



Learning God's Way

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
Thursday 14th November 2024, 7pm in the Staff Room

Meeting Focus – Finance, Staffing and Premises

The meeting was opened with prayer. Debbie Ricks chaired the meeting.

	<p>Present: Brian Baker, Jane Burke, Emma Craughan (Co-Chair), Kate Goater, Mike Jee (Head), Leila Kemp, Debbie Ricks (Co-Chair) Chris Snell Apologies:Carolynn Lorimer, Al Knox, Mark Standen (Vice Chair) Clerk: Jennie Ring Also present:</p>	Action
33	Apologies for absence – were received and accepted from Carolynn Lorimer, Al Knox and Mark Standen	
34	Declaration of Interest – one governor had an interest in an agenda item, and it was agreed to move the item to the very end of the meeting so the governor could leave the meeting early. For the purposes of these minutes the order of items on the agenda is followed.	
35	Urgent matters to be considered for inclusion - none	
36	Approval of minutes 17th October 2024 – the minutes were agreed and signed.	
37	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>General matters arising – Firstly, following last month's meeting the Clerk clarified that the action with regard to policies was for governors to have a look at the list of policies held in school as part of the governor's overall strategic oversight. Secondly the Roles & Responsibilities 2024-25 document is an appendix to these minutes, including Committee membership.</p> <p>The action table from October's meeting was reviewed:</p> <p>Item 1 (minute 18 and 5) – The Co-Chair (EC) agreed to seek an update from the Vice Chair regarding the Foundation Governor vacancy.</p> <p>Item 2 (minute 18 and 7) – there were two governors still to complete the Skills Audit integral to Governor's Virtual Office (GVO).</p>	<p>EC</p> <p>AK LK Clerk</p>

	<p>Item 4 (minute 24) – it was agreed to provide opportunity to outline the Educational Health Care Plan process during the January meeting.</p> <p>Item 7 (minute 32) – Mr Baker has been working with staff to address two information technology (IT) issues – the updating of photos on the website and how to respond to automated messages about data storage capacity. There was a brief discussion about photos used on the website and in the headteacher recruitment pack. The company providing IT services confirmed there was no need for any action to be taken in response to the automated messages and that additional storage could be purchased if necessary.</p> <p>All other actions were complete.</p>	
38	<p>Questions arising from monitoring visits</p> <p>A verbal summary was given of the visit of two governors to the staff meeting in order to keep staff informed of the headteacher recruitment process, including questions and responses between staff and governors, the feeling discerned that staff want to be involved in the process somehow, and they are appreciative of the time and attention governors are giving to the process.</p> <p><i>Has there been any feedback?</i> Not really, but staff appreciate the plan for governors to return to a meeting in January to give an update.</p> <p>One of the Co-Chairs attended the locality meeting of Heads and Chairs. She commented on the strength of the supportive links and co-operative working amongst the group, making a good support network. The Head affirmed this and expressed his confidence that if the governors were unable to appoint a new headteacher in time for a summer term start there are enough experienced staff members to manage the school until a new headteacher could start with locality group as support in the background.</p>	
39	<p>Financial reporting</p> <p>Governors examined the Cost Centre report which was part of the meeting pack. The Head gave more detail around the figures highlighted and the Clerical Staff cost centre.</p> <p>Energy bills are hard to account for since bills are received irregularly and costs for one year may have to show in another financial year.</p> <p>The school is having to be frugal. It is hoped that the increase in admission numbers and anticipated lettings income will avoid a future budget deficit. At the October census this year there were 416 children compared with 391 last October. The school receives about £5000 per child.</p> <p>There was a brief discussion on lettings covering letting levels compared to previous years, the circumstances of, and agreements with, some of the letees, and a brief summary of who lets the premises when.</p> <p>The Head continued to speak about the Classroom Support Staff and HTLA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) cost centres.</p> <p><i>Does all the money have to be spent?</i> No, but the school can't carry forward any more than 8% of the budget. This would be allocated to the Accumulating Fund and used for special projects.</p>	

	<p>What is included in the Premises Staff cost centre? The Head gave a summary including detail about levels of pay for different members of staff, the responsibilities they undertook and working hours, explaining factors that make it difficult to reduce costs.</p> <p>What's included in the IT Licences cost centre? It's all the software the children use and things like Papercut.</p> <p>It was noted there was some Sports Grant funding still available and that the reason for the low expenditure on the Supply Teachers – Agency cost centre was that the school has been able to use in-house staff to cover planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. There followed a brief discussion on PPA, teacher costs, teacher pay scales and future options with regard to recruitment of staff and leadership structures.</p> <p>A discussion took place around the current circumstances with regard to the Tomlin Centre cost centre covering anticipated annual cost of the Centre in future years, the hope that the overspend will be balanced out when payment is received from the local authority, the kinds of things that went into the costings, eg current school staff's time drawn upon by work for the Tomlin Centre, how staff absence is currently met, whether the school has resilience for covering staff absence at the Tomlin Centre, and the perspective that having staff from the school covering absence there contributes to staff continuing professional development (CPD).</p> <p>A brief look was taken at the items on the last page from the Fair Funding cost centre downwards. Where do the funds the school receives from the church appear? In the Income cost centre. This is spent on a host of different and essential things.</p> <p>It was noted that the changes to employer's NI contribution will cost approximately £50K and it's understood will be fully funded.</p>	
40 and 41	<p>Priorities for future expenditure Premises/buildings update</p> <p>A discussion took place around the logistical and practical aspects of the items for future expenditure listed in the report from the Head that was part of the meeting pack.</p> <p>Does the electrical check normally throw up additional costs? The electrical check hasn't been done before so I don't know, but given how other maintenance checks have gone I'm not anticipating that.</p> <p>It is the intention to bid for School Condition Allocations funds from the Diocese to undertake the replacement of outdoor shelters.</p>	
42	<p>Lettings</p> <p>A summary of lettings income was included in a written report from the Headteacher as part of the meeting pack.</p>	
43	<p>Staffing update: including absence, wellbeing, resignations & appointments, any staff voice available, appraisal arrangements, staff CPD</p> <p>The Headteacher summarised the main points of the information provided in the written report that was part of the meeting pack.</p>	

	<p>How does the absence this year compare with last? It's about the same. It was noted that support staff are sometimes absent for medical appointments. Teachers are more reluctant to take time out for the same reason.</p> <p>How is the maternity leave being funded? Through insurance. Is it an expensive premium? It covers all sorts of situations, not just covering the cost of a maternity leave. Most of the cost of a maternity leave is met by government through the local authority. Brief details were given about the person covering the maternity leave, her salary, length of contract and thoughts about the future.</p> <p>The forecast costings for the Tomlin Centre 2024-25 were examined.</p> <p>The number of staff in the Centre reflects the number of pupils. If there is an increase to 12 children will there be a need for extra staff? Potentially. It will depend on the needs of the children.</p> <p>The Head summarised the figures and reasons why they are set as they are. Senior Leadership time will temporarily increase in January with the temporary change of Teacher in Charge.</p> <p>Will it be an ongoing issue for the school budget to have to top up the Tomlin Centre funding? That's probable given the approach the local authority seems to be taking. Our response needs to be appropriate to protect the sustainability of the school.</p> <p>It was noted from a staffing point of view, that by the time of the next budget there should be a clearer picture on staffing with the potential for savings. A concern over admissions numbers for 2025 was expressed given the less than usual occasions where prospective parents have visited to see the school, but was countered with a different perspective including positive parent voice.</p> <p>Returning to utilities, Who decides the utilities provider and is it looked at regularly? The local authority, purchasing in bulk. The figure for utilities showing in the Tomlin Centre costs for next year – will the calculation be the same for next year? For 2025/26 it's the intention to work out separate costings for school and Tomlin Centre. If 2024/25 utilities costs were agreed by the local authority do you think we could expect that agreement would follow for next year? It's difficult to say, but ideally this year needs to be agreed before a new Headteacher is in place. Can you benchmark with other Special Support Centres? West Park is a possibility. There are several new SSC's in the county.</p>	
44	<p>Headteacher recruitment update</p> <p>The job advertisement is live. A number of candidates have shown interest and tours of the school are being arranged in November and December. These are for about an hour with the Head and a governor. A discussion took place addressing questions of handover, any further actions from governors in preparation for the process or arrival of the new Headteacher, the date of the shortlisting meeting, what will happen immediately following the closing date, what decisions will need to be made at the shortlisting meeting, and some practical and logistical aspects of the interviewing days.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the Head encouraged governors to ensure they have strong understanding of the financial history, context and current picture for the school.</p>	

45	<p>Pay progression recommendations</p> <p>The pay progression recommendations of the Pay Review Committee were outlined and ratified by the governing board.</p> <p>The Head have a brief summary of the pay scales, levels of pay and time it takes for staff to progress through each scale.</p> <p>There's something extra for an additional role? Yes, for example, if a staff member has a subject leadership role they are paid some extra per annum for a Teaching & Learning Responsibility.</p>	
46	<p>Governing board self-evaluation</p> <p>After a brief summary of the Co-Chairs' views on the wisdom of undertaking to begin this process now and some input from the Clerk on how self-evaluation could be done, it was agreed to postpone starting work on this until at least February.</p>	Clerk
47	Policies – none	
48	Chair's Action – none	
49	<p>Date of next meeting – Thursday 5th December 2024, 7pm in the Staff Room</p> <p>The issue of the parking at pick up time and vegetation overgrowing one of the paths children have to walk along near parked cars was briefly spoken about with concern for children's safety. It is the local authority's responsibility to maintain the accessibility of the path.</p>	

ACTION TABLE – FGB 14th November 2024

D = Done

Blank = give update

	Minute:	Action from:	Action by:	Status
1	38(18 and 5)	EC – contact Mark to ask for any update on the finding of a new Foundation Governor	Post meeting	
2	38(18 and 7)	LK/AK – review and update the Skills Audit integral to GVO	By next meeting 5 th December	
3	38(18 and 7)	Clerk – offer assistance if necessary re above	Post meeting	
4	46	Clerk – for agenda planning/word schedule – bring governing board self-evaluation back to the fore	February 2025	