

**Croscombe and Stoke St Michael Primary Schools Federation  
Board of Governors Meeting Minutes  
Monday 9 October 2023, 6pm, at **Stoke St Michael School****

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Nick Cramp (Chair) (NC)</b>	<b>Local Authority Governor</b>
<b>John Johnston (JJ)</b>	<b>Foundation Governor</b>
<b>Charlotte Corbett (CC)</b>	<b>Foundation Governor</b>
<b>Lucy Stott (LS)</b>	<b>Staff Governor</b>
<b>Sallyanne Shallcross (SS)</b>	<b>Co-Opted Governor</b>
<b>Anna Hay (AH)</b>	<b>Parent Governor</b>
<b>Bob Simpson (BS)</b>	<b>Co-opted Governor</b>
<b>Louise Jenkins (LJ)</b>	<b>Foundation Governor</b>
<b>Tanya Tyreman (TT)</b>	<b>Foundation Governor</b>
<b>Chris Partridge (CP)</b>	<b>Executive Head teacher</b>

**Guests: Gavin Ball (GB) Chief Executive Wessex Learning Trust, Libby Fidock (LF) Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Primary Education (WLT)**

**In attendance: Kathryn Strik (KS) Clerk to the Governors**

	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION/ Decision</b>
1	<b>Administration</b>	<p><b>1 (i) Apologies:</b> None</p> <p><b>1. (ii) Notice of AOB items:</b> Community PTA item 3 (v)</p> <p><b>1. (iii) Declarations of Interests:</b> CP is the head teacher at St. Pauls Junior school in Shepton Mallet.</p> <p><b>1. (iv) Membership Updates:</b></p> <p>There is currently one vacancy for a co-opted governor and one for a parent governor. Four parents have applied to be a governor, one from Croscombe and three from Stoke St. Michael.</p> <p>NC to meet with the prospective governors.</p> <p><b>1.(v) Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising:</b></p> <p>Minutes approved with no amendments.</p> <p><b>1 (vi) Update on Actions from last meeting:</b></p> <p>This item is carried forward.</p>	<b>Decision</b>
4	<b>Academisation</b>	<p><b>4 (i) Joining the Wessex Learning Trust</b></p> <p>This item was dealt with first as two guests from the Wessex learning trust were at the meeting to answer questions from the governors,</p>	

Signed

Date

regarding the next steps in the academisation process and the timeline for the schools joining the WLT.

### **Communicating the Decision to join the WLT.**

The governing body will tell the staff at both schools simultaneously at 8:00am on Wednesday 18 October. The parents at both schools will be told at 2:30pm on Wednesday 18 October. A letter will be sent to both staff and parents informing them of these meetings and the decision to join the Wessex Learning Trust. One person from WLT, one from the governing body and either the head teacher or the chair of governors will be present at each of the meetings.

A document of frequently asked questions (FAQ) will be prepared for parents that are not able to attend the meetings. This document will also be available to office staff to help them answer any questions from parents or new staff.

**The timeline for joining the WLT** is likely to be April onwards. This will be decided in December. Teaching staff and CP as Executive Head teacher will continue as planned until September 2024. In April the staffing structure for the next academic year will be decided.

Staff from the WLT will be in the schools after half term to provide support for the teachers and there will be training days available after half term.

From April or September 2024 the final switch over to the trust will be made. Parents should see little change. Staff will have had more training and the changes for them will be more gradual.

### **How the federation schools will fit into the WLT**

Gavin Ball the CEO of WLT give a short talk about how he sees the federation schools fitting in to the WLT. He stressed that is very important to keep the uniqueness of both schools and that the children and their community is of prime importance. The current staff and CP will continue to work together for continuity through the coming academic year. The WLT will help to put together the curriculum and the pedagogy. WLT will provide opportunities to the staff that are not normally available to staff of small village schools, e.g. to visit other schools. The WLT has networks, leadership groups and a central team that can help the school improvement team. "Sharing the love" is about providing opportunities to schools that they would not otherwise have. It is important that the schools continue to develop in the context of Somerset.

The chair of governors invited other governors to ask questions.

### **Questions and answers**

All staff will move over to the trust on the same terms and conditions.

**Will this apply to staff currently on temporary fixed term contracts?** Yes they will stay on fixed term contracts, and these will need to be re-negotiated. A list of the staff affected will be prepared.

	<p><b>What change will governors see?</b> Governance will be at a local level with one meeting each new term for a maximum of two hours. Governors are given training on the types of questions to ask at meetings. The school policies are produced centrally although some are particular to schools. Model policies provided by the local authority are used where possible.</p> <p>The focus is on the children and less on the administration. Checks on safeguarding, health and safety, and fire safety are done by central teams so relieving the pressure on the governors at the local level.</p> <p>The WLT team assisting with the transition will be learning about the contexts of the federation schools, as each school joining contributes in its own way to the trust. There will be more opportunities to develop staff across the trust, so the priority is the children and the community.</p> <p><b>Will the two federation schools still be Federated once they join the trust?</b> There will still be one governing body for Croscombe and Stoke St. Michael. Other Federated schools have joined the trust in the past e.g. Shipham and Draycott.</p> <p><b>Will there be early guidance on the premises and health and safety? Can a meeting with someone from WLT be arranged?</b> The trust has an estates manager who is also a surveyor who can meet with BS. Costs can then be determined and go to the budgets via the Finance Committee.</p> <p>The two federation schools will need to recruit a new head teacher before the summer term 2024. <b>Will this be one headteacher or two? Will the schools follow the local authority recruitment procedures or will the trust do this?</b> This will be decided after half term as the vacancy for the head teacher needs to be filled soon. WLT will assess the candidates and set the deadlines. There may be suitable candidates within the WLT.</p> <p><b>When the advert goes out will it be the same across all schools?</b> The WLT would start the process in January 2024.</p> <p><b>Will the current Finance Committee run until Academisation is complete?</b> Yes the function of the committee will be reassessed, and WLT people will be invited to attend.</p> <p>A transition group will be set up consisting of an operations team and some governors with a link trustee. The WLT Group will answer questions and want to see an overview of the finances and projections. More information will be available after half term.</p> <p>More energy will go into marketing for the recruitment and retention of children. Identifying what needs to be done to increase the pupil numbers is important as this links to the funding available for the schools.</p> <p>Parents are worried that there has been so much change over a short period and are concerned that governors have to find the best solution.</p>	
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2	<b>Headteachers Report and</b>	<p><b>2(i) Head Teachers Report</b></p> <p><b>(i). Pupil Numbers.</b> The results of the October census will be circulated to governors.</p>	

<p><b>Educational Performance</b></p>	<p><b>(ii) Pupil Progress Data</b> – This item will be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>(iii) SDP</b> The school development plan (SDP) is now clearer with the correct items included.</p> <p>A governor asked <b>if a precis of the SDP will be sent to parents?</b> Yes the last page of the SDP is in the final stages of editing and will be circulated to parents. The children will also know the contents of the condensed SDP. The priorities for Croscombe are more in line than those for Stoke St. Michael.</p> <p>CP has spent some time explaining the changes to staff and some feel better for sharing.</p> <p>Concern was expressed that <b>some Year 5 children in a mixed year class are not being taught by their class teacher but by teaching assistants</b> and that this appears to have become the norm. CP emphasised all the children should be taught together at all levels then the individual work differentiated by the pupil's skills. Staff beginning to open up about the teaching practises that are not following the correct process.</p> <p>A governor asked <b>if the TAs are following the teachers plan.</b> Not necessarily as the teaching methods are not consistent. Replacement teachers are not doing this.</p> <p><b>What does the headteacher intend to do now?</b> CP will do an official learning walk and talk to key members of staff.</p> <p>A governor was concerned that changing the culture can be very difficult and take time.</p> <p>A governor asked <b>should a TA never teach.</b> The teacher should always deliver the lesson on the subject across all the class regardless of skill level. The TAs recognise pupils that need assistance, provide help and give feedback to the teacher on specific pupils. The teacher should then take this into account when preparing for the next day's lesson.</p> <p>A governor asked <b>could teachers be teaching a minority in a class.</b> Yes, there is some old-style teaching methods happening. It is recognised that teaching a multiyear group is challenging but currently some TAs are teaching two days a week.</p> <p>A governor asked <b>has there been any performance management.</b> There are two lots of formal observations per year and the teacher is given notice of them happening.</p> <p>A governor had <b>noticed on a school visit when the children were doing phonics they were separated off into groups according to their ability and not their age.</b> Teachers provide plans for the TAs for these groups and each group could be doing different things. Teachers could give the TAs activities to do with groups allowing the teachers to do further teaching with other pupils.</p>	
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The governor asked **what happens from here on in, regarding teachers teaching**. It is agreed that pre-teaching is very important as is preparing the TAs to work well.

The head teacher was asked **what he needed from governors regarding monitoring and support**. CP will be observing in the classrooms and assessing the situation further. CP wants to work through the issue collecting evidence to support and encourage the staff to change. If the teaching staff continue to work in this way then the head teacher may have to look at their capabilities and involve the governors.

A governor asked **if WLT can be part of the solution**. Yes they already are.

A governor was concerned that the **staff may be afraid of change**. CP to talk it through with staff and focus on what is best for the children. This can be done through the school development plan (SDP). However some staff may need to move on. The evidence from the Ofsted's report shows that this is nothing new. CP needs to discover why and determine who is doing well and who is not.

#### **(iv) Training & Development**

There will be opportunities for staff to visit other schools with mixed year groups and see for themselves how they manage. This may help the staff to feel less isolated.

At the next governors meeting CP will bring along writing books for the governors to look at.

The baseline data e.g. for SATs for Year 6 show that there needs to be more concentration on teaching. The children do very well in the nursery then their progress drops as they move up through the school.

**Behaviour management.** Some staff did not know about the behaviour policy. There is a need to change the language used when dealing with behaviour issues. A new behaviour policy is being written and will be shared with the senior leadership team.

A governor asked **how do we know that the new policy is being used**. Monitoring governors can ask if staff are adopting the revised policy and how.

CP to share the behaviour policy at the next governors meeting and the principles of what to do according to the behaviour policy. All staff including TAs and lunchtime staff will have the same training so that everyone has the same ethos. Staff will be required to sign that they have read the policy.

Using the traffic light system each child starts with the colour green every morning and this may change throughout the day depending on their behaviour.

A governor asked if **the senior leadership team are clear on who plays the role of assessing the traffic light colour**. It is about staff

		<p>identifying a behaviour and using the correct language to resolve the behaviour and support the child. All staff received training from the SENCo in the “zones of regulation”. Teaching staff have descriptions of the types of behaviour that relate to the different zones of regulation to wear on their lanyard. CP will run a workshop on this.</p> <p>(iv) <b>Monitoring.</b> Governors were concerned that <b>they need to know what to monitor.</b> There is a governor monitoring policy which may help. Governors should be seeing mutual respect, an atmosphere of positive behaviour and an adherence to CP’s teaching methods. Any feedback should go to CP and not to the staff member directly.</p> <p>After half term staff will start to use the published scheme called Maestro to teach the curriculum. Croscombe and Stoke St. Michael should be teaching the same topics at the same time for the same year group.</p> <p><b>When governors are monitoring</b> if they see a child being disruptive they should refer to the behaviour policy. All children should be on green on the traffic light system. If however a child has a peg on amber the governor should ask if this started on green and why the colour changed and who changed it e.g. lunchtime staff.</p> <p><b>Attendance.</b> 2021 forms are still being used.</p> <p>(vi) <b>Policies.</b> The positive behaviour policy will be ready soon. Other policies will be based on model policies available from county.</p> <p><b>Action. NC, CP and KS to produce a list of policies ready for the FGB meeting on 13th of November.</b></p> <p><b>Pay policy.</b> This is with WLT to do.</p> <p><b>Action. KS to contact Libby Fidock at WLT regarding policies</b></p>	<p>NC, CP, KS</p> <p>KS</p>
3	<p><b>Sub-Committee updates</b></p>	<p><b>3.(i) Finance / Premises Committee Update:</b></p> <p><b>Finance</b> The meeting planned for 2nd November is postponed to 8th November.</p> <p>A deep clean of a school was paid for from the wrong pot of money.</p> <p>The Finance Committee needs to know who pays for what and what funding is available when the federation schools are academised.</p> <p>County finance officers are still experiencing problems with the financial systems that produce the financial reports for the Finance Committee.</p> <p><b>Premises</b> BS has asked Hookways to evaluate the damp problem at Croscombe on Wednesday. There may be a need to commission a damp survey and install permanent access points to monitor damp. The costs from this survey will be reported back to the governors as a matter of urgency.</p>	

		<p>A governor asked <b>if any facilities are giving any safeguarding concerns</b>. Stoke St. Michael is fine for safeguarding.</p> <p>There is a need to look at the gutters in November once the leaves are off the trees and to look at the health of the tree at Croscombe as it may need to be felled.</p> <p>During a recent fire alarm practise it was noted that the staff room door at Stoke St. Michael opens on the wrong side of the green fence.</p> <p>The issue of decarbonization will be discussed with the WLT premises team. Parents need to see that things have been happening with these buildings. It was suggested that Kevin Oatley be approached to do the work of a handyman.</p> <p><b>Action. NC and BS to discuss the work needed on premises.</b></p> <p><b>3. (ii) Ethos/Foundation Committee:</b></p> <p>Action: LJ to convene the meeting before the next full governors meeting.</p> <p><b>3(iv) Fund-raising workgroup</b></p> <p>The recent Apple Day was a great event for both parents and children and netted a total of £2600. A list of items to spend the money on will be compiled.</p> <p><b>3(v) PTA Link workgroup</b></p> <p>The community PTA are holding a Curry night on the 4th of November at the village hall in Stoke Saint Michael.</p>	<p>NC, BS</p> <p>LJ</p>
4	<b>Academisation</b>	<p><b>4 (i) Joining the Wessex Learning Trust</b></p> <p><b>This item was discussed at the start of the meeting see item 4 at the start of these minutes.</b></p>	
5	<b>Matters Arising/AOB</b>	<p><b>5 (i) Updates and Questions</b></p> <p><b>Update on governance Review.</b> The National Leaders of Governance programme, under which the governance review was carried out last term, has ended with the National governors being disbanded. Therefore the board will not receive the follow-up board observation review from the NLG Governance Services. The Local Authority have offered to fill this gap in the review framework by attending the governors meeting in the second half of the autumn term, to observe the meeting and provide feedback on evidence seen from the actions set out in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Action. NC to respond to the LA offer to complete the governance review.</b></p> <p><b>Flyers promoting the schools</b> will be sent to parents and placed on notice boards and shop windows in the area. It was suggested the Flyers could be placed in the local newspapers.</p> <p><b>The rest of this item is a Confidential Minute.</b></p>	<p>NC</p>



	<b>Next meetings</b>	Meeting dates for this term Full governing body meeting Monday 13th November at 6:00 PM Finance and premises committee on Thursday 9th November, time to be determined.  <i>The meeting closed at 8:00pm</i>	
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