



**Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Governing Body
Western Road Community Primary School
Monday 14th January 2019 at 6.30pm
MINUTES**

Governor members present:	Jonathan Sharpe (chair), Matthew Montebello, Christine McCarney, Roy Watkinson, Alison Teagle, Andrew Willcocks, Stephen Docherty, Tom Jeffery (vice-chair), Hilary Turner, Eleanor Murphy
Associate members present:	Irena Wooler, Sam Caughey
Officers present:	Nicola Gibson (clerk)

	Agenda Item	Action
1	<p>a) Apologies for absence – The chair thanked governors for attending this extraordinary meeting of the Western Road governing body. Apologies from Kerry Bedford, Ruth O’Keeffe & Daniel Hahn were accepted.</p> <p>b) Declarations of Interest – No declarations were made.</p> <p>c) Governor Status Update – Irena Wooler was voted in again as an associate member of the WRS governing body. Sam Caughey was also voted in as an associate member. Elections for the Parent Governor role will take place in February. JS announced that Jenny Westaway resigned from the governing body in November. Again, governors will seek to fill this vacancy as soon as possible. Thanks were expressed for the contribution Jenny has made to the governing body.</p>	
2	<p><u>Last meeting dated 26th November 2018</u></p> <p>a) Acceptance of minutes – Minutes were duly accepted & signed for.</p> <p>b) Matters arising from the meeting not included elsewhere on the agenda – There were no matters arising.</p>	

3	<p><u>Course of action regarding next stage in MAT proposals with vote</u></p>	
	<p>JS announced that a meeting is scheduled for this week at which heads and chairs will discuss & agree the next steps regarding the MAT proposals. As such he believes that this is now a good point to take stock & make a decision as to how we, as governors at Western Road, wish to proceed. He also acknowledged how unsettling the process to date has been for the parent body and staff & that he is very keen to take a conscious & informed decision.</p> <p>Given all the research that has been made available to the governing body & the views of both staff & parents, the chair has come to the conclusion that it is in the best interests of Western Road to cease its participation in the local MAT project. Governors then further discussed the proposals & the impact they would have on the school community & finances. These included:</p> <p>Does academization improve educational outcomes? The chair referred to a document that had been circulated to governors which summarized the research that had been reviewed as part of the MAT project. This document had been prepared by Rosie Gloster, a WRS parent.</p> <p>The conclusion from the research, in the opinion of the chair, is that there is no conclusive evidence that MATs achieve better educational outcomes (or worse outcomes). There are good MATs and poor MATs, as there are good and poor LA maintained schools.</p> <p>What impact would joining the MAT have on our budget? - JS informed governors that he had not received any further info from the MAT working group which meant it is difficult to give a straightforward answer to this. Although there is a case for some economies of scale, it is hard to know what savings the school could see. A lot of savings have already been made & the school is in a relatively good financial state. It would appear that the financial benefits are more easily achieved by large MATs. MATs do not receive any extra money compared to LA maintained schools.</p> <p>What would be the impact of joining a MAT on the Senior Leadership Team and staff at Western Road? – Whilst in the short term, contracts for staff would not change & professional development for them could be enhanced, the nature of the Governing Body would change & the HT would have a line manager, reducing the school's autonomy.</p> <p>Governors discussed what was the current view of the school community in relation to the proposals – JS reported that there had been no follow up since 10th December meeting to which parents were invited. All emails from parents had been shared with governors. The feedback from parents, via email or at the parents' meeting, had been opposed to WRS joining a MAT.</p> <p>MM acknowledged that staff have been very responsible, open minded and thoughtful throughout the whole process. The governors expressed their appreciation for the professional and measured approach taken by the staff.</p> <p>A question was raised about the current position of the church schools in relation to the proposals - It was reported that Southover had announced its withdrawal from the MAT proposals. JS reiterated that the WRS governing body</p>	

	<p>cannot speak for the church schools.</p> <p>Governors discussed the future of WRS & the Lewes Cooperative Learning Trust - The chair reiterated that if WR does withdraw from the MAT process, it would still wish to collaborate with the Lewes Cooperative Learning Partnership.</p> <p>Governors then went on to further discuss the risks regarding not being part of an academy chain. These include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cuts to LA budget – including to the School Improvement & clerking service 2. What if a local MAT of some schools is formed? 3. The fragmentation of Lewes schools 4. What if the LCLP breaks up? 5. What if Western Road becomes isolated? <p>Governors felt that the process is losing momentum & that they have doubts regarding the vision of the MAT. They asked whether becoming part of a MAT would help the school become outstanding, more successful and thriving. They felt, on careful consideration of the evidence, that it would not benefit what they already believe is a great school which collaborates with others. Governors did acknowledge though that parents need to be made very aware of the realities of the current & future financial climate & that more emphasis now needs to be placed on fundraising & how we most effectively use our resources.</p> <p>It was agreed that the school would need to develop 3-year plan if we do not join the proposed MAT & that the school should continue to work in partnership with other local schools.</p> <p>At the conclusion of discussions, governors voted unanimously to withdraw from the academisation process. SC & IW did not vote as associate governors. Again, it was reiterated though that upon withdrawing from the project, the school community needs to intensify fundraising for the school to meet the inevitable budget shortfalls.</p> <p>Action – JS to send letter to parents & staff. He will also email Tony Smith and John Griffiths.</p> <p>The chair thanked governors for all their efforts & participation in this process.</p>	JS
4	<p>Last Strategy Meeting dated 17th September 2019</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Acceptance of minutes - minutes were duly accepted. b) Matters arising from meeting not included elsewhere on the agenda – there were no matters arising 	
5	<p>Any other business</p> <p>There will be another Subject Leader meeting on Monday 21st January at 9.15 to look at science and humanities teaching & learning.</p>	

	<p><u>Dates of next meetings:</u></p> <p><u>FGB:</u> 28th Jan 2019, 25th March, 20th May, 8th July <u>Strategy:</u> 29th April</p>	
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Papers to accompany this meeting in order of the meeting:

Agenda, FGB Minutes from previous meeting with actions (26th November 2018), Strategy Group minutes from previous meeting with actions (17th September 2018), attendance register, notes from meeting with parents on 10th December 2018, INSET 06-11-2018 responses, MAT evidence, MWG Minutes (13th November 2018)