

Walford Nursery and Primary School Board of Governors - Meeting held on Wednesday 12th May 2021 - Chair's Impact Statement - Paul Deneen.

Introduction

The Governors are keen to ensure that parents/carers are able to be kept informed of the work of the board of governors. On the school website, under the governor's banner, please take time to read through the **'Walford Governor's - Governance and Strategic Leadership Document - 2020'** as this sets the scene in relation to how the governing board meetings and committees are structured and organised.

Headteacher Briefing

The Headteacher, Louise George, briefed the governors on the work which had been undertaken by staff and pupils during the term. All pupils were working incredibly hard in all of the classes. There had been an excellent range of activities and events which had been organised to enrich the curriculum. The PTFA had arranged a virtual balloon competition. The Liz Boynton outdoor project was in hand. Year 6 Leavers will enjoy a farewell residential trip and celebration ball at St Briavels Castle, Forest of Dean at the end of the summer term. All was going well at the school. There were no issues of concern to mention at this time.

Each committee chair reported on the work of their committee:-

School Business Committee

The chair of the committee reported that there were no issues of concern to be noted.

A draft budget for the school for 2021/2022 had been prepared and had been discussed in detail by members of the committee. The Local Authority had raised no concerns about the finances/budget situation at the school. The committee had also considered the budget over a 4/5 year period as well. The school had also benchmarked its provision against other similar sized schools. Projected future numbers at the school were looking very healthy. The budget is in a good place. It was also noted that the chair of the committee reviews the budget on a monthly basis and this is reported to the committee meetings. After discussion, and a report from Chair of Committee, the school budget was formally approved for 2021/22 and this was agreed unanimously.

The committee also reviewed the detailed school's financial value standard (SFVS) document. This DfE document is completed by all maintained schools on an annual basis. It helps schools to provide assurance that the school is meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management. As chair of governors, I drafted a summary position statement about the situation at Walford. The key points mentioned were as follows:-

i) The governors at Walford Nursery and Primary School have reviewed the six key areas of the SFVS of governance: school

strategy, setting the annual budget, staffing, value for money, protecting public money, and the SFVS dashboard.

ii) The governors work closely with the school's financial team at the Herefordshire Council as the school is a Local Authority (LA) maintained school. No issues of concern have been raised as part of the on-going discussions with the LA.

iii) The governors have full confidence in the financial monitoring arrangements and the school's budget. There is full reporting to all governors in relation to key financial decisions. There is monthly monitoring reporting on school expenditure.

iv) Even though the school has had to deal with the budgetary issues, as a result of the pandemic, no issues of concern have been raised or reported.

v) The school has a voluntary fund called the 'School Fund' which is audited on an annual basis, and is discussed by the governors.

vi) The completed SFVS report is an accurate reflection of the situation at the school.

vii) The governors place on record its grateful thanks to the staff at the Herefordshire Council, the Headteacher and Business Manager and the School Business Committee for their work in supporting the school on the important area of its finances/budget.

The governors would be reviewing the Health, Safety and Welfare policy this term.

No issues were raised in relation to Pupil Premium or Sports Premium.

Discussions continue in relation to the development of the nursery facility and outdoor area. New funding opportunities would be explored. The nursery has become very popular. Numbers evidenced it being oversubscribed. No issues with its separate budget and funding stream.

Standards, Teaching and Learning Committee.

The chair of the committee reported that there were no issues of concern to be noted.

The chair of the committee had spent a day at the school and had been briefed on key developments. They provided a detailed written report of the visit. The report included key updates on:-

i) How the staff have prioritised the elements of the national curriculum for each subject. This included a discussion on the computing progression document and sensational science pages on the 'Our Curriculum' section of the school website.

ii) A review of the SchooliP performance management system/SDP

iii) Reviewing the 'My concern' safeguarding tool for all staff.

iv) Safer Internet Day - a film featuring Walford pupils alongside comprehensive school pupils.

v) A new on-line GDPR / SCR facility.

vi) To revisit the school's complaints policy - in particular, the section on, 'To deal with complaints about the governing board's actions.'

The Headteacher reported that the school's Improvement Adviser would be visiting the school to undertake some work to undertake some work around curriculum improvements. Previously, virtual school improvement meetings had resulted in some excellent evidence being provided by staff in a number of curriculum areas.

Pupils, Personnel and Community.

The joint chair of the committee reported that there were no issues of concern to be noted.

All staff were in place in relation to teaching, support and administrative staff.

The chair of governors and the SEND governor would be reviewing the More Able and Talented policy and would report on this in future meetings.

The chair of governors and Headteacher would meet with the school council to have a conversation with them about the school, and any thoughts or ideas on how things might be improved for them in the future.

The Headteacher updated the governors on some of the work being undertaken with the support of the community including a visit to the Ross Community Gardens which had been a great success, enjoyed by all.

Parent, Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA).

The PTFA were organising a virtual balloon race event and all governors were encouraged to purchase a balloon. The chair thanked the PTFA for all their hard work in supporting the school, which is much appreciated.

Governors training and governor skills audit.

The clerk would update governors on all relevant training, which included some modular courses arranged by the NGA. The chair and clerk would liaise on the skills audit process. Governors would be asked to complete information, and the chair would report on findings at the autumn meeting. This would help the governors to ensure the board had a good skill mix and relevant experience which would be utilised in relation to any future vacancies.

Conclusion

The main focus for the discussion at the May meeting was on the school budget. Huge thanks to the school for all the hard work in relation to ensuring that the finances were being closely monitored and reported upon. In addition, that external sources of funding might be sought for key projects such as the development of the school nursery.

I did want to pay tribute to Louise George for her excellent work in supporting the staff and pupils at the school at this time, when we are in the early stages of a 'recovery mode' from the pandemic. All of the staff are also doing their very best in relation to this support, and for this, the governors are most grateful.

Also, I would like to thank the clerk her hard work and for the detailed paperwork for each of our committees and board meetings. The governors, all of whom are volunteers, do a tremendous job in both supporting as well as challenging key areas of discussions, so that all pupils are achieving their very best through - 'Learning and Enjoyment - Every child, every opportunity, every day.'

Thank you for taking the time to read this report - much appreciated.

Paul Deneen OBE JP DL
Chair of Governors
May 2021