

## FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING MINUTES

Monday 26 June 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
Sarah Aarons	vacant	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:** Geoffrey Goddin

**Also attended:** Dan Cadman (Deputy Head Teacher and Associate Member)  
Christina Sturge, former governor  
Connie Capel, RE Lead (for item 2)  
Alison Watts (Clerk)

*The meeting opened at 7.00pm*

		ACTION
1.	<p><b>WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE and DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Geoffrey G and accepted by the Chair. Harry C attended the meeting by video conference.</p> <p>There were no declarations/conflicts of interest relevant to the meeting.</p> <p>Governors thanked Christina S for her 8 years of service, particularly as co-Vice Chair of Governors and Chair of Curriculum and Standards Committee.</p>	
2.	<p><b>RE PRESENTATION – by Connie Capel, RE Lead</b></p> <p>The RE curriculum map was shared with governors. The rationale for not following the LDBS curriculum was given as follows: 'In Reception and KS1, children are introduced to the Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) alongside Sikhism. In KS2 we</p>	

	<p>build on Judaism and Islam and we explore two other faiths, Hinduism in Year 3 and Year 5 and Buddhism in Year 4 and Year 5. By the time children come to end of the primary school journey, they have solid foundation of all 6 world faiths. Judaism and Islam have 3 units to reflect our growing diverse population and our school's proximity to Hounslow where many of our children live'.</p> <p><b>Q: Are there any disadvantages in not adhering to the LDBS curriculum?</b> A: All material included in the LDBS curriculum is covered – the school has chosen to adapt the timing of certain modules to reflect the specificities of the pupil population. The decision demonstrates the care that has been taken to ensure the RE curriculum reflects the needs of the children.</p> <p><b>Q: What training is provided for staff?</b> A: The RE Lead meets with all new staff at the start of the year. Training is available through the LDBS. The RE Lead attends RE leaders' network meetings.</p> <p>It was explained that the core concepts were designed by the worship ambassadors and showed the timeline of the Bible. Teaching was age specific with the full timeline being taught from Y3 onwards. Each unit had a 'big question' and a series of smaller, underpinning questions. Pupils were required to reflect on the content of lessons thereby creating the opportunity for pupil voice. Expectations were set out at the start of lessons and used to assess progress. Learning involved a variety of approaches: role play, photos, construction. Classroom learning was supplemented by parent visits, visit from representatives of other faiths and visits to places of worship.</p> <p><b>Q: How does the RE curriculum reflect the ethos of the school?</b> A: There are many opportunities for pupil voice. A recent exercise involved looking at public figures and how their stories related to 'true love in action'. Children were asked how they could live out that message.</p> <p><b>Q: When organising the programme of outside speakers, are parents invited to share their own experiences?</b> A: It was confirmed that parents were invited to speak at assemblies. Talks had been given on Islam and Humanism.</p> <p><b>Q: How are people of no religion included?</b> A: It is always made clear that views are not shared by all. Children feel comfortable to express a contrary view. It is considered important that children can live out the values of the school without belonging to a particular religion.</p> <p><b>Q: Parents are entitled to opt out of collective worship. How many have done so?</b> A: Over the past 7 years, 1 child has opted out.</p>	
3.	<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (20/03/23) and MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 20 March 2023 were approved. Updates on the action points are provided at the end of this document.</p>	
4.	<p><b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</b></p> <p><b>a. Headteacher's Report</b> The following points were highlighted:</p>	

- There had been a significant rise in the number of EHCPs. The school was required to provide the first £6k of each plan so there were significant financial implications;
- There had been a small number of cases of bullying and sexual harassment. The latter was difficult to define for young children but were recorded for clarity. It was noted that the parents and external agencies were involved;
- There had been a larger than usual number of staff resignations following an extended period of stability. The school would be fully staffed in September. High quality appointments had been made: well qualified teachers and one ECT (Early Career Teacher). All teams would be led by an experienced St Mary's staff member.

***Q: How has the school managed the recruitment process given the challenges across the sector?***

A: The recruitment process was started early and a number of rounds of adverts were placed. The school generally avoided recruiting from agencies as such appointments incurred a significant fee payable to the agency.

- Staff absence data was scrutinised in detail at F&S committee. Covid remained a factor as government guidance still advocated 5 days' isolation. There had also been a number of challenging personal events (family illness, bereavements). It was noted that teachers had organised crowd-funding and a cooking rota to support a member of staff in difficult circumstances. The trustees had provided further financial support. This was testament to the strength of the school community and evidence of 'true love in action'.

***Q: What has been the impact of industrial action?***

A: There had been some lost teaching time but teachers have been advised to merge 2 lessons to catch up.

- The middle site library was recently flooded and most books destroyed. There had been strong support from the local community: parents had raised £3k, one pupil had raised £600 selling drinks outside his house and local schools had donated spare books.

***Q: Looking at comparative absence data, how was attendance recorded during the pandemic when schools were closed?***

A: Days when schools were closed were not included in the data.

- For Persistent Absence (PA), the national average was 4.8% and St Mary's was 3.2%. This was encouraging as PA had been flagged at the last Ofsted inspection. It was noted that attendance would be covered in detail by SC&E committee.

***Q: How are PAs addressed?***

A: The school received support from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) service. The admin team had time allocated for addressing attendance related matters. The school had a new attendance policy which included: letters sent home for unauthorised absence, meetings with parents/HT/EWO, no authorised absence 2 days' before or after holidays.

**Q: Do PAs overlap with disadvantaged students/SEND?**

A: There was overlap. It was noted that SEND may be related to an increased number of medical appointments. Some SEN/disadvantaged pupils were on a reduced timetable.

**Q: What is the expected uptake of Universal Free School Meals (UFSMs)?**

A: Uptake remained uncertain. Some parents had offered to pay to minimise the negative impact on the budget. Under current prices, the school would receive a limited amount per meal but the caterers were expected to increase their prices. It was noted that the school lacked the infrastructure to provide meals for a large number of children: the kitchens at the junior and middle sites were small and additional plates, cutlery etc would be required. There was concern that additional funding was only guaranteed for one year.

**Q: What is the impact on their relationship with the school when parents apply for EHCPs directly?**

A: It caused difficulties but the school always made clear why it was not supporting the application. It was noted that one EHCP not supported by school had been approved.

**Q: What are the playground plans?**

A: FoSM was providing funding for a shed to provide an undercover seating and craft area.

**Q: What is the 'teach like a champ' approach?**

A: A practitioner working in under privileged schools identified 49 teaching strategies; St Mary's has adopted 5 and introduced them throughout the school. The strategies included using the least amount of language possible, expecting the active involvement of 100% of pupils, calling on all children to answer questions, and tight transitions to minimise time wastage.

**SIP Priorities 23-24**

b.

Governors were invited to comment on the draft SIP priorities for 23-24. There was a discussion on whether to retain finance as a key priority. It was noted that this had been introduced when the school had been forced to submit a deficit budget and, since then, financial sustainability had remained a constant challenge. Governors agreed that the school needed to maintain its focus on an enhanced marketing strategy to support the admissions process and to continue efforts to increase income. The HT highlighted the recent focus on the impact of the menopause on staff and the need to consider an appropriate response in the future.

**Q: Why is there no focus on reading given the data indicates that some pupils are at a lower level than previously.**

A: Reading was addressed in the focus on the phonics scheme captured in point 1.1.

**Q: For each key priority, what would success look like? (It was noted that measurable indicators were needed to allow governors to assess progress).**

A: Governors were invited to specify the data set required to facilitate monitoring. The HT noted that the unions did not recommend using data in the appraisal process. It was highlighted that the C&S committee had recently requested the provision of data on

c.	<p>progress and attainment for all pupils minus SEND and EAL. This had enabled governors to track the progress of those groups against the general cohort. It was agreed that the final SIP would include measurables and would be submitted for approval by governors at the September meeting. <i>ACTION: SIP 23-24 to include measurable indicators and to be agreed at September FGB meeting.</i></p> <p><b>How have governors supported the school's vision and ethos?</b> Governors promoted the vision and ethos through challenge, support and engaging positively in school visits. The chair of governors met regularly with the HT and governors were invited to INSET days.</p> <p>There was a general discussion on the use of staff exit interviews to receive feedback. All governors agreed on the importance of engaging with stakeholders and understanding the concerns of staff members, particularly given the challenges around recruitment. It was noted that governors currently received feedback via the staff survey. It was further noted that more serious matters could be addressed through the grievance procedure and whistleblowing policy. Governors were mindful of the need to remain strategic and not stray into operational matters. It was agreed that the chair would meet with committee chairs to assess whether current arrangements were sufficient. It was further agreed to add a regular staffing-related monitoring visit to the visits schedule. <i>ACTION: CoG to meet with committee chairs to consider exit interviews.</i> <i>ACTION: Add staffing visit to visits schedule.</i></p> <p>Governors were advised that the school was expecting an Ofsted inspection by Jan 2024.</p>	CR/AA
5. a.  b.	<p><b>SAFEGUARDING &amp; RISK</b></p> <p><b>Safeguarding update</b> The Chair reminded governors that she met regularly with the HT and safeguarding was a standing item on the agenda. Given the need for confidentiality, details of individual cases were not shared unless strictly necessary. There was a complex on-going case in which it was proving difficult to access support from external agencies. The Chair expressed her confidence that the relevant procedures were being followed. The LDBS School Improvement Partner visited the school on a termly basis and had recently undertaken a safeguarding visit. The report would be reviewed by S&amp;C committee at its next meeting. <i>ACTION: Add safeguarding report to autumn term SC&amp;E agenda.</i></p> <p><b>Risk Register</b> As per usual practice, committees had reviewed in detail the relevant sections of the risk register. The sole FGB-assigned risk related to joining a MAT. It was noted that the government's commitment to a fully academised sector by 2030 had now been shelved. The HT advised that the LDBS grouped its schools by borough and was encouraging the sharing of resources, eg. school business managers or the appointment of an executive head. She did not consider these measures applicable to St Mary's given its size. <i>[The description of the risks on academisation and admissions was updated after the meeting].</i></p>	HC

6.	<p><b>ADMISSIONS</b></p> <p>The Chair of Admissions committee provided an update on the latest figures for the September 2023 intake: Reception was expected to be full in part due to a higher than usual number of siblings (10 more than the previous year). The catchment area had reduced significantly: the furthest distance offered on National Offer Day was 1.21km. Governors recognised the enhanced marketing efforts but acknowledged it was difficult to assess their impact. It remained unclear whether the high number of siblings was an anomaly. Governors noted that the reduction in the catchment area could reduce direct knowledge of the school across the borough.</p> <p>The Chair provided an update on admissions appeals as follows: i) one appeal for a reception place was scheduled for 3 July, however, reception classes were limited to 30 by law; ii) governors were required to attend appeals and there was therefore a need to ensure sufficient skills on the board, iii) the school was required to pay a fee of £400 per appeal (plus interpretation costs if necessary).</p>	
7.	<p><b>SCHOOL FINANCES</b></p> <p><b>a. Final budget for 2023/24</b></p> <p>The Chair of F&amp;S committee provided a brief overview of the final budget for 2023-24. The school had ended the 22-23 year in a strong position: unused contingencies, funds received from FoSM and the deferment of some costs to the following year had led to a healthy carry forward (£232k). As a result, the school was able to present a balanced budget for 23-24 but was forecasting a significant reduction in the carry forward to £232. It was noted that a conservative approach to budgeting was adopted and non-guaranteed income was excluded. The F&amp;S Chair highlighted the school business manager's hard work and excellent reporting to governors.</p> <p><b>b. Income Generation</b></p> <p>As agreed at the previous meeting (see action update), the Chair of Governors had met with the DHT and SBM to discuss maximising revenue from school property. The report would be discussed at the autumn F&amp;S meeting. A meeting had also been held with a trustee to clarify the funding agreement with Capella House (CH). The history to the arrangement and cost implications had been summarised for the benefit of new governors and would be shared at the next F&amp;S meeting. It was noted that CH should be billed for the cost of playground maintenance.</p> <p><i>ACTION: Reports on maximising revenue and Capella House to be reviewed at autumn F&amp;S meeting.</i></p> <p>Governors questioned whether an appeal for funds for the school library (damaged in the recent flood) could be advertised in the school newsletter. The HT advised that FoSM was leading this initiative and it should therefore be separate from school-run initiatives.</p>	JM
8.	<p><b>ETHOS UPDATE</b></p> <p>Father Jeff advised governors that a new chaplain had been interviewed and recruited but it had proved impossible to find suitable accommodation within the existing budget.</p>	



	<p>The post would be re-advertised in September and the budget re-considered. He confirmed the chaplain's time would be split 50:50 between church and school. Father Jeff highlighted the coronation service as a particular high point and noted the sophistication of the children's questioning. Some pupils had recently spoken at Church and eloquently expressed their beliefs and read prayers.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors had attended training on the new SIAMS framework and noted the apparent high degree of responsibility placed on governors. A call with LDBS had been scheduled to clarify expectations. She recommended re-establishing the Ethos Committee to ensure governors were meeting their obligations. This would be formally considered at the September FGB meeting.</p> <p><i>ACTION: Consider re-establishment of Ethos Committee</i></p> <p>It was noted that a potential candidate for the vacant foundation governor post had been identified and would be interviewed in July. The vacant co-opted governor post offered the governing body the opportunity to recruit to fill specific skills gaps. It was agreed to seek a non-parent if possible.</p>	All govs
9.	<p><b>STATUTORY POLICIES</b></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"> <li>a. <b>Staff Code of Conduct</b> – recommended by F&amp;S for approval (addition of clause on staff use of the internet)</li> <li>b. <b>Looked After Children</b> - recommended by SC&amp;E for approval (no changes)</li> <li>c. <b>First Aid</b> – recommended by SC&amp;E for approval (minor updates)</li> </ul> <p>The <b>RE policy</b> was also submitted for approval. It was explained that policy was based on the LDBS model but adapted for the school's specific circumstances.</p> <p>All policies were approved.</p>	
10.	<p><b>GOVERNANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Chair's Update</b> - The Chair reported that the HT's advisory role at LDBS would continue for a further year and noted the benefits to the school of this valuable learning opportunity. The LDBS had expressed its appreciation for the governing body's agreement to the secondment.</li> <li>b. <b>Committee meeting dates for 23-24</b> – noted.</li> <li>c. <b>Draft Committee minutes</b> The draft minutes of recent committee meetings were noted. The C&amp;S chair advised that the committee had reviewed its data monitoring practices and as a result was felt to be functioning more effectively. The F&amp;S Chair highlighted the net reduction in donors to the St Mary's Fund (SMF) particularly amongst the lower years. A SMF film had been made by pupils to advertise its importance and a governor visit would take place before the end of term to assess impact.</li> </ul>	

d.	<i>ACTION: SMF visit to take place before the end of the term.</i>	JM
	Governors noted that the decline in uptake for volunteering roles (e.g. with FoSM) was a widespread trend. <i>ACTION: Discuss stakeholder engagement at next SC&amp;E meeting</i>	HC
	<b>Governors' annual report</b> <i>ACTION: clerk to send out annual report to committee chairs for updating.</i>	Clerk
11.	<b>AOB</b>  Governors were reminded of the invitation to attend staff INSET training at the start of the academic year. <i>ACTION: Governors to attend INSET training in September</i>  It was noted that some policies on the website required updating. <i>[These were updated after the meeting].</i>  The HT thanked governors for their support over the year.	All govs
	Dates of meetings in 23-24:  7pm on the following Mondays – 25 Sept, 11 Dec, 25 Mar, 24 Jun - all at junior site.	

*The meeting closed at 9.15pm with a prayer*

Signed by the Vice Chair: Stephen Tetley

Date: 25 September 2023

### FGB Actions

As of 26 June 2023

Minute	Action	Assigned	Update
5.12.22 3c	Hold Q&A sessions on specific areas of committee responsibility	Cttee Chairs	Format to be determined
20.3.23 2	Add RE presentation to summer term agenda	clerk	On 26/6 agenda. See item 2.



20.3.23 5c	Add risk of reputational damage caused by negative social media comment to summer term SC&E agenda.	KH/ clerk	Actioned.
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	Actioned. See item 7.
26.6.23 4b	SIP 23-24 to include measurable indicators and to be agreed at September FGB meeting.	CR/AA	
26.6.23 4c	CoG to meet with committee chairs to consider exit interviews.	CR/EB/ JM/HC	
26.6.23 4c	Add staffing visit to visits schedule	clerk	
26.6.23 5a	Add safeguarding report to autumn term SC&E agenda.	HC	
26.6.23 7	Reports on maximising revenue and Capella House to be reviewed at autumn F&S meeting.	JM	
26.6.23 8	Consider re-establishment of Ethos Committee	All govs	
26.6.23 10c	SMF visit to take place before the end of the term	JM	
26.6.23 10c	Discuss stakeholder engagement at next SC&E meeting	HC	
26.6.23 10d	Send out annual report to committee chairs for updating	Clerk	
26.6.23 11	Governors to attend INSET training in September	All govs	

Documents circulated:

Draft minutes 20/03/23 FGB  
HT Report Jun 2023  
SIP 23-24 summary draft  
Risk Register  
Final Budget

Summer term committee draft mins  
Policies: Staff Code of Conduct, CLA and CPLA, First Aid, RE  
GB Meeting dates 23-24