

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING MINUTES

Monday 20 March 2023 at 7pm at Junior Site

PARENT	CO-OPTED	LA	STAFF	HEAD TEACHER	FOUNDATION 8			
2	1	1	1	1	LDBS	PCC	Trustees	St Mary's Church
Malcolm McKinlay	Christina Sturge	Geoffrey Goddin	Amanda Harrison	Angela Abrahams	Harry Coleman	Andrew Miyaji	Caroline Rayfield	Jeff Hopkin Williams
Kat Honour						James Maher	vacant	
						Emily Bainbridge	Stephen Tetley	

Apologies: Jeff Hopkin Williams, Emily Bainbridge, Geoffrey Goddin

Also attended: Dan Cadman (Deputy Head Teacher and Associate Member)
Sarah Aarons, Governor Designate – as an observer
Alison Watts (Clerk)

The meeting opened at 7.00pm

		ACTION
1.	WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE and DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. Apologies were received from Jeff HW, Geoffrey G and Emily B and accepted by the Chair. There were no declarations/conflicts of interest relevant to the meeting. The Chair informed governors that Oliver Watkins had stepped down from the governing body. Amanda H was welcomed to her first meeting as a staff governor. Sarah A was welcomed as an observer following her success in the recent parent governor election.	
2.	RE PRESENTATION – this was postponed to the summer meeting due to staff ill health ACTION: Add RE presentation to summer term agenda.	clerk
3.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (05/12/23) and MATTERS ARISING The minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2022 were approved.	

	Updates on the action points are provided at the end of this document.	
4.	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	
a.	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>The HT advised that the SIAMS inspection, expected this year, has been postponed to the autumn term due to the covid back log and a shortage of inspectors. The school would therefore be inspected under the new framework. Whilst similar in format, the new framework would necessitate the re-drafting of the relevant paperwork which placed a significant additional burden on staff. The HT explained that there would be an increased focus on the school's vision and that schools would be awarded a simple pass/fail. Governors noted the benefit to the school of the HT's advisory role with the LDBS.</p> <p>The HT advised that the sexual harassment cases noted in the report involved pupils in the younger years. Despite their age, it was considered important to identify such behaviour as unacceptable. Following a recent case of inappropriate language used on a Year 6 Whatsapp group chat, the HT had spoken with the parents and children affected. It had been an important learning experience for all involved.</p> <p><i>Q: Does the school make clear where responsibility lies for conduct on social media?</i></p> <p>The HT confirmed that lessons on e-safety and the responsible use of social media were provided but it was a difficult area as much of the activity took place outside of school. The school's behaviour policy allows the school to intervene when behaviour risks bringing the school into disrepute. The HT highlighted the importance of children understanding that keeping silent in the face of unacceptable language was to be complicit. It was confirmed that anti-semitism would be included under racism.</p> <p><i>Q: The number of staff absences remains relatively high. Are there any specific concerns and how are the pressures on other staff managed?</i></p> <p>The HT explained that 32 days of sickness were due to 2 members of staff with long term health issues. The HT advised that there had also been a marked increase in the number of covid cases. The impact on other staff members was unavoidable. She confirmed that the current covid guidance remained 5 days of isolation.</p> <p><i>Q: What does 'spirituality training' entail and how is its impact assessed?</i></p> <p>The HT explained that the training was focused on how to inspire children, the importance of silence and reflection, and the special nature of collective worship. Channels for assessing the impact of spirituality teaching included pupil voice, behaviour in school and spirituality journals in each classroom.</p> <p><i>Q: How are the behavioural issues in Year 2 being addressed?</i></p> <p>The HT advised that the behaviour incidents listed were largely due to one pupil with significant needs. The teacher was adopting a robust approach to indicate such behaviour was not acceptable. The parents were fully engaged.</p>	
b.	<p>Term Dates 2024-25</p> <p>It was noted that an INSET day in June had been allocated to working from home. It was hoped this would support staff well-being by allowing staff members some flexibility in organising their work and taking advantage of off-peak holiday travel if desired. The impact of the initiative would be assessed. Governors approved the proposed term dates for 2024-25.</p>	

5.	SAFEGUARDING & RISK	
a.	<p>Strike risk assessments - were noted. The HT reported that the industrial action had been a challenge as the unions had advised against informing HTs of striking intentions in advance. Parents had been broadly supportive of the action. The HT had sent out a letter to all parents regarding the financial pressures on schools as advised by the National Union of Headteachers.</p> <p>Q: Have the strikes had any impact on the curriculum? It was confirmed that teachers would need to condense the remaining lessons into a shorter time period.</p>	
b.	<p>Safeguarding Harry C, the safeguarding link governor, highlighted the key points from his recent monitoring visit. He noted that pupils were well behaved and engaged. Those interviewed had been able to explain clearly what to do if they felt uncomfortable. Having previously met with senior leaders, he had specifically requested meetings with a TA and a new teacher to monitor whether safeguarding procedures were clearly understood throughout the school. It had been evident that safeguarding training was not restricted to a one-off session on recruitment but was an on-going process. The school's on-boarding processes appeared robust.</p> <p>Kat H, second safeguarding link governor, reported on her recent visit to school to attend a celebration assembly at the infant site. She noted that children's behaviour had been excellent and pupils had demonstrated a genuine delight in the success of their peers. Through conversations in the playground with pupils from Reception and Year 1, it had been clear that that they knew what to do if they had any concerns and that they felt safe at school.</p>	
c.	<p>Risk Register Governors discussed the risk of compulsory academisation (the sole risk assigned to the FGB for monitoring). Following changes in government, it was noted that the drive towards universal academisation had slowed. Many schools preferred instead to explore partnerships as a possible means of sharing resources and therefore costs. Governors agreed to reduce the risk of academisation from 'possible' to 'unlikely'.</p> <p>Governors briefly discussed the other risks which had been previously reviewed in detail by the relevant committees. It was noted that staff recruitment was a challenge across the sector and that, whilst the school benefitted from having good transport links, it suffered from its proximity to Central London where pay was higher.</p> <p>One governor questioned the risk rating around falling pupil numbers and whether, given the good level of applications for September 2023, this risk should be downgraded. The F&S Chair explained that the matter had been discussed in the recent committee meeting and it had been agreed that there was a need to see a sustained upward trend before downgrading. Governors commended staff for the recent efforts to improve the</p>	

d.	<p>marketing of the school, for example, FoSM's contacting local nurseries to invite families to the summer and Christmas fairs.</p> <p>Governors discussed the risk of reputational damage caused by negative comments on social media and referred the matter to the next SC&E committee meeting for consideration.</p> <p><i>ACTION: Add risk of reputational damage caused by negative social media comment to summer term SC&E agenda.</i></p> <p>The HT advised that an in-person e-safety workshop for parents had been poorly attended so a subsequent session had been moved online but attendance had remained low. From September 2023, families would be required to sign a home-school agreement at the start of each academic year.</p> <p>Health & Safety Annual Report – The report was noted and approved.</p>	KH/clerk
6. a.	<p>SCHOOL FINANCES</p> <p>Draft budget for 2023/24</p> <p>The F&S Chair provided a brief summary of the committee's recent review of the budget. The school was ending the financial year in a stronger place than forecast with a predicted carry forward of £187k. Whilst this was good news, the school's expenditure was exceeding income (last year's carry forward had been £240k) and it remained dependent on non-guaranteed income (e.g. the St Mary's Fund) to balance the books. Reasons for the better than expected figures included prudent forecasting by the SBM, the non-utilisation of the £45k contingency fund, the receipt of 2 years' of gift aid in arrears and an increase in lettings income. It was noted that the future of the sports premium grant was uncertain and had therefore only be included for the first term. The loss of the grant would represent a significant reduction in funding for the school and could negatively impact the sport provision.</p> <p>It was noted that the SBM had provided modelling on a number of scenarios to understand the possible impact of the London Mayor's proposed Universal Free School Meal (UFSM) initiative and different levels of staff pay rises (5% to 9%). The worse-case scenario led to a deficit of £52.6k. Governors regretted that there had been no consultation with schools on the impact of UFSM and noted the logistical challenges around the initiative (school kitchens were often too small to manage a significant increase in lunch provision).</p> <p>The Chair of Governors referenced the government's recent announcement of an increase in childcare provision. A number of schools were exploring bringing wraparound care in-house. It was acknowledged that this would require a considerable amount of work (some schools had recruited an additional member of staff to manage the process) but could generate significant revenue. Whilst the school was committed to the current wraparound care provider for a further two years, governors agreed to explore possibilities thereafter.</p>	

b.	<p>ACTION: <i>Meet after Easter to explore the creative use of space for income generation and possible wraparound care options for the future.</i></p> <p>Q: What is the latest data on the St Mary's Fund? The F&S Chair advised that there had been a net reduction of 4-6 in the number of families contributing to the fund. Monthly donations stood at approx. £2k. It was cause for concern that the majority of donors were higher up the school with the number of contributors in Reception very low. The school was considering recording a video to explain the fund and its importance to parents.</p> <p>It was noted that, whilst a number of schools were struggling to meet increased energy costs, St Mary's had been largely sheltered by the PFI contracts.</p> <p>School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) The SFVS was approved by governors on the recommendation of F&S Committee.</p>	CR, DC, SBM
7.	<p>STATUTORY POLICIES</p> <p>The following policies had been previously reviewed by committees and were recommended for approval by the FGB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance (LDBS model policy) • Disciplinary (LDBS model policy) • Health & safety • Medical conditions in school • Children with health needs who cannot attend school <p>All policies were approved.</p>	
8. a. b.	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>Chair's Update The Chair advised that committee membership would be reviewed following changes to the governing body.</p> <p>Ofsted and SIAMS Preparation The postponement of the SIAMS inspection was discussed under item 4a. The Chair noted that the school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2011 and a new inspection was expected at any time. She referred to the recent suicide of a headteacher following an Ofsted downgrading and the subsequent outpouring of anger from headteachers across the country at the way in which Ofsted inspections were carried out and the excessive pressures they placed on teachers. Whilst some schools were considering boycotting Ofsted inspections, governors noted this was unlawful and agreed this was not an approach they could support.</p> <p>Governors reflected on the impact of Ofsted inspections on headteacher and staff well-being and agreed to send a message to all staff ensuring them of governors' full support and understanding. <i>[A message to all staff was sent on the day following the meeting].</i></p>	

<p>c. Draft Committee minutes</p> <p>d. Governor training and visits</p>	<p>The Chair informed governors that she had written to AfC, LDBS and The Key to register concern at the way in which inspections were currently conducted. Governors stated their confidence in the school but acknowledged that the Ofsted framework had changed significantly in recent years and the number of schools being graded as outstanding had sharply declined.</p> <p>The draft minutes of recent committee meetings were noted.</p> <p>Governor monitoring visits were on schedule. The HT advised that staff feedback on the visits was positive with teachers and support staff appreciating the opportunity to demonstrate their work. The visits were felt to be supportive. The SEND governor advised that, together with the SEND team, the decision had been taken to conduct one deep dive visit per year with top-up visits as necessary. This was to avoid excessive additional burdens on staff time.</p>	
<p>9. AOB</p>	<p>Governors said farewell to Malcolm M and thanked him for his work over the past 4 years, particularly as co-chair of the governing body during the pandemic.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting: 7pm on Monday 27 June at junior site.</p>	

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.



Signed by the Chair:

Date: 26 June 2023

FGB Actions

As of 20 March 2023

Minute	Action	Assigned	Update
<p>5.12.22 3c</p>	<p>Hold Q&A sessions on specific areas of committee responsibility</p>	<p>Cttee Chairs</p>	<p>Format to be determined</p>
<p>5.12.22 8b</p>	<p>Paper on the strategic goals to be circulated after the meeting</p>	<p>CR</p>	<p>Actioned</p>

20.3.23 2	Add RE presentation to summer term agenda	clerk	
20.3.23 5c	Add risk of reputational damage caused by negative social media comment to summer term SC&E agenda.	KH/clerk	
20.3.23 6a	Meet after Easter to explore the creative use of space for income generation and possible wraparound care options for the future.	CR,DC, SBM	

Documents circulated:

Draft minutes 05/12/22 FGB
HT Report Mar 2023
Term Dates 24-25
Strike risk assessments
H&S annual report
Budget plan 23-24

SFVS
Risk Register
Spring term committee draft mins
Policies: Grievance, Disciplinary, H&S, Medical
Conditions in school, Children with health needs who cannot attend school