



Westfield Primary Academy Governors' Impact 2016/17

ACTIVITY

What has been our main focus over the past year?

- We have gradually realigned the governing body to the SWAT model of 9 governors by not filling vacancies as they have occurred. We would like to say thank you to all the governors who have served on the Westfield governing body, for the time, commitment and support they have given.
- The LGB now meets half-termly ie. 6 times a year. This allows us to have more regular feedback on the progress of teaching and learning, the outcomes for pupils and the financial position of the academy.
- Working Groups have been formed which will enable governors to focus their attention on key areas and ensure the leadership is being held accountable against the school development priorities.
- Governor monitoring has been formalised with Governor' Monitoring Mornings being introduced. These enable governors to work together to get detailed information about their areas of responsibility, as well as get a "snap shot" of the school in operation. These sessions have been well received by governors and staff and will continue to be developed to have even greater impact in 2017/18.
- Governors are beginning to meet with subject and middle leaders to evaluate the progress of pupils and seek evidence of strategic planning and effective monitoring.
- Regular meetings have been established between the Headteacher and Chair of Governors and the Chair of Governors attends SLT meetings once a half-term. The Chair of Governors is in school regularly engaging more with staff and pupils and supporting the HT with issues including staffing, pupil behaviour and finance.

CHALLENGE

What areas have we specifically questioned re the school's provision, decisions or actions?

- Attendance: Whilst attendance is not a huge issue at Westfield it was reported that there was a drop in attendance during the Spring term of 2017. Governors questioned the Headteacher on how the school supported good attendance and tackled poor attendance – particularly with vulnerable groups. Attendance data remains a governor focus.
- Pupil Progress: Governors receive detailed data reports from the Assessment lead and challenge the progress of groups of pupils including pupil premium, SEND and the more able.
- Finance: Governors have been concerned by the change in the financial position of the academy due, in part, to Trust policy changes implemented during the year. Ie. the introduction of an in year 2% to reserves. Governors have questioned issues around the staffing structure, including those that have resulted in the reduction in TA hours and how this will impact on the provision in classrooms.

Non-confidential minutes of LGB meetings are available for public view

LOOKING OUTWARDS

How has our work extended beyond our one school?

- Westfield is fortunate to be part of an expanding Multi Academy Trust which encourages the sharing of good practice.
- The Chair of Governors is the Governance Advisor to the Trust and as such, is able to bring a wider knowledge of the direction of Governance within the Trust. The introduction of Governor Hub which has streamlined communication and the sharing of resources. As part of her role, the Governance Advisor has been involved in three Ofsted visits within the Trust and arranged cross-Trust governor training.
- Three members of the LGB work within other schools in the Trust and bring their experience and expertise to the Committee.
- Governors have undertaken a skills audit and used this to identify gaps in training and aid recruitment to the LGB, looking for those with suitable skills set.
- Governors have attended training provided by the Trust and also Suffolk County Council through Schools' Choice.
- The Headteacher meets regularly with other colleagues and the SWAT primary lead to ensure outward facing dialogue and brings this experience to the LGB. Staff are regularly involved in cross-academy training and moderation activities.
- The Academy has benefited from two NCETM leads (National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Maths) in school who regularly provide training for colleagues both within the Trust and across the County.
- A colleague from the RSC (Regional Schools Commission) has visited Westfield and met with the Chair of Governors as part of that visit.
- The Chair updates the LGB on trends in education on a local and national level ie. consultations and changes to policy.
- All governors receive The Knowledge produced by Schools Choice on a termly basis and a weekly update from the Trust to the CEO and the Trust PR briefing.

STRATEGY

How are we helping to shape the school's future?

- By restructuring the way the governing body operates and formalising monitoring activities Governors are better able to hold senior leaders to account. The Working Groups are going to be more able to focus on strategic priorities and moving to more regular meetings of the whole lgb mean that governors are better informed and can respond to issues in a timely manner.
- The Chair of Governors attended the PD day at the beginning of the Autumn term and was involved in the discussions around the academy ethos and vision. It is envisaged that more governors will be involved in the schools' continued self-evaluation and will be informed by SWAT annual review and TATS (Team Around the School) meetings to better understand the school's strengths and areas for development.
- By being more "hands on" with monitoring; meeting with staff and talking to pupils, governors are able to better understand the "context" of Westfield Academy and ensure that the developmental priorities identified remain the focus.

IMPACT

What difference have our decisions and actions made?

- Through governors engaging with stakeholders more regularly, all staff now have a better understanding of the role of Governors in the leadership and management of the school.
- Senior leaders are more aware of the capacity of the LGB to hold them to account.

- LGB meetings are more focused on strategic rather than operational with in depth discussion about teaching and learning and pupil outcomes and strategies being used to support areas for development.
- Closer attention to budget setting priorities will result in a better understanding of the impact of expenditure, particularly with ring fenced funding such as Pupil Premium.

LOOKING AHEAD

What are the issues/areas of focus for the next twelve months?

- To continue to improve the monitoring role of the governor body to ensure that all statutory obligations and school priorities are being met.
- To encourage governors to be come more pro-active in engaging with the academy and to raise the profile of governance with all stakeholders, particularly parents.
- To play a greater role in setting the strategic direction of the school through engagement with the SEF and looking at the longer term – what do we want this school to look like in 3, 5 even 10 years time?
- As governors become more experienced in their role, to look to them for succession planning and taking on more key areas of responsibility.