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Working in partnership with



**Headteacher - Mr T Whitehead**



### **Governing Board update: March 2024**

My apologies, somewhat later than planned... I seem to have had much on over the last two weeks.

Unusually there were three governors meetings in March: the 6 March Curriculum Committee meeting, rescheduled from February; the 12 March Finance and Resource Committee meeting; and the 21 March Full Governing Board meeting - all three meetings were held in school.

The **6 March** Curriculum meeting was chaired by Mr Whitehead. Governors approved the minutes of the October 2023 meeting and reviewed agreed action points.

Governors then heard a presentation on the music curriculum from Mr Schofield, the specialist music teacher who works with all class groups on a Tuesday.

Mr Schofield outlined the approach to music across the school and demonstrated some of the teaching methods, and also discussed the positive impact of music on child development. Mr Whitehead and Mr Schofield also outlined the approach to music professional development for all staff. Governors were able to ask questions of Mr Schofield.

Mr Whitehead noted that music was a 'deep dive' during the autumn term Ofsted inspection and was additionally a focus of the recent North Yorkshire School Improvement Adviser visit - both visits were very positive.

Governors noted the value of specialist music teaching provision as a core part of the Kildwick curriculum.

Governors then looked at the Pupil Premium strategy, funding provided by the government for 'disadvantaged' groups, and heard an update on special educational needs and disability provision from Miss Akrigg.

Governors were able to ask questions of Mr Whitehead and Miss Akrigg. Governors were keen to stress the importance of inclusivity as key to the Kildwick School offer.

Governor monitoring visits for English and PSHE were noted and the points raised discussed.

Governors then approved the EYFS, professional development and feedback policies - copies of key school policies can be seen on the school website: [www.kildwickceschool.org.uk](http://www.kildwickceschool.org.uk)

The **12 March** Finance and Resource meeting was chaired by Cameron Quinn. The bursar attended for part of the meeting. Governors approved the minutes from the November 2023 meeting and reviewed agreed actions.

Governors reviewed the Budget Monitoring reports for February 2024 and were able to ask questions of Mr Whitehead and the bursar.

Governors looked at the: financial impact of the current executive headteacher support arrangement with another local school; Capital Expenditure budget; the energy grant; and the Before and After School club budget.

Governors noted the current pressure on the Before and After School club budget, linked to a reduction in numbers attending, and discussed options to address the concern. Mr Whitehead is to consider these options for the summer term Finance and Resource Committee meeting.

Mr Whitehead noted the probability that school would have a slightly larger 'carry forward' into the 2024-2025 financial year in part due to the executive headteacher support arrangement.

Governors next reflected on the likely start budget for 2024-2025 - this has to be approved by the Full Governing Board by the end of May. The financial situation is likely to be very tight despite careful management over the current financial year. Governors noted that the majority of other local schools were reported to be in a similar situation. Mr Whitehead reported that head teachers of local schools had met with Julian Smith (MP for Skipton and Ripon) and outlined the considerable concerns around funding for schools and the likely impacts on provision going forward.

The bursar is to work on budget options to inform discussion at the summer term meeting. Governors highlighted the need for continued careful budget management and vigilance around future financial commitments.

The School Financial Value Statement (SFVS), a Department for Education requirement, was discussed and approved - this was later 'signed off' by the Full Governing Board meeting (see below). Governors were reminded that the statement required Governing Boards to look ahead at budgets for the coming two financial years when considering the school financial position.

Governors then looked at the contract schedule - contracts for a range of services from energy provision to data management and cleaning. Governors approved the recommended contracts - Mr Whitehead is however to look at possible options for the clearing and caretaking contract from 2025.

Governors next heard a premises update from Mr Whitehead. As part of this, Governors reviewed plans for the use of the energy grant - LED lights will be installed across the school building, supporting the school's strategic focus on environmental sustainability and hopefully reducing energy costs. I have been in school this last week and note that the work has already taken place.

Governors then approved the charging and recruitment and retention policies.

The Spring Term Full Governing Board meeting, **21 March**, was chaired by myself. Governors approved the minutes of the December 2023 meeting and the additional February 2024 meeting and reviewed agreed action points.

Governors then discussed minutes from the March Curriculum and Finance and Resource meetings and reviewed actions.

The SFVS, agreed by the Finance and Resource Committee, was approved.

Governors then discussed at length academisation and possible collaboration and federation approaches with another local school. Governors felt that following the recent Ofsted report the school was in a strong place and that working with other local schools would potentially provide additional benefits to the school and the education of the children at Kildwick. Governors decided that at this stage it was not in the schools' best interests to pursue the academisation route but that a 'watching brief' on developments locally and nationally should continue to be maintained.

Governors reflected on advice from North Yorkshire Council and the diocese and agreed to look to structure a working group to take forward discussions around collaboration and possible federation. At the time of writing, 17 April 2024, options around the structure of a working group are being explored and it is hoped to have an update for all stakeholders in the coming weeks.

Governors then discussed the termly headteacher's report and questioned Mr Whitehead on: behaviour management approaches; attendance and persistent absence; special educational needs and disabilities, including local authority financial support; and pupil well-being.

Governors noted the very positive Ofsted report - governors feel that it reflects the school and the positive view of school in the local community. Governors thanked Mr Whitehead and the wider staff team for their ongoing dedication and work. Mr Whitehead is to ensure that the Ofsted action points are included in the strategic plan - discussion on the strategic plan is planned for June 2024.

Governors then discussed: the safeguarding governor monitoring visit report; the latest parent forum meetings; staff well-being; and governor monitoring visits.

Governors next approved a number of updated school policies including, intimate care, managing allegations and educational visits.

Finally governors reviewed the school's approach to governance through three key questions from the diocese governance review checklist - it is intended that future Full Governing Board meetings will consider further questions from the checklist.

I am happy to discuss the work of governors and can be contacted through: [chair@kildwickce.uk](mailto:chair@kildwickce.uk)

Governing Board meeting minutes and further information on the work of the governors can be seen on the school website at: [www.kildwickceschool.org.uk](http://www.kildwickceschool.org.uk)

John Perry, Chair of Governors  
April 2024