

West Bridgford Junior & Infant School Joint Extraordinary Governing Body Meeting

Tuesday 10th March 2026 at 6.15pm
At West Bridgford Junior School

Attending:

Beth Arnold	DHT and Associate governor, WBJs
Steve Brooks	Co-opted governor, WBIS
Sarah Colston	Vice-Chair and Parent governor, WBIS
Gayle Cutts	HoS, WBIS
Pamela Dinsdale	Co-opted governor, WBIS
Lis Gibbon	Co-opted governor, WBJs
Cath Hammond	Co-opted governor, WBJs
Claire Hughes	Co-opted governor, WBJs; Chair and LA governor, WBIS
Gregory James	Parent governor, WBIS
Lucy James	Chair and LA governor, WBJs
Emma Nixon	Vice-Chair and Parent governor, WBJs
Clare Shawcross	Parent governor, WBJs
Liz Spink	Staff governor, WBIS
Jenny Stewart	Co-opted governor, WBIS – left @ 7:40pm
Claire Wheeler	Co-opted governor, WBJs
Shaarna Whitton	Co-opted governor, WBJs
James Willis	EHT

1. Apologies for absence

Cat Bancroft	HoS, WBJs
Kate Boxall	Parent governor, WBJs
Jo Elbourn	Parent governor, WBJs
Lauren Gimson	Parent governor, WBIS
Jat Hanspal	Co-opted governor, WBIS & WBJs
Ben Watson	Staff governor, WBJs

2. Declaration of interest

Claire Hughes	Parent governor, The West Bridgford School
Lucy James	Foundation governor, Bluecoat Aspley Academy
Claire Wheeler	Works at a local primary academy

3. Joint Collaboration Committee feedback from the consultation

Feedback report

The JCC met 05/03/2026 to discuss feedback from stakeholder groups:

- Both Chairs attended their respective school's staff meeting to discuss federation with members of staff; they also met individually with members of the SLT. The feedback is detailed in the report.
- We received three emails back from parents and discussed the issues raised (as noted in the report).
- The relevant Trade Unions were contacted, but gave no feedback beyond an acknowledgement of the proposal.
- Governor Services provided advice on the formation of a new, federation governing body. This will be staged, starting with five governors, and increasing to fifteen in time for the first FGB in October 2026. This has been reflected in the changed timeline.

Associated documents:

Notifying stakeholders (parents, LA, DfE, staff) – this must be done within a week of the decision to federate being taken.

Risk register: at every JCC a list of criteria was reviewed - increased governor workload, unequal influence between schools, leadership overstretch, contractual difficulties, recruitment challenges, staff resistance/morale, policy and process conflicts, budget disparities, resource allocation disputes, dilution of school identity, disruption to teaching and learning, inconsistent outcomes across schools, parental opposition, reputational risks and local authority concerns. From this process it is clear that most risks have reduced – eg policies are more aligned; there is a lower risk of schools losing their individual identity; the consultation process has demonstrated parental support etc

Financial considerations

This meeting was held before budget-setting, so the final positions of both schools for the next financial year have not yet been determined.

Both governing bodies – especially at WBIS – had real concerns about incoming pupil numbers and how this will be managed. The JCC is confident that the addition of the EHT role has created more leadership capacity to address this, although it is a problem for all infant and primary schools due to falling birth rates. Currently in reception there are 71 children, and the incoming reception class also looks to be low in numbers at the moment. Both years 1 and 2 are at full PAN of 85. WBIS budget setting will have to look at alternative scenarios in terms of ensuring that the school remains financially stable. In WBJS, Y3 has 81 and Y4-6 have 90 in each.

Challenge: what measures have been taken to attract more children to the schools, and how successful have they been? Is there anything else worth trying?

- WBJS 2025 SATS results and the congratulatory letter from the Secretary of State for Education can be advertised more widely – they have already been in the West Bridgford Wire, but could be used in other ways eg during open mornings etc.

- The WBIS HoS has visited a range of local nurseries and playschools to encourage families to apply for reception places.
- All the show-rounds of parents felt very positive, and large numbers attended.
- It is worth thinking about the ways in which social media can be used to change the usual story about the school, to advertise that it has spaces available and welcomes children and families from outside its catchment area. Can we learn from academies, which have marketing teams that are able to adapt quickly to this?

Challenge: what are the strategic benefits to federation in terms of marketing and advertising?

- WBIS can put greater emphasis on the outcomes and successes of both schools when prospective parents visit.
- Collaboration has been helpful for WBS to have a better understanding of the incoming pupil cohort – this enhances the GB’s strategic insight.

NB: Confidential Item

Financial considerations

The county council HR department gave feedback on the EHT IPR. After discussion, governors decided to keep to the current IPR range and level.

Challenge: is the EHT salary too high in comparison to equivalent primary schools, especially if pupil numbers continue to fall?

- It was decided that the current scale is reasonable for a federation providing for 680 children across three sites, especially in the context of difficulties in recruiting and retaining school leadership, and given evidence of improved strategic capacity that will help both schools. Sustaining and increasing pupil numbers has been an EHT appraisal objective and will remain a priority. Also, the pay point is a consequence of decisions that were made in 2019 around deciding on an appropriate IPR for HT recruitment – to change this now, to a lower scale, would be a major disincentive for leadership retention.

Challenge: could there be flexibility within the federation contract to allow for different proportions being paid towards the EHT salary other than 50:50 between schools?

- It is currently set at 50:50, and EHT timetabled time in each school reflects this. It could possibly be revisited if necessary at a later date, we would need further HR advice on this at the time.

4. Individual board level discussion and vote

WBS Discussion

Challenge: by federating will WBS have more responsibility for the WBIS budget?

- The two schools' budgets will remain separate. Any budgetary difficulties being faced by WBIS – especially due to declining pupil numbers – will become difficulties for WBJs as well. At least with joint strategic oversight from the outset across both budgets we will be able to be more prepared, and able to use joined-up thinking on how to address it. Moreover, if WBIS children are able to benefit from improved resources, this has a positive impact on WBJs outcomes.
- The WBIS budget is currently in surplus, largely due to increased income generation (TB Sports, WBOOSC and Rattle and Roll) and more SEND funding. The school is now looking at the cost effectiveness of hiring out the school in the evening as well.

Challenge: for WBJs, federation entailed a reduction in SLT time and time lost for the SLT to work together.

- There are significant gains made in working together as part of a wider SLT team – eg the development of a joint school behaviour policy by both Heads of School, and joint curriculum development by both Deputy Head Teachers. It is hoped that difficulties in finding SLT time to work together can be mitigated by SLT timetable changes for the next academic year.

Challenge: the WBJs SBM is leaving and the new SBM will be a federation appointment. Will the new SBM be torn, to be more flexible with funding across the federation?

- The funding the schools receive are per child, and there are strict rules in place to ensure that the funding and grant for each school is spent on the children within that school only. It will be made clear that the rules around the school grant and funding are followed, to ensure no discrepancies at audit.

Challenge: will the fact that new appointments will be federation rather than school appointments be a deterrent to any potential candidates?

- An expectation to teach across both KS1 and 2 is consistent with all primary school appointments.

Challenge: What are the staffing challenges at WBIS?

- Staffing challenges are largely to do with there being a need for more TAs; in addition, most TAs are now having to work 1:1 with children with complex needs, so they feel really stretched.

Challenge: We will be looking at two budgets which will add considerably to governor workload

- To mitigate the workload it would be helpful to have at least two governors with a finance/accounting background to look at both school budgets together.

WBIS discussion

Challenge: The Head of School at WBIS is currently under significant pressure due to the many other hats they wear i.e. SENCO, DSL. Will this be addressed by the federation?

- Both the CoG and EHT have spent time working with the HoS to understand the additional duties being undertaken at present and how this is impacting upon both their ability to achieve and their wellbeing. Whilst there are no easy options to quickly relieve some of their legacy roles such as SENCO, we are actively taking steps to understand what positive change we can make in the short, medium and long term. Some of these steps will be linked to the federation for example, the WBS SENCO spending scheduled time at WBIS. Others will require us to move responsibilities around the leadership team to allow for a better balance.
- The HoS feels that her concerns have been heard and is happy with the steps being taken.

Challenge: How do we anticipate managing governor workload and participation in monitoring activities such as talk / walk days?

- Moving to a federation board gives us the opportunity to assess our current practice and reflect on what is most effective and what will need to evolve. We plan to spend the summer term considering how we can adapt to ensure we continue a robust level of support and challenge whilst moving to have oversight of two schools. This will be a collaborative process and we will seek feedback as we make plans.

Challenge: Whilst budgets will remain separate, are we confident that we understand how to tackle the grey areas i.e. shared cost for CPD. Could there be a scenario where the school with the more favourable financial position covers costs because it's in their interest to?

- Our finance and other associated policies will need to be reviewed to ensure we have considered our response to this kind of scenario. We can also seek advice from the LA finance team.

Challenge: Do we feel that there will be sufficient financial acumen on the federation board?

With two budgets to consider this is a risk that we are actively trying to plan for. Part of this has been understanding which of our current board members wish to continue onto the federation board. We are exploring the option of inviting individuals with pertinent skills to join the board as an associate member with a specific role to oversee finance rather than full governing board responsibility. We will also have two new parent governors joining the board and we can specify that finance experience would be desirable in the information sent out to all parents and carers. Whilst we don't have any control over who can be elected to the role we would like to offer more opportunity for candidates to meet with us before applying so we can fully explain our vision for the federation board and their role within it.

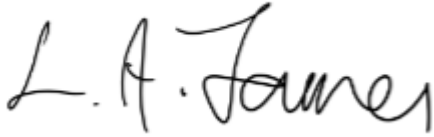
5. Result of individual board vote and next steps

Both boards voted in support of federation. All stakeholders, including parents, staff, the Local Authority and Department of Education will be notified within the next seven days.

6. Determination of confidentiality of business

It was determined that the discussion of EHT IPR be treated as confidential.

Signed .



Date: 19th March, 2026

(Chair of Governors)

School Display