



St George's Primary School

Full Governor Body Meeting

Thursday 21 November 2024

Lower Site 5:30pm

Present

Community Governors

B. Clark
M. Wiggins
J. Marshall
J. King
P. Dunning

Acting Chair

Parent Governors

W. Alderton
J. Pollard
C. Lucking

Staff Governors

B. Cassidy
J. Thomas

Head Teacher

Also Present

K. Choudhary
S. Jones
L. Binks
M. Chambers

Clerk

Apologies

T. Freeman
C. Scott

Did Not Attend

N/A

Item 1 Welcome, Apologies and declarations of AoB

- 1.1 Apologies noted and received as above.

Item 2 Declaration of any business or pecuniary interests

- 2.1 There was no declaration of any business or pecuniary interests.
- 2.2 This is to be further discussed in Item 4.

Item 3 Minutes of previous meeting and action points

- 3.1 Minutes accepted as a true and accurate record.
- 3.2 All actions completed.

Item 4 Clerking Matters

- 4.1 Papers circulated as part of the papers.
- 4.2 FGB informed that Chair and Vice Chair are willing and happy to continue in their roles.
- 4.2.1 **DECISION TAKEN:** Chair and Vice Chair to continue in their roles.
- 4.3 K. Choudhary reminded FGB GIDs are a statutory requirement and highlighted the most recent version on this document.
- 4.3.1 As discussed in pervious FGB regards expiring Terms of Office:
- P. Dunning's Term of Office ran out in October 2024
 - B. Clark's Term of Office is due to expire in January 2025
 - J. King's Term of Office Terms of Office are due to expire in 2024/25
- 4.3.2 **DECISION TAKEN:** P. Dunning, B. Clark and J. King's Terms of Office renewed.
- 4.3.3 **ACTION 1(11/25):** K. Choudhary to update GID records to reflect Terms of Office.
- 4.4 FGB reminded of the scope of FGB work set out in the Scheme of Delegation.
- 4.5 FGB informed that S. Robertson has taken the decision to step down as a Parent Governor. As such, the school will be conducting a Parent Governor nomination process in the coming day to find a replacement.
- 4.5.1 FGB discussed the opportunity to reflect and review the skills audit and assess any areas of need within FGB.
- 4.5.2 FGB discussed possibility of a recruiting a faith leader to the governing body. SLT stated that there has been some discussion with external stakeholders recently exploring options.

- 4.5.3 K. Choudhary stated that FGB need to consider the number of governors on the board.
- 4.5.4 **ACTION 2(11/24):** C. Scott, J. Marshall and K. Choudhary to discuss and map out options regards vacant Governor role and feedback to FGB.
- 4.5.2 FGB thanked S. Robertson for time as a governor.
- 4.6 FGB reminded that Governor's attendance at committees is recorded and published on the school's site, for transparency.
- 4.6.1 As discussed in previous meeting, the decision has been taken to add an additional filter on minutes (Did Not Attend) with the intention of creating a more transparent register and attendance system.
- 4.7 FGB reminded that the last skills audit was last conducted March 2024. As such, it was recommended that there is no need to conduct the exercise this academic year.
- 4.7.1 That said, K. Choudhary will ensure that the new Governor (when elected) will complete a skills audit and update the existing template.
- 4.8 FGB reminded that all Wirral LA Governor training sessions are forwarded to governors.
- 4.8.1 **ACTION 3(11/24):** K. Choudhary to recirculate all Wirral LA Governor training sessions.
- 4.9 FGB discussed the governor visit form protocols and e-form process. K. Choudhary informed the last registration of visit was May 2024. As such, FGB asked to ensure they fill the visit forms as a matter of urgency.
- 4.9.1 **ACTION 4(11/24):** All governors to update the governor visit form.
- 4.10 K. Choudhary highlighted that the school provides [School Bus](#) for Information and Compliance for governors to assist Governors in carrying out their duties
- 4.10.1 K. Choudhary highlighted the template for recording Governor Training.
- 4.10.2 SLT highlighted the need for governors to complete mandatory safeguarding training, with specific levels recommended based on their involvement. The importance of ensuring that all governors are up to date with their training, including courses like safeguarding and SEND was stressed.
- 4.10.3 The importance of compliance with training requirements to avoid issues during local authority reviews was stated.
- 4.10.4 **ACTION 5 (11/24):** K. Choudhary to speak to the school office to pull the latest training data, then start convening governors to ensure they complete the required training by 22 January 2024.
- 4.10.5 As per action from C&PC, K. Choudhary and T. Skarratts-Jackson to liaise re potential all governor training session focusing on Safeguarding.

- 4.11 FGB asked K. Choudhary is it would be possible to streamline shared governor file area and circulate minutes to all governors irrespective of their membership to committees.
- 4.12 **ACTION 6(11/24):** K. Choudhary explore folder/ file streamlining and ensure all minutes from all committees are circulated to all governors.
- 4.13 K. Choudhary informed FGB that a Complaints Committee was convened on 01/07/24. The complainant received the Outcome Report of the Complaints Committee (which included decisions reached by the committee) in line with the School's Complaints Policy timeframe.
- 4.14 The committee decision and the Outcome Report was forwarded to the Schools Complaints Unit for transparency. SCU have acknowledged receipt and welcomed the school's transparency.

Item 5 Actions Taken from Informal FGB

- 5.1 As discussed in September 2024, K. Choudhary, C. Scott and J. Marshall reflected on the discussion points at the meeting.
- 5.2 With the support of SLT, the following measures have been implemented to ensure a more robust approach to governance and collaborative committee structure:
- Ensured all meetings are pre-planned with Chairs of committees/FGB.
 - Maximum 90 minutes with timings - Clerk to support this.
 - T. Skarratts-Jackson and B. Clark to lead C&P Committee
 - L. Binks, S. Jones and J. King lead R&P Committee
 - Improvements to guidance on documentation for governors to read.
- 5.3 K. Choudhary highlighted that there was one remaining discussion points to be addressed regarding request for streamlined communications.
- 5.4 FGB discussed the creation of a WhatsApp Group. It was highlighted that there would need to be the creation of protocols.
- 5.5 K. Choudhary expressed some hesitancy and stated that any such communication platform would not be used for any official communication i.e. paper sharing, sensitive information or BAU. This would be purely for polite reminders of upcoming meetings etc.
- 5.6 **ACTION 7(11/25):** K. Choudhary to explore setting up a tailored, close network WhatsApp Group where he has admin privileges only.
- 5.7 **ACTION 8(11/25):** K. Choudhary to create a protocol to manage communication effectively.
- 5.8 **ACTION 9(11/25):** K. Choudhary to send email invitations to upcoming committee meeting as calendar requests as well as circulating papers.

Item 6 Strategic Challenges Facing School Leaders

6.1 Circulated as part of the papers.

6.2 Following a series of announcements by Government and regulatory bodies, SLT prepared and shared a briefing paper outlining key national challenges following recent announcements. In summary, the document focused on:

- Secretary of State's Speech Highlights:
 - Emphasis on "Belonging and Thriving," social inclusion, and closing the attainment gap)
 - Focus on improving educational systems over restructuring.
 - Bold reforms in SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and inclusive practices.
 - A collaborative approach involving local authorities and professional partnerships.
- DfE Announcements:
 - Introduction of Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) Teams to focus on school improvement and accountability.
 - Changes in funding structures for academies, including removal of academy conversion grants.
- OFSTED Developments:
 - Revisions to the Education Inspection Framework with reduced focus on "deep dives" and increased transparency.
 - Proposed standalone safeguarding judgment and emphasis on inclusion in inspections.
- Curriculum and Assessment Review:
 - Sector-led discussions on curriculum balance and distortions caused by external pressures like testing and OFSTED.
 - Emphasis on evidence-based practices and collaborative adjustments.
- SEND Agenda:
 - Announcement of £1 billion funding for high-needs SEND.
 - Establishment of expert panels to guide reforms in mainstream schools.
 - Focus on neurodivergence and strategic inclusion initiatives led by appointed advisors.
- Strategic Challenges for Schools:
 - Adapting to policy and structural changes, particularly in SEND and inclusion.
 - Collaboration with partners (e.g., local authorities or trusts) for shared improvements.
 - Preparing for curriculum adjustments and maintaining high standards amidst evolving policies.

6.3 FGB asked how much was the Academisation Grant?

- 6.4 **RESOLUTION:** £25k
- 6.5 SLT stated that LAs and academies will be treated the same.
- 6.6 FGB does the school see funding changes as a positive or negative for St George's Primary School directly?
- 6.7 **RESOLUTION:** SLT stated this it is a obstacle to academisation and short term planning, suggesting that there as governors and school leaders, there are 'a lot of challenges heading our way'.
- 6.8 With regards to the SEND agenda, FGB asked is the long-term aim for there to be no more special SEND focused school – or far fewer?
- 6.9 **RESOLUTION:** Far fewer.

Item 7 Academy Considerations

- 7.1 Circulated as part of the papers.
- 7.2 FGB reminded the committee has had extensive briefing papers on this issue that they had voted to pursue intent to join Peninsula Academy. Founder schools would be Weatherhead, St George's and Liscard.
- 7.3 FGB informed that there is now a firm proposal that the school complete the initial stages of application and move towards formal consultation with staff and parents in early 2025.
- 7.4 SLT stated that LAs are supportive of moves towards a purposeful MAT
- 7.5 SLT outlined the strategic challenges facing the education system, including changes in funding and accountability, emphasising the importance of maintaining a national education system and the need for inclusive practices in schools.
- 7.6 FGB discussed the potential benefits and challenges of converting to an academy, with SLT highlighting the need for structural support.
- 7.7 FGB informed of the process of converting to an academy, including the need for staff and governance reassurance.
- 7.8 SLT stated that they will continue to work with the governing body to further explore the academy conversion process and bring back a detailed proposal for consideration circa January 2025.
- 7.9 SLT highlighted that FGB will need to carefully evaluate the risks and benefits of academy conversion, with a focus on maintaining inclusive practices and supporting staff.
- 7.10 FGB informed that they will need to ensure robust stakeholder engagement, including with staff and parents, throughout the academy conversion process - and any implications for the school.

7.11 In terms of next steps:

- SLT stated that they will work with the governing body to complete the initial application form for academy conversion.
- FGB will then review the detailed proposals from the working party in the coming weeks/months.
- If FGB decides to proceed, SLT will initiate the formal consultation process with staff and other stakeholders.
- FGB will make the final decision on whether to convert to an academy based on the feedback from the consultation.

7.12 FGB expressed the need to carefully evaluate the risks and benefits, with a focus on maintaining inclusive practices and supporting staff, before making a final decision

7.13 FGB asked what the timeline for conversion would be?

7.14 **RESOLUTION:** September 2025.

Item 8 Statutory and Annual Reporting Arrangements

8.1 Circulated as part of the papers.

8.2 FGB reminded that documents have been sent to relevant committees, but SLT are happy to respond to any queries.

8.3 FGB informed that the following documents are published on the school's website:

- 2024-25 Attendance Policy and Strategy
- 2024-25 Updated Pupil Premium Report
- 2024 Tuition Report
- 2024 - 25 Sports Premium Grant Report
- 2024 Data and Standards Report
- 2024 Parent Survey
- 3 Year School Development Plan
- Autumn 2024 Self Evaluation report
- 2024 SEND Report

8.4 FGB asked were there any considerations raised in the Parents Survey that resulted in actions for the school?

8.5 **RESOLUTION:** Yes. Parent feedback has influenced the structure of events, ensuring they are accessible and engaging.

8.6 FGB discussed parental and carer engagement in the school, particularly regarding events like parents' evenings and surveys about parents' preferences.

8.7 SLT highlighted:

- Parental Surveys and Feedback:
 - Surveys reveal most parents prefer online formats for events, with over 70% approval.
 - Feedback emphasised better attendance and engagement for online events compared to in-person ones.
 - Some parents appreciate informal opportunities to interact with teachers, like coffee or lunch meetups.
 - Balancing Event Formats:
 - Schools aim to provide a mix of online and in-person events to cater to diverse preferences.
 - Examples include remote phonics and curriculum sessions for convenience and in-person events like Black History Month galleries for interaction.
- 8.8 FGB asked what are the challenges for the school adopting online formats how does the school replicate the experience of reviewing children's work during online parents' evenings?
- 8.9 **RESOLUTION:** The schools addressed this by providing physical opportunities to view learners work alongside other events.
- 8.10 SLT stated that the school seeks continuous feedback to refine approaches, and the focus remains on ensuring a balance between online convenience and in-person connection.
- 8.11 **ACTION 10(11/24):** SLT to emphasise survey findings in school newsletter and highlight changes made in response to parent input.

Item 9 Head Teacher's Report to Governors

- 9.1 Circulated as part of the papers.
- 9.2 B. Cassidy walked FGB through the Annual Headteacher Report to Governors.
- 9.3 The key summary points were:
- Standards Report:
 - School performance exceeds national averages, with a focus on improving disadvantaged outcomes in KS2.
 - External reviews validated improvements in curriculum and pedagogy.
 - Priorities: enhancing outcomes for disadvantaged students, strengthening SEND support, applying advanced teaching strategies, and addressing learning gaps via assessments.
 - School Development Plan:
 - Four priorities:
 - Implementing a curriculum that inspires and enables.
 - Inclusion to ensure every child thrives.
 - Building an effective and flourishing team.

- Ensuring long-term resource strategies to address external pressures.
 - Emphasis on disciplined implementation and continuous evaluation.
- 3-Year Pupil Premium Strategy:
 - Focused on evidence-based spending (aligned with DfE requirements).
 - Reviewed regularly with significant gains in targeted support for disadvantaged pupils.
- Wirral Council Banding:
 - Retained Band 1 status, reflecting consistent high performance.
 - Scheduled for a two-day council quality assurance visit this year.
- School Budget:
 - Deficit reduced from £150,000 to £55,000.
 - Financial planning awaits National Funding Formula updates, with inflation posing ongoing challenges.
- PE Funding Impact Report:
 - Investments in sports and well-being exceed PE funding allocation.
 - Aiming to enhance physical literacy through partnerships and funding bids with Sport England and others.
- Attendance:
 - Overall attendance sustained at 95.1%, above national averages.
 - Persistent absenteeism at 9.8%, with targeted interventions for improvement.
 - Attendance figures monitored via live dashboards.
- Tuition Grant:
 - Final year of the national tuition grant with 1,500 hours delivered across subjects.
 - Grant usage aligned with strict funding conditions; total spend was £20,160.
- Safeguarding Information:
 - Updated policies in line with DfE guidelines.
 - Comprehensive safeguarding measures and live monitoring via dashboards.
 - Notable decline in serious incidents compared to previous years.
- Exclusions and Behaviour:
 - No exclusions recorded; behaviour consistently positive under the RESPECT framework.
 - External feedback highlights exemplary behaviour management.
- Incident and Safety Report:
 - Minor incidents logged with a reduction in behaviour-related reports.
 - Inclusive of bullying, racism, and homophobic language interventions with parental involvement.
- Pupil Mobility:
 - Managed increases in in-year transfers with minimal impact on student outcomes.
 - Near capacity enrolment across year groups.
- Year Group Numbers and Demographics:

- 908 students currently enrolled, with diverse ethnic backgrounds and 19% eligible for free school meals.
- Student numbers set to rise to 915 in January 2025.
- Policies and Documents:
 - All statutory policies reviewed and updated.
 - New policies focus on family-friendly support and flexible working.
- Local Authority Support and Partnerships:
 - Extensive collaborations with 77 schools, including leadership in Maths Hubs, STEM projects, and Oracy initiatives.
 - School leadership provides guidance to lower-band schools.
- National Professional Qualifications (NPQs):
 - 18 staff pursuing advanced qualifications; emphasis on leadership and teaching development.
- Enrichment and Residential:
 - Enrichment restored, including two trips, workshops, and live theatre for every child.
 - Residential programs for Years 4-6 and expanded activities for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupil Voice:
 - Active student leadership through councils, digital leaders, sports leaders, and eco committees.
 - Engagement across all key stages.
- Complaints:
 - Resolved complaints related to absence policies, staff conduct, and bullying.
 - One unresolved complaint referred back to the head teacher.
- Staffing:
 - Recruitment challenges due to national shortages; mitigated through SCITT and leadership training programs.
 - Low staff absence rates (3.7%) compared to national averages.
- Capital Projects:
 - Major refurbishment of classrooms and staff facilities.
 - Additional projects include roof repairs, a new library, sensory garden, and SEND intervention base.

9.4 M. Wiggins left meeting.

Item 10 Annual Policy and Key Document Audit

- 10.1 Circulated as part of the papers.
- 10.2 FGB reminded that this document is provides an overview of all the policy renewals and update.
- 10.3 FGB informed that this is shared for transparency and to ensure oversight and compliance by governors.

Item 11 Policy Renewals (No substantive changes)

- 11.1 Circulated as part of the papers.
- 11.2 FGB reminded that policy renewals and updates are the responsibility of the governing body to review and approve for transparency and accountability.
- 11.3 FGB signposted to the following policies:
- **Health and Safety** (all follow LA Health and Safety Guidance):
 - 2024-25 Health and Safety Policy
 - 2024-25 Emergency Policy
 - CCTV Policy (also linked to GDPR)
 - Mini Bus Policy and Guidance
 - Driving at Work Policy
 - First Aid Policy
 - **Other** (All using compliance templates from School Bus or DfE)
 - ECT Policy
 - Medicine Policy
 - Pupils With Medical Needs Attendance Policy
 - Intimate Care
 - Collection of Children from School
- 11.4 FGB informed that there have been no substantive changes to any of these policies, highlighting that the only changes were focused on updating the names associated to roles within the school.
- 11.5 **DECISION TAKEN:** Approved.

Item 12 Policy Updates

- 12.1 Circulated as part of the papers.
- 12.2 FGB informed that the only key policy update was to the Complaints Policy.
- 12.3 SLT highlighted that the language in the policy has been made more transparent to reflect that the Schools Complaints Unit do not investigate complaints, but rather judge whether due process has been followed.
- 12.4 **DECISION TAKEN:** Approved.

Item 13 R&PC Action Points and Updates

- 13.1 Circulated as part of the papers.
- 13.2 As per action from recent R&PC, S. Jones discussed the SLA quotes for HR renewal.

13.3 FGB informed that Worknest represents the best VFM.

Item 14 C&PC Action Points and Updates

14.1 Circulated as part of the papers.

14.2 K. Choudhary highlighted that of the two actions, one has been completed and the other is ongoing.

Item 15 Governing Body Training Requests

15.1 Circulated as part of the papers.

15.2 SLT reiterated its standing offer to source any training requested by governors.

Item 16 AOB

16.1 None

Item 17 Date of next meeting

17.1 Meeting finished at 7:05pm

17.2 **Next meeting:** Thursday 13 March 2025 at 5:30pm

Item	Summary of actions from meeting	Whom	Date to be completed
4.3.3	ACTION 1(11/25): K. Choudhary to update GID records to reflect Terms of Office.	K. Choudhary	Nov '24
4.5.4	ACTION 2(11/24): C. Scott, J. Marshall and K. Choudhary to discuss and map out options regards vacant Governor role and feedback to FGB.	C. Scott J. Marshall K. Choudhary	Dec' 24
4.8.1	ACTION 3(11/24): K. Choudhary to recirculate all Wirral LA Governor training sessions.	K. Choudhary	Nov '24
4.9.1	ACTION 4(11/24): All governors to update the governor visit form.	FGB	Ongoing
4.10.4	ACTION 5 (11/24): K. Choudhary to speak to the school office to pull the latest training data, then start convening governors to ensure they complete the required training by 22 January 2024.	K. Choudhary School Office	Nov '24
4.12	ACTION 6(11/24): K. Choudhary explore folder/ file streamlining and ensure all minutes from all committees are circulated to all governors.	K. Choudhary	Dec '24
5.6	ACTION 7(11/25): K. Choudhary to explore setting up a tailored, close network WhatsApp Group where he has admin privileges only.	K. Choudhary	Dec '24
5.7	ACTION 8(11/25): K. Choudhary to create a protocol to manage communication effectively.	K. Choudhary	Dec '24
5.8	ACTION 9(11/25): K. Choudhary to send email invitations to upcoming committee meeting as calendar requests as well as circulating papers.	K. Choudhary	Dec '24
8.11	ACTION 10(11/24): SLT to emphasise survey findings in school newsletter and highlight changes made in response to parent input.	SLT	Dec '24