



Learning God's Way

**FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING**  
**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 7pm in the Staff Room**

Meeting Focus – Finance, Staffing and Premises

The meeting was opened with prayer.

	<p><b>Present:</b> Helen Fletcher-Reilly, Mike Jee (Head), Leila Kemp, Chris Snell, Mark Standen (Vice Chair)  <b>Apologies:</b> Emma Craughan, Kate Goater, Al Knox, Carolyn Lorimer, Debbie Ricks  <b>Clerk:</b> Jennie Ring  <b>Also present:</b> Brian Baker, Jane Burke - Foundation Governor and LA Governor respectively, awaiting appointment</p>	<b>Action</b>
122	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> – were received and accepted from Emma Craughan, Kate Goater, Al Knox, Carolyn Lorimer and Debbie Ricks. The Chair welcomed the two governors awaiting appointment.</p>	
123	<p><b>Declaration of Interest</b> – none</p>	
124	<p><b>Urgent matters to be considered for inclusion</b> - none</p>	
125	<p><b>Approval of minutes of meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 and Confidential Part II Minute 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023</b> – were agreed and signed.</p>	
126	<p><b>Reflection</b></p> <p>Governors considered the February minutes noting the meeting's focus on standards and curriculum meant hearing from subject leads on Maths and Phonics – how curriculum strategy is being implemented.</p> <p>The Maths Lead continues to lead staff meetings every 2 weeks. It is planned that this will continue until the end of the academic year and perhaps longer.</p>	
127	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p><b>General matters arising</b></p> <p>The Head will attend a Deanery group head's meeting to discuss thoughts following the presentation from a potential multi-academy trust (MAT) to join, Trinitas. Trinitas is a MAT based in south east London looking to develop another hub in this area. The feeling of the Deanery group is that a move en-masse to a MAT would be the way forward. There are other MATs to consider, eg Bishop Luffa – a secondary academy with one small primary school in its MAT.</p>	

	<p>The Head summarised the some of the pros and cons of academisation, the structure, governance structure, funding source, issues to consider when considering the move, and the way the Deanery group currently co-operate and might in the future.</p> <p><a href="#">Are local schools also considering academisation?</a> Some are. The Head gave an outline of his knowledge of the positions of schools surrounding St Margaret’s and further afield in the Worthing area, particularly the Church of England Schools. The pace at which schools could become academies will be affected by the capacity of the legal department at the local authority. The Diocese has 4 main trusts, prefers Church of England schools to join a Diocese trust, and will scrutinise a school’s choice to join a non-Diocese trust.</p> <p><b>Matters arising from the February 2023’s action table:</b></p> <p>Item 4 (minute 108) – reports are awaited from Al Knox and Carolyn Lorimer</p> <p>All other actions were complete.</p>	
128	<p><b>Questions arising from monitoring visits - none</b></p>	
129	<p><b>Budget monitoring – revenue</b></p> <p>The Head explained the meaning of the column headings on the Cost Centre Summary for March 2023, said that the carry forward figure changes day to day but is roughly as predicted, and is smaller compared to average previous figures due to 50 staff members receiving substantial unfunded pay rises which were not included in the original budget. It also reflects payments to support staff, backdated, related to holiday pay.</p> <p>He then gave some narrative to some of the cost centres:</p> <p>Photocopying – the cost is high. By changing arrangements for photocopying under a new lease, it is anticipated costs can be reduced by about £4K. It will mean new copiers and a new programme called Papercut, which limits allocations and incorporates security.</p> <p>Premises Staff is as it is because the school employs a full time caretaker whose expertise in building works is called on for internal works. He also has an assistant.</p> <p>Classroom Support Staff includes Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HTLA) and cover costs. Quite a large proportion of support staff salaries are paid out of Pupil Premium funds. It is high but not as high as the school benchmarked against.</p> <p>The Teacher cost centre is just under £1M and includes national insurance and superannuation payments. The £21K remaining will go into reserves. <a href="#">Is this because some more expensive teachers are gone?</a> Yes, partly, and because one member of staff is on maternity leave.</p> <p>Long Term Reserves is at it is because money was spent on toilet facilities. The quality and cost of the work has been noted as “a good deal, with hard workers”.</p> <p>The carry forward will change due to 12 teacher’s planning days, costing £2K. Income through a donation from William Older has been received, and is earmarked for funding the work in creating the new performance studio.</p> <p>The ICOSA claim compensation connected to work that affected the field and its use is still outstanding, although has now gone through the surveyors hands. The claim is for</p>	

	<p>£41K. A brief discussion took place on the circumstances around the claim. The school may not receive the full amount in the end.</p> <p>At 2 weeks before the end of the financial year the budget is looking OK.</p> <p>Where are the monies related to lettings from Ticklemetoo and the playgroup? Under School Lettings. This year the school received £15K. A brief discussion took place on the rates charged for these and the Activate Holiday Club. The question was raised as to whether rates should be reconsidered longer term. It was acknowledged there is a balance between keeping costs down for users enough so cost is not a deterrent and charging a fair price for the use of the school premises. It was agreed that the school should take a generous approach to charges.</p> <p>You go through these figures regularly with the Bursar? Yes, all the time. This year has been very challenging because of the introduction of the new management system that is used county-wide, BROMCOM.</p>	
130	<p><b>School Fund Account</b></p> <p>The Head gave some narrative on the purpose and contents of the School Fund Account, highlighting some of the items listed. It is used mostly as an account where parents can pay contributions to the school for things like trips, events and uniform. The Governors Account forms part of it, which is in effect the Governor's Fund. The Tomlin Account is the balance of the legacy received. This is used to top up parent contributions in cases of hardship.</p> <p>All of the fund, except the balances for the Tomlin and Governor's Accounts will be transferred into the Revenue Account imminently.</p> <p>The Chair asked for arrangements to be made for the School Fund Account to be audited. The Head agreed to make contact with a suggested suitable person to carry out the audit.</p>	<b>Head MSt</b>
131	<p><b>Expenditure linked to School Plan for Learning &amp; Development</b></p> <p>The work on making the links has not yet been done. It was agreed to carry forward this item to another meeting.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>
132	<p><b>3 Year Budget</b></p> <p>The local authority require the submission of a 3 year budget every year comprising this year, next year and a year after. For some elements the school is advised or told what to allow for and include in parts of the budget, eg for salaries, energy. Experience shows that 3 year budgets rarely turn out to be accurate.</p> <p>Some main points to note: the revenue reserve carry forward is stated as £21K but this is anticipated to be more.</p> <p>Then, looking at the draft budget for 2023-24 listing all the cost centres, and after some explanation of the column heading meanings the Head gave some narrative on particular cost centres, eg clerical staff, midday meals supervisors, photocopying, furniture and support staff. Arrival of new children in-year, often with learning needs, affects expenditure and presents a challenge in budgeting. There is no building; no decorating and minimum maintenance budgeted for. The budget is tight.</p>	

	<p>Returning to the 3 year budget it is anticipated that the overestimates the school have been directed to make by the local authority will affect the carry forward figure positively. In addition the instruction to include a decreasing Planned (or Published) Admission Number at the rate of 15 children per year is likely to be conservative given the birth rate's anticipated recovery, local housing expansion and additional children that the SSC may attract.</p> <p><b>Is Pupil Premium (PP) funding attached to a specific child?</b> For each child eligible for PP funding the school receives £1400. However, the money is spent on supporting and addressing disadvantaged children in the school as a whole. Research shows that children of armed forces families and children who've received free school meals in the last 6 years are considered eligible. The school is held to account for the progress and attainment of PP children, and there's an emphasis on "diminishing the gap" between PP children and non-PP children's progress and attainment. The school receives a slightly larger allocation of ring-fenced money for children in the care of the local authority. PP funding is partly used to cover the salary of the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion. There is a high correlation between children with special educational needs and PP eligible children.</p> <p><b>So returning to the 3 year budget, you're saying it's not as gloomy as it seems? What do we do?</b> We await feedback from the local authority before signing it as reviewed and approved by the governing body. It was agreed to bring the approval of the 3 year budget to the May meeting.</p>	Clerk
133	<p><b>Review School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) for approval</b></p> <p>Given lower numbers of governors in attendance at this meeting it was agreed to bring this to a future meeting.</p>	Clerk And pc lease
134	<p><b>Premises/buildings update and costings</b></p> <p>This has been covered through the financial information shared. It was agreed to view parts of the building where the Special Support Centre (SSC) building work would impact on its use following the meeting.</p> <p>At the walkround issues around fire exits, fire risk assessments, children's access at the beginning and end of school and at playtimes, physical changes to layout and rooms (temporary and permanent), the location of the SSC and its staffing, capacity, provision and use by St Margaret's children were discussed.</p> <p>The former ICT suite was visited and plans for the refurbishing and future use discussed. It was agreed that the provision of a fire exit for the room should be part of the plans.</p>	Head
135	<p><b>Staffing update: including absence, wellbeing, resignations &amp; appointments, succession planning</b></p> <p>The picture for staffing is generally stable at present, with no resignations or appointments to report.</p> <p>The Head agreed to extract absence figures to be shared with governors through Governor's Virtual Office (GVO).</p> <p>One member of staff is soon to return after a period of long term sickness. Another member of staff is anticipated to be on long term sickness imminently.</p>	Head

	<p>One full time support staff member is planning to retire soon.</p> <p>The circumstances of two other members of staff were mentioned with nothing firmer to say at present.</p> <p>There is nothing to report on succession planning.</p>	
136	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>It was agreed to bring the Early Career Teacher’s Policy to next governor’s meeting. It was proposed that the Deputy Headteacher be asked to draft the policy.</p> <p>The Grievance Policy was approved subject to the dates on the front page being edited to read 2023, review date 2026.</p> <p>As the meeting drew near its end the Head returned to the financial picture – with 400 children on the roll, the coming financial year is anticipated to be tight and it is important to remember the school’s position is not for lack of strategic planning and overspending. The board has done well to control finances. All school are facing similar financial positions, the pinch will be felt, and will be exacerbated by admissions dropping. Governors need to be cognisant and confident that finances are being managed well, the next two years will be financially challenging, “sailing close to the wind”.</p> <p>The benchmarking process undertaken has shown no glaring issues.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the factors affecting admission numbers, including a look at historical decisions, birth rates, new housing, affordability of new housing for young families, and leavers from the school leaving mostly because they’re moving from the area. Children joining in-year often have learning needs. In 2-3 years’ time, the birth rate indicates that the school will be at capacity again.</p> <p><a href="#">Are we still at 47 first choice places for September?</a> It is 48 now. There are 3 new children starting in the next few weeks.</p>	
137	<b>Chair’s action</b> – none	
138	<b>Date of next meeting</b> – Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2023, 7pm, in the Staff Room.	

## ACTION TABLE

D = Done

P = In progress – give update

O = Still outstanding

	Minute:	Action from:	Action by:	Status
1	130	Head/Mark Stander – arrange for audit of School Fund Account	By next meeting 27 <sup>th</sup> April	
2	131	Clerk – carry forward Expenditure linked to the SPLD to future agenda	Post meeting	D
3	132	Clerk – 3 yr Budget approval to future agenda	Post meeting	D
4	133	Clerk – SFVS and Photocopying Lease to future agenda	Post meeting	D

5	134	Head – note fire exit in plans for performing arts studio	Post meeting	
6	135	Head – provide staff absence figures for sharing with governors via GVO	By end of spring term	