



Governing Body of the Winchcombe School
Minutes of the Governing Board
Monday 26th February 2024 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; Alex Hawkins (AH) co-opted governor; Gary Smith (GS) parent governor; Abi Preston-Rees (APR) parent governor

Apologies: Sarah Whatmore (SW) LA governor

Absent:

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

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

1. Apologies & Introductions

Sarah Whatmore (SW) LA governor sent her apologies;
Abi Preston-Rees (APR), newly elected parent governor, was introduced to the GB
The meeting was quorate

2. Declaration of any other business

(i) Governor Training & governor hub (clerk)

(ii) Happy Kids Lease (RB)

(iii) Allergen Policy (GS)

3. Declaration of interests

None

4. Minutes of the meeting of 20th November 2024

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. Appointment of co-opted governor (Kathryn Bowers) (KB)

KB left the meeting.

Governors felt that KB had a proven track record as a parent governor and it was agreed unanimously to appoint KB as a co-opted governor for a term of 2 years starting 26.2.24

Update Governor Hub and website: clerk ASAP

RB proposed that items 9,10, 1 be tabled first. Agreed.

7. Head teacher report

MP advised that the format of the HT report is in the process of review, in consultation with the Winchcombe's school improvement advisor (SIA). MP went on to explain that the HT report doubles as the self-evaluation form (SEF) and he summarised key points from the report.

RB commented that a national comparison of data would be a constructive benchmark.

Staffing was discussed and **AH asked about the lunchtime supervisor role.**

MP advised that the post had been filled internally and was working well. Friends of Winchcombe (FoWs) raised £21k last year and was commended by MP.

Governors were pleased to learn of collaboration with other schools: The Winchcombe School welcomed a year 5 class whilst Falkland School was closed and regular networking events with local head teachers. AH recognised the value of sharing good practice with other schools. LA talked about primary school networks emphasising partnership between subject leaders. Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) data was considered. RB confirmed that the PPG section of the school website was compliant with DfE conditions.

LA questioned the attendance data and asked about MP's strategy for dealing with absence and lateness. MP confirmed that attendance and lateness data had been analysed, letters sent out and meetings with families scheduled for 27.2.24. LA wanted to know if these measures were having an impact and it was felt that it was too early to assess. RB suggested that the attendance data is reversed to show % attendance as opposed to % absence. LA pointed out that attendance and punctuality is a priority for all schools and a national issue and suggested having a dedicated governor to monitor and report back to the GB. KB volunteered. KB to report on attendance and punctuality by next mtg 22.4.24.

DC asked about the practicality of school staff (who are also parents) teaching their own children. ES and MP agreed that this would only be in exceptional circumstances (due to staff absence) and not usual practice.

RB commented on the exemplary behaviour of pupils during a recent school walkabout.

Link governors for SEN (AH) and Curriculum (HP) to arrange school visits – liaise with clerk by end of academic year.

8. School Improvement Plan (SIP)

AH queried level of governor involvement. The clerk advised that the SIP should be on the agenda of every FGB meeting but it was unusual for the GB to go through the SIP line by line. RB and MP agreed that governors be involved at a strategic level and stressed that the current SIP was inherited from the previous HT. AH wanted clarification of the school's vision and MP agreed to present his overarching vision for the school in bullet points at the next FGB meeting 22.4.24.

9. Finance report to governors

LA summarised the minutes of the Finance Committee (FC) meeting of 29th January 2024.

LA went through the benchmarking report. SP updated the GB on cleaning contract: quotes have been received and the in-house cleaners are cheaper so the school will continue to employ our own cleaners.

KB opined that the school could not feasibly make any more savings and reiterated that the school was not in a deficit yet – although it is very tight.

The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) checklist was considered and approved by the GB, signed by RB. Submit SFVS to internal audit: clerk, ASAP and no later than 31.3.24

10. Policy review: Charging & Remissions, School Fund Policy (recommended for approval by Finance Committee) MP noted referral to LEA in Charging and Remissions Policy – Clerk to amend to LA. Approved unanimously. Clerk to update website, staff shared school policies folder, policy review timetable: ASAP

11. HR Policies review: Capability, Code of Conduct for Staff, Disciplinary Procedure, Grievance Procedure, Whistleblowing

The clerk explained that the above policies are provided by the school's HR provider, Juniper HR and as such it is recommended that the GB adopts them, furthermore these are statutory

policies which the GB must have in place. However, Governors raised some concerns with the following policies:

Capability Policy: RB pointed out that page 3: "Transition to Capability" section does not detail informal steps leading to capability process. It was suggested to seek clarification from Juniper HR. Clerk to contact HR by next FGB mtg 22.4.24.

Code of Conduct: AH opined that section 9. Use of Mobile Phones is outdated and does not reflect the use of mobile phones today; AH mentioned timer function and staff WhatsApp groups. APR was surprised to learn teachers used mobile phones in the classroom and felt it inappropriate from a safeguarding perspective. ES concurred that mobile phones should not be used in classrooms but acknowledged that there were occasions when they were used in emergencies. It was argued that staff have access to school iPads and laptops so should not need their phones in the classrooms. It was agreed to examine and review use of mobile phones in school and revise the Code of Conduct: SLT by next FGB mtg 22.4.24.

Disciplinary Procedure: RB initiated a discussion on the inclusion of the definition of a "neutral act" in section 9.3, and governors concluded that the wording covered this. The Disciplinary Procedure was approved (subject to correction of a typo on page 12. Clerk to update website, staff shared school policies folder, policy review timetable: ASAP.

Grievance Procedure: Approved, subject to a typo on appendix. Clerk to update website, staff shared school policies folder, policy review timetable: ASAP.

Whistleblowing Policy: Approved. Clerk to update website, staff shared school policies folder, policy review timetable: ASAP.

12. The Winchcombe School policy for dealing with persistent, vexatious complaints

Revised wording was agreed, and the policy was approved by the GB. Clerk to update website, staff shared school policies folder, policy review timetable: ASAP

13. Health and Safety/Premises update

The GB was pleased to learn that of the recent H&S audit overall score was 'good' just short of outstanding.

LA and SP did a H&S walk around on 21.2.24 and the checklist was circulated.

14. Safeguarding report and audit

MP reported that SW visited the school on 30.11.23, the Single Central Record (SCR) was inspected and safeguarding audit was completed.

There were no safeguarding concerns to report.

15. Website

MP admitted that the website could be improved but financially this is not viable. RB volunteered to check that the website is compliant by DfE standards and will report back to SLT by next FGB mtg 24.2.24

16. AOB

(i) Governor Training and governor hub

The clerk reminded governors to update governor hub with any training attended, as well as register of business interests.

(ii) Happy Kids

Further to the FC meeting, RB advised that the school now has a copy of the lease with Happy Kids Pre-School.

(iii) Allergen Policy

GS's job involves catering in schools and as such felt the school's approach to allergens should be reviewed – not just in the dining hall but in all areas of school life. GS offered to share some resources with links to model policies – GS/MP/ES/SP – by next FGB meeting 22.4.24.

16.Date & time of next meeting

Finance Committee: Monday 25th March 2024 at 5.00pm; **FGB** Monday 22nd April 2024 at 5.00pm

The meeting closed at 6.55pm

	Supporting documents	Agenda item
1.	Agenda for this meeting	1.
2.	Minutes of the meeting of 20.11.23	4.,5
3.	HT report to governors	7.
4.	SIP	8.
5.	Minute of the FC meeting of 29.01.24 SFVS checklist 2023-24 Benchmarking report 2022-23 Budget monitoring report to governors Jan 24	9.
6.	Charging and Remissions Policy School Fund Policy	10.
7.	Capability Policy Code of Conduct for Staff Disciplinary Procedure Grievance Procedure Whistleblowing	11.
8.	The Winchcombe School Policy for dealing with persistent, vexatious complaints	12.
9.	H&S Audit report 12.12.23 Governor H&S checklist	13.