clerk to upload minutes to the school website: ASAP**

**5. Matters arising**

None

**6. Head teacher report**

Governors were pleased to learn that the recent year 6 residential was enjoyed by all. RB asked about the attendance rate of the trip, MP confirmed that 7 pupils did not attend for various reasons including anxiety, illness and Speech and Language (SAL) children did not attend.

HP commented that year 6 teachers encourage as many children as possible to participate. DC mentioned that the group who remained in school took part in other activities (Thatcham Lakes and pizza making at Pizza Express) MP thanked the staff who facilitated these activities and the staff who accompanied the year 6s to Manor Adventure. LA enquired about pupil premium grant (PPG) children and MP confirmed that families of PPG children received a significant discount to enable all children to take part. RB wanted to know if MP felt the facility offered a valuable experience and MP acquiesced that the activities were good but the visit did little to nurture independence and in future the school would be looking into a provision which would encourage greater responsibility in children.

MP reported that teacher appraisals have been completed, no pay increases were withheld. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the process of reviewing Upper Pay Range (UPR) targets in preparation for next appraisal round.

A brief discussion took place about the Language and Literacy (LAL) resource and governors understood that the LAL is the responsibility of the local authority and as such there is no role for the GB – however the school does manage the LAL budget.

Governors considered the attendance data in HT report and noted that currently at 94.9% - not far off the 95% target. The GB learnt that a meeting with WBC Education Welfare Safeguarding Service had taken place in school on 16<sup>th</sup> November to follow up on strategies for dealing with persistent absence and lateness. AH queried the use of fixed penalty notices (FPN) and MP concurred that the implementation of FPNs was being examined. The discussion moved onto circumstances when absences are approved under HT's discretion, such as sports competitions and religious observance.

MP reported that recent parents' evenings were a success and AH commented on how well the consultations were organised. RB asked about the engagement with PPG families and MP agreed to look into the parents' evening attendance figures and report back to governors by the next meeting.

Governors noted the resurgence of extra-curricular clubs and were glad to see provision has been extended this year.

MP advised that Kate Betts (KB) (inclusion manager/SENCo) will be leaving The Winchcombe School at the end of year to take on a role at a specialist school. On behalf of the GB, RB thanked KB for her dedication to the school over 16 years and commitment to SEN pupils. MP informed the GB that a successor is being sought and SLT are considering interim support for SEN. MP to report to governors when SENCO appointment made.

LA questioned safeguarding of children during a recent visit to Winchcombe Place Care Home, MP assured governors that the children were chaperoned by school staff at all times.

Data update was discussed, LA noted predicted Year 6 figures and asked if SLT felt targeted support was working. ES advised that Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) were leading small intervention groups; HP mentioned the time constraints for HLTAs and MP conceded that HLTAs are used to cover absence for consistency, however the return of a class teacher from maternity leave would ease the HLTA workload.

RB drew attention to the number of child protection cases/cause for concern and SW concurred that this was a common trend across the local authority especially post Covid and the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. Governors agreed that teaching and learning was not the only emphasis for school leaders and acknowledged the additional burden to schools.

## Minutes of the meeting of 20.11.2023

Signed ...



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## **7. Finance report and budget monitoring period 6**

SP advised that position at period 6 predicted a small surplus of £ 12k but cautioned that Period 9 reports would give a clearer indication for year end. RB understood budgetary constraints but felt that SP's report was broadly positive. SP explained that to make savings the school must recruit from within the school and cut back further on spending on educational resources but qualified this with the understanding that the school has to meet the complex needs of the pupil profile. **AH enquired if the Sports Coach would be replaced and SP/MP advised that a HLTA will be deployed to fill the role.**

**RB questioned if the way forward was to monitor and wait or be more proactive. SP and MP felt strongly that early intervention was crucial.** (See next agenda item)

## **8. Finance Committee – agree Term of Reference and appoint 3 governors**

As a number of new governors with a wide skill set have joined the board from September 2023, it was agreed to form a Finance Committee: a small group of 3 governors plus HT to scrutinise expenditure and monitor budgets, reporting back to the full governing body. Terms of Reference were circulated and the GB understood the function of the committee and delegated powers. The Clerk emphasised that the GB would be ultimately responsible for approving budget plans and advised that the committee terms of reference would be reviewed by the FGB on an annual basis. The clerk advised that the Chair of Governors was expected to be on a finance committee and RB consented to this, LA (Vice chair) as an experienced member of the board, also agreed to join the finance committee. The clerk advised that KB had expressed an interest in joining the finance committee; KB is a finance director for a logistics firm and has 20 years' experience of working in finance. The GB agreed to appoint RB, LA, KB (and MP, SP in attendance) to the finance committee and approved the Terms of Reference. Inaugural meeting to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023, when a Chair of Finance Committee would be elected.

**Clerk to update website and Governor Hub ASAP.**

## **9. Approval of summary appraisal report for governors**

Approved.

MP advised that appraisal process is under review by SLT in preparation for next round of performance management 2024-25.

## **10. Teachers' pay and Appraisal Policy**

Teachers' Pay Policy was approved, to be reviewed by October 2024. **Clerk to update policy folder ASAP.**

Appraisal Policy to be overhauled, draft to be ready for review by September 2024.

AH noted that in previous years, the appraisal process was informal, MP cautioned that in future, teachers main scale will not mean automatic uplift and targets for UPR will be more measured.

Furthermore, UPR teachers have to be accountable in order to sustain high number of teachers on UPR at The Winchcombe School.

## **11. Financial Management Policy (FMP)**

FMP adapted from WB model policy to reflect practise of finance team in school.

FMP approved unanimously. **Upload to policy folder, website and circulate to staff, clerk - ASAP**

## **12. Policy for dealing with persistent/vexatious complaints and harassment**

Governors raised a query over the definition of 'letter'.

**RB to clarify and advise clerk - ASAP**

## **13. Health and Safety/Premises update**

LA and SP conducted a H&S school walk around on 16.11.23, completed H&S checklist circulated. LA commented that H&S in school continues to be of a high standard, no issues to

report. H&S needs assessment scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December. **LA and SP to report back to GB – next meeting.**

#### **14. Safeguarding report and audit**

Safeguarding visit booked for 30.11.23 to inspect Single Central Record (SCR) and complete section 175 education safeguarding audit. **SW to report back to governors – next meeting.**  
SW had no safeguarding concerns to report.

#### **15.AOB**

##### **(i) School Improvement Plan (SIP) AH**

AH felt strongly that evaluation and impact of SIP 2022-23 should be tabled at this meeting of the GB, although there is a change in HT, school staff have worked hard and AH wanted to know what has happened with the SIP. RB agreed that the SIP would usually be a regular agenda item, however the agenda for this meeting was extensive and he felt it best to defer the SIP to the next FGB meeting. MP argued that the SIP was very much still in existence and had been updated via staff meetings and SLT strategy days. ES informed the GB that the SIP has been RAG (red, amber, green) rated and implementation meetings were underway in classroom to measure impact and set priorities.

**It was agreed that SIP be tabled at the next FGB meeting – MP/ES/clerk to circulate updated SIP.**

##### **(ii) LA term of office (clerk)**

The clerk advised that LA's term of office (two years) ends on 13.2.2024. LA would like to stay on the board and has a proven record of service. The next FGB meeting is 26.2.2024 therefore it was agreed unanimously to reappoint LA for another two- year term to ensure seamless transition. **Update Governor Hub & website – clerk**

**(iii) Health & Safety Policy (clerk)** no changes to the H&S policy other than new HT, CoG and H&S Governor. H&S policy was duly signed by MP, RB and LA.

**(iv) 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (MP)** – is the day of a member of staff's husband's funeral. MP would like staff who wish to attend to do so; the school will facilitate this (possibility of class closures). Governors fully supported MP's decision.

##### **(v) website (RB)**

RB raised a concern about compliance of website in terms of publishing statutory information. SW pointed out that School Improvement Advisor (SIA) footprint report would highlight any omissions. MP conceded that the website could be developed, but financially not a priority at present. The idea of reviewing the website was mooted and could be a possible agenda item for the next meeting. **Review website – SLT by end of 2023-24 academic year.**

#### **16.Date & time of next meeting**

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 5.00pm

(Finance Committee to meet on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 5.00pm)

*The meeting closed at 6.30pm*

	<b>Supporting documents</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>
<b>1.</b>	Agenda for this meeting	<b>1.</b>
<b>2.</b>	Minutes of the meeting of 25.09.23	<b>4,5</b>
<b>3.</b>	HT report for governors 17.11.23	<b>6.</b>
<b>4.</b>	Period 6 budget monitoring reports Funds 01, 08, 13,50,55,76,99	<b>7.</b>
<b>5.</b>	Terms of Reference – Finance Committee	<b>8.</b>

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Signed ...



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<b>6.</b>	Summary Appraisal Gobs report 23-24	<b>9.</b>
<b>7.</b>	Teachers' Pay policy 2023-24	<b>10.</b>
<b>8.</b>	FMP	<b>11.</b>
<b>9.</b>	Policy for dealing with persistent/vexatious complaints and harassment	<b>12.</b>
<b>10.</b>	H&S walkaround 16.11.23	<b>13.</b>
<b>11.</b>	Revised meeting dates 2023-24	<b>16.</b>

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