



Willingham County Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body on
Thursday 10th November 2022 at 7pm (WPS)



MINUTES

Present: Chris Shaw (CS) (Chair), David Morel (Headteacher), Louise Johnstone (LJ), Helen McCarthy (HM), Matt Unwin-Riches (MUR), Angela Walker (AW) (Deputy Head), Nikita Ellis (NE), Sarah Ashworth (SA), Sarah Morgan (SM), Cecelia Pipe (CP) and Chris Woodward (CW).

Also attending: Amy Lorimer (AL), CamClerk

	Minutes	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome from the Chair</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Jo Aldhouse (JA), Kate Van Dort (KVD), Richard Hughes (RH), and Hanna Bowran-Pavey (HBP).</p>	
2.	<p>Presentation from Inclusion Lead</p> <p>Gemma Hassan (School Inclusion Lead) gave an overview of the inclusion lead role, addressing three areas requested by governors:</p> <p>Intent (key focus, what you plan to change/evolve this year, and longer term) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole-school approach to look after all disadvantaged children, ensuring consistency and integration.• Provision becoming more child centred.• More communication between home and school. Inclusion Lead to be available to families for support.• Also supporting teachers (solution circles which include TAs and teachers to ensure consistency, classroom observations, top up phonics work, paperwork support for referrals).• Managing and measuring impact of Emotional Support Assistant (ESA) provision.• Developing TA team.• Stronger links with the preschool which thread throughout the year.• Assess-plan-do-review process for SEND children (explained process). Introduced discussion at parent consultation meetings. Explained specialist teacher roles.	

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	<p>Governors queried the numbers of children involved:</p> <p>38 children currently on SEN register (10%). Around 100 who are identified as vulnerable (approx. one third of pupils).</p> <p>Implementation (what will we see that is different – for pupils, for parents, for staff) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEN children – parents now get extended slot at parents evening (20 minutes instead of 10 minutes)– to allow for review of APDR. Modified forms to include positives. <p>Governors queried any parent feedback on this? Too early to say. Teachers and TAs have said they like the improved format.</p> <p>Governors asked whether there was any parent feedback on extended time slots? Quite a few took the offer up and used the extra time. Gemma and ESA also offer slots at parents evening to all parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reintroduced coffee mornings (we ran them pre-pandemic – used to be only open to SEN parents) – open to all parents this time. The first coffee morning was attended by seven individuals. Conversations were huge and have triggered streams of work, now in contact with one of the parents daily. Next time we will advertise coffee mornings more widely, and include Honeypots parents.• Meet with ESA weekly.• Introduced animal support work (not therapy) with alpacas – fortnightly -one child does 1:1 and putting together a 4:1 group. <p>Challenge: Governors queried whether safeguarding checks and risk assessments were in place?</p> <p>Yes, all in place. Children don't go without their parents, as well as school staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closely monitoring children who are working outside of their year group – reviewed all cases and got transition plans in place to close gaps.• More frequent TA meetings – split model, same meeting twice each week to ensure coverage. Some TAs want it back together in one meeting to build team feeling, but staff are simply not available to do that. Other feedback was that meeting in a smaller group allowed for more voices to be heard.• Updated voluntary reader protocols – all now regulated activity. This will also provide a group of adults to support trips outside school.	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uniform giveaway – which promoted new conversations.• Weekly visits to Honeypots.• Senior Mental Health Lead – schools are strongly encouraged to have one. Gemma has completed two of the three days of training for this qualification. Support for children with SEMH but also for staff wellbeing. There will be actions coming out of the third day of training including reflection and review of school processes. <p>Noted that HM is governor Mental Health lead – will come in to meet with Gemma to review mental health role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External activities for high needs pupils, for example bowling trip for SEN pupils – organised by external sports provider, who works 2 days a week at WPS.• Sending ESA to specialist settings to observe some interventions that she runs here, to improve practice.• Improve TA skill base. <p>Impact (how we can measure impact of the plan, what benefits will children experience?).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall improved communications with parents and families of disadvantaged pupils.• Vulnerable pupils will have received the very best that we can offer.• Provision will be more child centred.• Improved SEMH across the school. One in three children have mental health difficulties by the age of ten - really concerning, but it is improving.• More consistent and concise approaches.• Strong links between Gemma and the community – already spending a lot of time with parents at the school gate. (This is more accessible than requiring parents to pick up the phone.)• Reading volunteer team will be secure.• Life experiences for vulnerable pupils – improving their ability to learn.• Gemma to be available to help support teachers. <p>Governors asked, how are you finding the role? Really enjoying it. Some days are very hard, some situations are hard. Being able to focus on this role means I can follow things through.</p>	
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	<p>Challenge: Governors queried, do you have mental health support in your role?</p> <p>AW (Deputy – Gemma’s line manager) and Gemma meet half-termly to talk through Gemma’s role, and any support needs. Juliet (LA leadership advisor) provides significant support via termly therapeutic coaching sessions.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the presentation from Gemma was really helpful and very positive – they would like to invite her back next summer term to review progress.</p>	Agenda – summer term
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest concerning items on the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>Governor Appointments*</p> <p>i. Consider Appointment of Co-Opted Governor Cecelia Pipe – Cecilia is a teacher at the school. The Chair noted the potential value of having a staff member on the governing body who is not on the senior leadership team. CP introduced herself, noting that she has worked across the school including PPA cover, her children attended the school, and that she lives in the village.</p> <p>The Clerk informed the governors that the articles of association prohibit more than one third of the total number of governors from being staff members. With co-option of Cecilia, exactly one third of the GB comprises staff; this will need to be carefully monitored to ensure validity of GB in the event of a non-staff member resigning from the governing body. Clerk recommended Cecilia be offered an associate governor role and explained how associate governorship works.</p> <p>Decision: Cecilia Pipe co-opted as governor.</p> <p>ii. Consider Appointment of Local Authority Governor Chris Shaw (change from co-opted governor)</p> <p>A letter from the LA had been circulated prior to the meeting, nominating CS be appointed as LA Governor. CS is currently a co-opted governor with a term end date of 15/07/2023.</p> <p>Decision: CS appointed as LA governor with new four-year term.</p>	

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5.	<p>Minutes*</p> <p><u>To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 29th September 2022</u></p> <p>The minutes of the FGB meeting, held on 29th September 2022, were submitted and will be signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting, subject to the following minor amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Emma Fuller’s absence SM has been fulfilling the role of maths and English link governor – she will continue to do so, so this is not a vacancy. <p><u>Actions outstanding and Matters arising from the Minutes (not included elsewhere on the agenda.)</u></p> <p>Action 001 - SM and CW to sign updated Code of Conduct – ongoing.</p> <p>Action 002 - Clerk to liaise with JA to circulate Pecuniary Interest forms – completed. Action closed.</p> <p>Action 003 - The Clerk was asked to liaise with CCC regarding the LA governor vacancy. Completed, action closed.</p> <p>Action 004 - CS to follow up with interested staff member regarding possible governor role. Completed. Action closed.</p> <p>Action 005 - Non-staff governors to complete KCSiE declarations. The Clerk noted that very few governors have completed this on GovernorHub. Ongoing.</p> <p>Action 006 - CS to invite Inclusion Lead to speak at next FGB meeting. Completed, action closed.</p> <p>Action 007 - The Clerk agreed to confirm statutory requirements for circulation of committee agendas and minutes, rather than best practice. Completed, action closed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair to update tracker with dates for this term – Completed, on GovernorHub. Action closed. • Parent governor elections – CS has drafted letter to parents inviting nominations – Completed, letter sent out, but no response from parents. Action closed. 	
6.	<p>Head Teacher’s report *</p> <p><u>To receive a report from the Head teacher,</u></p> <p>A report was circulated ahead of the meeting; NOTE – some governor queries were submitted in writing prior to the meeting, and were responded to in writing and circulated on GovernorHub; these questions</p>	

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	<p>and responses are included as an appendix to these minutes for completeness.</p> <p>The Chair noted the new format for the Heads report and invited feedback from governors. One governor noted that the new format was easier to read.</p> <p><u>Phonics scheme</u></p> <p>Multiple governors had asked questions about the rationale for, and the process for, introducing a new phonics scheme.</p> <p>Challenge: Governors asked, why do we need a new scheme? What's wrong with the current scheme 'Storytime Phonics'?</p> <p>The Head explained that school staff already have to adapt what is provided within Storytime Phonics to make it clearer and more robust. A lack of structure and support in Storytime Phonics to help plan lessons, means that staff time is wasted.</p> <p>Storytime Phonics is no longer DfE approved. DfE criteria for Phonics schemes have added in extra requirements (for example: intervention programs, reading books closely linked to the scheme progression), and many of the older schemes including Storytime Phonics do not address these. We had identified these gaps last year. Had Storytime Phonics put these in place and been validated we would have stayed with them. Newer schemes we are looking at have significantly improved CPD offerings.</p> <p>We met as a group to discuss progress, set timelines – two potential schemes identified from DfE validated list - to be looked at in two weeks time. Phonics PD session with LA next week will help with research. Decision will be made in next four weeks as to which scheme to go with. Implementation to start by latest spring half term.</p> <p>Challenge: Governors queried costs to the school?</p> <p>The Head explained that we will get funding from the English Hub to support this new phonics scheme (and potentially from British Schools Trust for books to match the scheme). There will be a professional development time required which has a related cost - whole school staff training (not just KS1/EYFS).</p> <p>Challenge: A governor asked, is it manageable for staff to take on a new phonics scheme when we're only a year into new maths curriculum?</p> <p>The head replied with an emphatic yes - because our staff are unbelievably good at managing new curriculum materials and thinking about the curriculum delivered. There is almost nothing in our curriculum that looks the same as it did five years ago. Staff know that this is the right decision</p>	
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	<p>for the children.</p> <p>AW noted that current Year 1 cohort are not on track to meet year 1 phonics targets. Similarly, in Year 2 we have a large group of children (25%) not secure in those targets, and small numbers in Years 3 and 4. Staff can see the impact of this. We want a scheme that extends beyond KS1. Noted that it will be hard to work with new scheme, but also necessary.</p> <p>The head noted that this is a significant move away from his position at the last FGB suggesting that we would not move to a new phonics scheme half way through the year. This is due to input from HT observations since 29th September.</p> <p><u>Multi-Academy Trusts</u></p> <p>Governors discussed the national picture regarding moving maintained schools into trusts. The Head will continue conversations with local and national MATs.</p> <p>The Head encouraged governors to attend information sessions coming up for governors regarding potential LA MATs (22nd and 28th November - LA presentation about what an LA MAT might look like).</p>	
7.	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>A governor visit report (from July 2023) by CS focused upon safeguarding had been circulated prior to the meeting. CS noted that a whole-school approach to safeguarding was certainly apparent. The visit included a school walk to check that site was safe and secure.</p> <p>One action coming out of the visit referred to the lack of visual materials for children reminding them of who to talk to (now adding posters about the ESA).</p> <p>CS had a conversation with the office about how to validate callers for example a parent asking to release a pupil to a different adult.</p> <p>CS asked all governors complete updated safeguarding training and KCSiE updates.</p>	
8.	<p>Honeypots Report</p> <p>A report was circulated on the day of the meeting; in KvD's absence, CS read the report aloud for governors.</p> <p>The Head noted that the Honeypots team are having weekly staff meetings, and will attend the LA phonics meeting next week.</p> <p>The head and AW noted that Honeypots staff are also involved in the</p>	

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	<p>phonics discussions and the maths preparation.</p> <p>A governor asked, is this to increase the amount of 'teaching' at Honeypots?</p> <p>No - its to upskill the staff and help staff understand the arc of the curriculum so they can help prepare the children for EYFS.</p> <p>Challenge – Governors queried Gemma Hassan's work with other preschool settings in village?</p> <p>So far Gemma's time has been focussed upon Honeypots. Later in the year our EYFS team and Gemma will start liaising with the other village settings. Noted that other village settings do often send children to Honeypots sessions in their final term to help prepare for school.</p>	
9.	<p>Committee Updates *</p> <p>i. Personnel</p> <p>The committee chair explained that the meeting discussed the requirement for volunteers to go through vetting process for regulated activities.</p> <p>The Pay Panel met and audited pay recommendations.</p> <p>JA and SA have discussed GovernorHub and ease of use.</p> <p>ii. Curriculum</p> <p>SM reported that the Curriculum committee met earlier this evening. Discussed Head's classroom observations – strengths in KS2 lessons in SPAG. EYFS KS1 observations were around phonics – picked up further evidence of the need to change Phonics scheme.</p> <p>The committee discussed the move to a new phonics scheme.</p> <p>Appraisal targets set for all staff, KPIs developed into a bank so that appraisers can choose appropriate KPIs (see appendix).</p> <p>Committee looked at Pupil Premium (PP) Strategy – school had budgeted for more income than has been received. Evaluated school-led tutoring program – feedback positive from tutors and teachers. Discussed funding needs for this program. The Clerk flagged up new PP guidance and suggested the PP Strategy template in use is checked – this was completed during the meeting and is compliant with the new format.</p> <p>The committee ratified the school trips policy.</p> <p>AW reported on Attendance: 95.2% for first half of Autumn term – explaining that this is in line with national and local averages, and is partly due to a chicken pox outbreak in week 2. Some pupils moving school to other schools, not yet accepted on roll at new</p>	

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	<p>school so they remain on our roll. In response to a governor query, AW confirmed School continue to conduct 'safe and well' checks until pupils are on roll at their new school.</p> <p>Planned attendance paper trails governor visit next week.</p> <p>Working on PP attendance – 4% greater attendance in non-PP pupils.</p> <p>Safeguarding – prejudice related incidents have been addressed via PSHE scheme, as well as talking to pupils and parents. Follow-up work with ESA for particular children involved.</p> <p>Antibullying week next week.</p> <p>'Report a Concern' button for KS2 pupils has been used, and has identified friendship and bullying issues that school were not aware of.</p> <p>Struggling to recruit a TA for mornings – impact in Year 1.</p> <p>iii. Finance & Premises</p> <p>The F&P Chair advised that the committee reviewed the report from the LA advisor regarding site security after the gate incident last half term – reviewing actions from it which have all been completed.</p> <p>The committee reviewed the summer 2022 LA letters about financial internal audit – LJ to follow up with JA to ensure all requirements are met.</p> <p>Latest school accounts reviewed by Chair yesterday – position not significantly changed – behind budget in-year because of pay rises for teaching and non-teaching announced post-budget (approx. £55k impact). Started year with £107k in reserves, we will probably end the year with more than £40k in reserve.</p> <p>A governor asked, has there been any feedback from parents on the school gate regarding updated site security? The Head reported that the only feedback was about bike/scooter storage – we can't afford an additional bike shed so we will consider other options, including further use of existing back bike shelter by older pupils.</p> <p><u>Committee terms of reference</u></p> <p>The Clerk advised that committee terms of reference must be approved by the FGB.</p> <p>Draft committee terms of reference for Personnel and for Finance and Premises had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Curriculum committee terms were tabled at the meeting. Governors discussed delegated responsibility for policies.</p>	
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	<p>Decision: Committee terms of reference were approved subject to each having a sentence added regarding approval of policies - delegated as per the policy schedule.</p> <p>Action 008: Clerk to finalise Terms of Reference for Committees.</p> <p><u>Curriculum Committee Chair</u></p> <p>Decision: SM was elected Chair of Curriculum Committee for 2022-23.</p>	008 Clerk
10.	<p>Governor Business*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. KCSiE declarations, Code of Conduct confirmations Chair asked all governors to complete these items via GovernorHub. ii. Governor Training and Board Development* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reports from governor training undertaken CS recommended SG for governance training circulated by Head from The Key. <p>Planned training for this term (including Safeguarding training) = governors present all confirmed SG training in the past year. Head noted that due to updated KCSiE guidance, new training must be completed.</p> <p>Action 009 – Head to circulate ‘Safeguarding for Governors’ training and KCSiE training</p> <p>Action 010 – All governors who are not school staff to complete ‘Safeguarding for Governors’ training and KCSiE training, and update training records on GovernorHub accordingly.</p> <p>SA queried a possible governor session for safer recruitment as mentioned in last meeting by JA. Noted that EPM training is not Safer Recruitment Consortium accredited, so LA training is required. AW noted that several members of SLT need updated training.</p> <p>Action 011 - Clerk to ask LA for in-school safer recruitment training by Phil Nash as part of school’s existing training package.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. GovernorHub Chair, Head and JA have discussed use of GovernorHub. Governor feedback was positive – they found it user friendly, and booking training was easy. <p>Action 012 – Chair and Clerk to meet to discuss further use i.e. for committees, OFSTED pack, policies.</p>	<p>009 Head</p> <p>010 All</p> <p>011 Clerk</p> <p>012 Chair and Clerk</p>

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	<p>iv. Recruitment needs – 2 x new governors</p> <p>a. 1 x Parent and 1 x Co-Opted</p> <p>Chair encouraged governors to consider inviting individuals they might know with relevant skills.</p> <p>v. School visit reports* and queries arising</p> <p>Visit reports were circulated prior to the meeting –</p> <p>MUR met with Gemma Hassan before half term looking at Inclusion Lead role, he described the visit as really positive and exciting. Looked at APDR process, Matt will return to review progress in January.</p> <p>Report not yet circulated –</p> <p>Visit looking at staff questionnaires with Head. Teaching staff seem happy. TAs more mixed – Gemma’s new role should improve that.</p> <p>vi. Policy review*</p> <p>a. Appraisal & Capability Policy</p> <p>Reviewed by personnel committee and recommended for approval.</p> <p>b. Code of Conduct for all Adults</p> <p>Reviewed by personnel committee and recommended for approval.</p> <p>c. Redundancy Handling Policy and Procedure</p> <p>Reviewed by personnel committee and recommended for approval.</p> <p>A governor queried the terminology regarding governors managing the process – Personnel Chair explained that this is a model policy – the work is delegated to the SLT.</p> <p>d. Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>Reviewed by personnel committee and recommended for approval.</p> <p>e. Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure (for approval)</p> <p>Reviewed by personnel committee and recommended for approval.</p>	
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	Decision: The following policies were ratified by the FGB: Appraisal & Capability Policy Code of Conduct for all Adults Redundancy Handling Policy and Procedure Whistleblowing Policy Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure	
11.	Summary of Actions* See table at end of minutes.	
12.	Date of Next Meeting* The next FGB meeting is scheduled for Thursday 19 th January 2023 at 7pm. Committee meetings are scheduled as follows: Personnel – 10 th January 2023 Curriculum – 10 th January 2023 F&P – 24 th November 2022	
13.	Review the Impact of this Meeting The Chair reflected that it was very helpful to hear from the school's Inclusion Lead especially regarding specifics around implementation. Monitoring of impact will be revisited in the summer term. The Chair also noted the value of a substantial and robust discussion of the decision to move to a new phonics scheme, and how this will be implemented.	

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed *Christopher Shaw*

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Table of Outstanding Actions

Action No.	Action	Owner	Deadline
Actions from the meeting of 10th November 2022			
008	Clerk to finalise Terms of Reference for Committees	Clerk	End of term
009	Head to circulate 'Safeguarding for Governors' training and KCSiE training	Head	This week
010	All governors who are not school staff to complete 'Safeguarding for Governors' training and KCSiE training, and update training records on GovernorHub accordingly.	All	End of term
011	Clerk to ask LA for in-school safer recruitment training by Phil Nash as part of school's existing training package.	Clerk	This week
012	Chair and Clerk to meet to discuss further use of GovernorHub i.e. for committees, OFSTED pack, policies.	Chair and Clerk	End of term
Actions from the meeting of 29th September 2022			
001	SM and CW to sign updated Code of Conduct	SM, CW	Next FGB
005	Non-staff governors to complete KCSiE declarations	All	Half term

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Appendix to FGB Minutes 10th November 2022: HT Report Questions From Governors

Governor's Questions:

Behaviour – the 2 x prejudice related incidents are concerning, how have these situations been addressed, and what else is being done more widely to ensure these topics are addressed with all children?

Both incidents were dealt with in line with the '[Responding to Prejudice Related Incidents](#)' policy and were logged on the Prejudice Reporting for Education website. Parents/carers of perpetrators and victims were notified and consulted with and pupils worked with appropriate members of staff (ESA/Class Teachers/HT) to recognise the impact of their language and improve their understanding of their actions. The school's PSCE curriculum and assemblies cover all aspects of the required curriculum for pupils and through logging and monitoring incidents, the school is able to identify when issues that are picked up do not improve.

Can you provide a summary of the intent and the key milestones for the Early Reading Subject Leader project and review please? When can the governors expect an update as part of this review?

The intent is to work with the SMT and English SL to review potential schemes and then facilitate training and implementation to improve outcomes for all pupils. The team met this week to assess progress made and have identified 2 potential schemes to investigate further that match our criteria for selection:

- Significant focus on staff CPD, not just a 'pick up and go' scheme
- Inclusion of pre-school and post phonic screening check provision
- Clear, structured planning and delivery
- Have a large number of phonically decodable practice books

Timeline is to meet in 2 weeks having researched the 2 identified schemes further to arrange potential visits/conversations to local schools. Decision on scheme to be taken before start of December, ready for training to begin on or before first day back in January. Scheme to be implemented by Feb ½ term.

From the observations, what areas need further development and what is being done to address them?

Phonics as above. Individual teachers have specific pedagogical areas for development, which have been identified and addressed through the appraisal targets.

What measurements will be used to assess performance against the objective "Improve outcomes in reading, phonics and spelling through developing and delivering expertly sequenced lessons and units of work."

See below

Please guidance on the measurements connected to the other 2 objectives being set for staff?

Potential KPIs (as discussed at SMT then adapted and developed during appraisals) could include up to 4 or 5 of:

Target 1:

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading and spelling
- Vulnerable pupils and those with SEND have received appropriate extra support to ensure that they make the best possible progress
- Teaching of reading, phonics and spelling is in line with the school's policy and schemes.
- Higher attaining pupils are stretched and challenged through the use of good quality resources and high-quality teaching
- Class outcomes in phonics are above ___%

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- *Great teaching provides a model to other staff*
- *Best practice is shared with other staff across the school*
- *Planning demonstrates clear progression and is adapted to match the needs of the pupils*
- *Prior learning is routinely reviewed during lessons to ensure pupils' long term retention of knowledge*

Target 2:

- *Evidence in teaching of the focus principle(s) being embedded in practice*
- *Lessons are efficient and effective*
- *Pupils make strong progress from their starting points*
- *Vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are well supported in acquiring and retaining new knowledge*
- *Pupils' work shows appropriate knowledge being recalled and applied*
- *Disciplinary writing is appropriate and well planned*
- *% of pupils at ARE in _____ has improved from starting points*
- *Practice has provided a model for other staff*
- *Pol is clearly evidenced in planning*
- *Evidence of self-study is clear in planning and delivery*
- *Feedback is acted upon to improve practice*

Target 3:

- *SL documentation shows intent and progression within the subject*
- *Staff adapt teaching to ensure units build on previously learnt knowledge*
- *Pupils are able to remember and apply knowledge from previously taught content*
- *Subject Leader can confidently evidence the quality of the Intent, Implementation and Impact of their subject across the school*
- *Subject Leader has clear understanding of the progress of the subject and next steps for development*
- *Subject Leader engages with SSL and wider subject communities to drive their subject forward*
- *Teaching in _____ has improved as a result of the support/guidance given*
- *Monitoring records indicate that _____ is taught consistently and effectively across the school*
- *Evidence of further research and professional development and the impact on teaching*

Evidence will be taken from a range of sources, from pure outcome data to lesson planning documentation and from lesson observation to personal notes and evidence of research.

MAT options - have there been any direct requests for consideration from any MAT discussions you have had?

No direct requests and there continues to be a paucity of clear, local, aligned options for us.

On the phonics scheme can you provide a bit more information about what this will entail? It struck me it might just be the focus placed on maths and getting to grips with that new scheme detracting from phonics outcomes rather than the scheme itself. Therefore, refocusing on phonics taught through the current scheme with some additional training may be more beneficial than the introduction of a new scheme?

In April 2021, the DfE put criteria together, alongside a process for 'validation' of synthetic phonics schemes. This was in response to the huge range of published schemes that schools were being sold, which had no quality mark attached to help schools make an appropriate selection. At this point the school's phonic outcomes were strong, so no initial change was made. However, there have been several things that we have been concerned about with the current scheme for a while now (lack of intervention materials; WPS teachers having to significantly adapt planning to make it more focused; difficulty of identifying closely matched practice materials) but have been waiting to see whether Storytime Phonics was going to be updated and 'validated' by the DfE. It has not.

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It is true that the school may see an improvement in outcomes with further training for staff, but we do not feel that the pupils would get the best possible deal from the current scheme and can already see the impact that new schemes/support could have on a greater number of pupils.

Would the new scheme require time to be set aside for teachers to learn it?

Yes, as with the Maths, a proportion of PD will have to be dedicated to any new scheme. The amount of time will depend heavily on which scheme is chosen.

I am also interested to hear more about the proposed new Phonics scheme. It might be useful once one has been selected to have a specific presentation to the governors from Phonics lead. As Chris S has said it would be good to get a feel for the timescale involved and how we are going to measure its success and adjust if necessary.

Yes, I will give an overview of where we're at to Curriculum tonight and for timescales, see above. As for a presentation, yes, I think it would be possible to manage this in Spring 1 FGB if the Gobs feel this would be useful.

Secondly, how do we maintain the focus on the Maths in conjunction with a push on Phonics.

This is the ongoing juggle that we must manage in school – as you are aware from the RAP, there is never just 1 focus for us to work on at any one time. We will still dedicate a number of PD sessions to supporting maths and ensuring that staff are teaching in line with the Ark principles and as we continue to develop the role of the SLs, they will begin to take on more responsibility for observing lessons and supporting individuals, where necessary.

Last but not least, I am assuming the new phonics scheme will primarily be focused on the EYFS, do we need any intervention on SPAG further up the school, what would this look like?

Part of our criteria for selection of a new scheme is the smooth transition in and out of the scheme and the support for spelling further through the school. Some schemes focus on EYFS and Y1 and omit anything to support pre-school or Y2 upwards – we have immediately dismissed these. We are also working on ensuring that our SPAG lessons are relevant and supportive of the writing types being used at any time and this will continue alongside the phonic development.

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