



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Malmesbury
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
in school
1 December 2022 at 6.30pm

Governors present

David Bryson - Chair (DB)	Rachel Copeland - Vice Chair (RC)	Sue Woods (SW)
Colin Kershaw - Vice Chair (CK)	Dave Talkowski (DT)	Kieron Lillis (KL)
Lorna Howarth (LH)	Steve Croft (SC)	Theresa Adams (TA)

In attendance:

<i>Neil Baker (NB) – School Effectiveness, LA</i>	<i>Mary Cox (MC) – Clifton Diocese</i>
<i>Kate Nepstad (KN) – National Leader of Governance, NGA</i>	<i>Nicki Warne (NW) – Clerk</i>

Minutes		ACTIONS
1.	<p>Opening prayer, welcome and apologies DB opened the meeting with a prayer. Apologies None. Governors were informed that Helen Lever (HL) had resigned as Staff Governor effective 10/11/2022.</p>	
2.	<p>Register of Business Interests + Governor Code of Conduct LH and CK completed the Business Interest form for 2022-23 and signed the Code of Conduct for the new academic year.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of last meeting The clerk explained that the reference to FMSiS at item 10d had been changed to SFVS (Schools Financial Values Statement) to reflect the current terminology. The minutes also erroneously said that it was JBH's last meeting and this had been changed to her term of office having ended 01/10/2022. This change had been made since the circulation of the minutes and the minutes would be accepted on the basis of this change. KL asked for clarity over the loss of data relating to the staff survey and it was agreed that it would be described as 'statistical' data.</p> <p>On the basis of the above changes, the minutes of the FGB held on 11 October 2022 were accepted as a true record.</p> <p>a. Matters arising & carried forward Since the last meeting, leads had been assigned to the previously agreed taskforces and were as follows: HT performance management – DB, KL (KL lead) Pay Panel - DB, DT, CK (DT lead) Finance - DB, DT, SC, CK (SC lead) (until 5-year budget signed off) – now finance monitoring comprising SC and DT. Community Engagement & Expansion (CEE) – RC, TA, LH, (RC lead) Ofsted (until inspection) – DB, RC, KL, CK (CK lead) Admissions Panel – RC, TA, LH, KL (RC lead)</p>	

	<p>The following Link Governors were agreed offline and confirmed thus:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="240 76 1259 246"><tr><td>Safeguarding - RC SEND - KL Phonics - DT Maths - DT Science - CK</td><td>H&S - CK Curriculum implementation including RE - LH PP - perhaps a new foundation governor Wellbeing – TA, CK Website - SC</td></tr></table> <p>The chair confirmed that actions from the last FGB were complete with the exclusion of those carried forward below and with the following notes and comments: It had been decided that the PAN for the 2024-25 academic year would remain at 20. All governors confirmed that they had read KCSiE 2022 Part 1.</p> <p>Carried forward:</p> <p>Safeguarding: CK, DB, KL, LH had been unable to access the LA’s ‘Safeguarding Training for All Governors’. NW to contact LA about problems with access. SW agree to check whether National College training was possible as an alternative. RC informed governors that her safer recruitment training had expired. DB to do safer recruitment training.</p> <p>Finance: It had been determined that the School Fund Audit would be signed off by two separate governors. SC and KL (from outside finance committee) would do this. SFVS needed to be amended to reflect the Circle Model and was referred back to the Finance task force once SW had completed her inputs.</p>	Safeguarding - RC SEND - KL Phonics - DT Maths - DT Science - CK	H&S - CK Curriculum implementation including RE - LH PP - perhaps a new foundation governor Wellbeing – TA, CK Website - SC	<p>CK, DB, KL, LH, NW SW</p> <p>DB</p> <p>SW / Finance</p>
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4.	<p>Notification of AOB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Strategic plan ‘task force’ – to draft a 5-year strategic planEnergy Sparks initiative – SCSEF – Self Evaluation FormFuture support from the LAHealth & SafetyFinance monitoring going forward – to be added as item 9e			
5.	<p>Governor Matters</p> <p>a. NGA external review</p> <p>KN outlined the purpose and the process of the external review of governance (ERG) and explained that a report listing recommendations and an outline action plan would be circulated after the meeting. KN explained the process by which she had undertaken the ERG including reviewing paperwork, 1:1s with all governors and the clerk and observing a governor meeting.</p> <p>Effective governance</p> <p>KN explained the DfE’s competency framework for good governance and the functions of the governing board and what is needed to make and maintain an effective governing board. She gave an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the board against the three core functions of governance as well as looking for evidence of the school’s governance covering the six governance competencies of strategic leadership, accountability, people, structures, compliance and evaluation.</p> <p>Findings</p> <p><u>1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction</u></p> <p>KN commended governors for some good work on vision and ethos that could be further developed. She explained that the board now needed to focus on defining the school’s strategic direction and identifying the key risks and therefore mitigations. She explained that it was the governors’ role to set</p>			

the vision and strategic direction and then let the school get on with delivering against the governors' vision.

2. Holding executive leaders to account

KN found that performance management was evidence based and being conducted effectively. She said that appropriate academic data was available and being shared, but there were some improvements that could be made on how data was being shared and reviewed and some consideration needed to be given to ensure that the data was presented in a way that was useful for all parties. She stressed the importance of making sure that monitoring activities, such as governor visits were effective. For example following model protocols and reducing the number of times that governors visit unofficially. She tasked governors to ensure that all governor visits were written up.

3. Overseeing financial performance

KN was happy that good financial systems were in place and that governors have the skills to understand the financial data. She explained that governors have a tendency to get involved at a very operational level and urged governors to maintain a strategic view.

Moving to the governance competencies of people, structures, compliance and evaluation, KN ran through the strengths and weaknesses of the board in these areas.

1. People

KN said the range of skills on the board were good, however behavioural concerns about individual governors were dominating affairs and robust chairing of meetings was essential, to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to contribute.

2. Structures

KN said the willingness of governors to change to the circle model had been good, but meetings needed to be kept to a tight schedule with forward-planning of agendas, to ensure that governance was more focused and meetings shorter. The definition of the circle model in the October FGB meeting had been very clear and succinct and she felt that it was a good turning point from which the governing board could move forwards.

3. Compliance

KN said that governors understood their role in compliance but need to respect collective decision-making and observe professional boundaries in discussions and in treatment of other governors and staff. The role of the LA and Diocese are recognised by the governing board and they are both supportive; noted by their presence at the meeting. KN said that in moving to a flat model of governance it was important that governors understood the power and challenges of collective decision making.

4. Evaluation

KN said she was impressed by the ability of all governors to reflect on the impact of their individual and collective decision making. Governor self-evaluation was robust and the inclusion of leadership on the SDP for 2022-23 was positive; putting governance in a priority position. However, she stressed that the board should continue seeking external advice going forward.

Recommendations

KN concluded with the following recommendations and next steps:

1. Focus on core governance roles

- Adopt a clear vision, ethos and expression of strategic direction.
- Become even more effective in holding executive leaders to account via the circle model.
- Continue to provide oversight of (but not operational involvement in) performance of the organisation. Focus on the oversight role, as the operational performance is delegated to the Headteacher.

2. Develop professional behaviour for governance

- Whole board to undertake training to support improved practices.
- Be clear about roles and responsibilities. This will help governor visits to be more focused and strategic.

3. Learn from others and review

- Learn from effective governance elsewhere.
- Review the effectiveness of the circle model after a year and decide whether to take it forward or not..

Next steps

KN explained that the draft report and the action plan (which was quality-assured by the NGA), had been sent to the commissioning body (the LA) and to SW and DB to share with Governors.

KN explained that there would be a progress review meeting in February/March 2023. Either at a Governing Body meeting or by meeting with a small group and she would provide a write up of that to conclude the ERG. Governors were asked to complete the following form to feed back on the process for the NGA: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/8W08QC/>

KN invited questions.

A governor raised the challenge of keeping governor meetings short whilst allowing all voices to be heard.

KN suggested that the agenda should be clear whether an agenda item is a decision item or a discussion item. This should help to keep meetings tight.

b. Approve Scheme of Delegation – Circle Model

Following discussions at the previous meeting, the Scheme of Delegation had been reviewed offline and was brought to the FGB for ratifying.

NB suggested adding an additional point regarding the signing off of the Voluntary Fund on P.19, with the additional text to be added in green:

- To monitor and evaluate the management of the Voluntary Fund, receive the audited accounts and report to the Board. **This will be carried out by a governor who has no control or influence over these fund and will be further audited by a governor from outside the finance monitoring group.**

The clerk also proposed that the 'finance task force' be changed to 'finance monitoring group'.

On the basis of the above changes, governors voted unanimously to adopt the Scheme of Delegation 2022-23.

c. Link Governor update

The chair reminded governors that all link governor visits needed to be arranged with the Headteacher with 5 days' notice.

RC, CK and **TA** have link governor visit report forms to submit and would do this as soon as possible.

- Update from Community Engagement & Expansion task force (RC)

RC explained that they had not yet met. SW informed governors that the school had had extra open days and Phil Gibbons the Diocesan communications officer had offered support to school. **SW** would be following this up and would share his details with CEE committee.

d. Governor recruitment

DB explained that two Foundation Governor interviews had taken place and been referred back to the Diocese.

Staff had been written to inviting nominations for staff governor but none had been forthcoming. It was agreed that SW would discuss with staff with a view to inviting any interested parties to observe a future meeting. DB also offered to speak to staff if required.

e. Policies for approval

Both the Governor Visits Policy, which had been updated to reflect the circle model, and the Pay Policy for 2022-23 and had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Governors voted unanimously to adopt both policies with the

ALL

**RC, CK,
TA**

SW

	proviso that a typo that had been identified in the Governor Visits Policy was corrected.	
6.	<p>Headteacher's update</p> <p>a. Safeguarding RC had had her termly visit for term 2. She explained to governors that there was a new focus for safeguarding on low level concerns and DOFA referrals and this has been communicated to the staff and was reflected in some of the training that staff had undertaken with Sarah Turner. SW informed governors that she had undertaken mental health training and this was now a category for all safeguarding meetings in school. There were no safeguarding concerns to report to governors. MC suggested showing safeguarding cases as a trends table in the HT report. SW to action.</p> <p>b. LA progress review update SW explained that the LA progress review had been conducted looking at progress on actions from June and they were pleased with the direction that the school was moving. The report would be shared with governors once it was received.</p> <p>c. SCA bid SW explained that this had changed from the original bid and now focused on repositioning the toilets. With governor agreement, the bid was ready to be submitted and would require £16k funding from the school, which would come from devolved money that could only be used on buildings and IT. There was a discussion about the safeguarding concerns of the toilets in their current position. The issue had been expressed by pupils during a pupil voice exercise, and the staff have also asked for their concerns to be minuted. A governor queried how the school is currently mitigating against this safeguarding issue. RC explained that there was an MDSA at both ends covering the blind spot, so the immediate concern has been addressed, but this bid would address the longer-term problem. Governors agreed to make a decision by email following SW circulating the bid to all governors after the meeting.</p> <p>d. School Vision SW explained that a parent had kindly created the logo and that the intent to learning had been added since the vision document had last been presented to governors. There was a concern that the religious quotations could be off-putting to non-Catholic parents. The document was referred to CEE with the aim to having it finalised before the end of term. SW agreed to join the next CEE meeting. SW explained to governors that she wanted to get the vision up on the website as soon as possible and this would be followed with a launch night for parents in January.</p>	<p>SW</p> <p>SW / ALL</p> <p>CCE</p>
7.	<p>Chair of Governors update DB explained that the Diocese had been in discussions with a neighbour about buying the scrubland (sheep pen) on the land. The Diocese have agreed in principle, however they are asking the school to take responsibility for the rest of the land. He explained that there were unanswered questions over insurance and the liability, which he was working to resolve. NB recommended discussing with Clara Davis at the LA. There was a query over safeguarding and fencing and DB assured that this was all part of the negotiations.</p>	
8.	<p>Curriculum & learning It was agreed that, in future, this would be made a standing item under HT report.</p>	
9.	Finance & resources	

	<p>a. Review and ratify the School Budget (3/5 year) The budget had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. SC explained that a meeting had been held at the end of November and the meeting notes had been circulated. SC explained the different models that had been considered in order to balance the budgets. Governors gave their thanks to the school business manager for the success of the Opportunities Club, which was a good money-raiser for the school, especially in the summer when it was open to all parents. The budget was approved by the governing board and would be signed by Chair.</p> <p>b. Sign off School Fund Audit This has been audited by SC and KL as a second eye. The School Fund Audit would be signed off by the Chair.</p> <p>c. Sign off Income & Expenditure Return The Income & Expenditure Return (to Sept 2022) had been signed off by the Chair.</p> <p>d. Update on boiler bid SC updated governors on the green bid that had been submitted to replace the school's gas boiler with an air source heat pump, solar panels, insulation and other energy-saving measures. He expected to hear back by the end of January. A governor queried who should be leading this project going forward – whether it was operational or strategic. It was discussed that the bid may not be successful and so SC would continue to lead until a decision was made. SC offered to go through the detail with anyone who was interested.</p> <p>DB emphasised that future bids would not be considered if there was not enough notice for governors to make a collective decision about how to proceed.</p> <p>e. Finance monitoring going forwards – AOB DB raised an issue that had come to light since the October FGB. Whilst it had been agreed that the Finance task force wouldn't be required once the budget was signed off, all agreed that a Finance monitoring group would need be formed going forward. The external review of governance suggested that this should take the form of a 'monitoring pair' for financial oversight. It was agreed that the Finance monitoring group would be formed by SC and DT.</p>	<p>DB</p> <p>DB</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>a) Strategic plan 'task force' – to draft a 5-year strategic plan The clerk suggested forming a Strategic plan task force to build on the work started by Janine last year. It was agreed that the CEE task force would look at this, supported by KL and SW. NB discussed how this could work; working in collaboration with the Headteacher. MC asked for MAT options to be included in that strategy document. MC offered to talk to governors about MAT options in the new year and DB agreed to follow up.</p> <p>b) Energy Sparks initiative SC explained about Energy Sparks, which Wiltshire Council are funding, and looks at ways to reduce energy consumption at school. Schools were generally saving 10% by being part of the scheme. Governors agreed to sign up for this for the first year when it was free. AD to action.</p> <p>c) SEF – Self Evaluation Form</p>	<p>CEE</p> <p>DB</p> <p>SW</p>

	<p>SW explained that she would be circulating the SEF to all governors after the meeting and it would be an associated document for the next meeting. Governors were asked to submit any questions in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>d) Future support from the LA NB explained that he would no longer be working with the school. He said he had enjoyed his time with at St Joseph's and had learnt a lot from the school, which he had shared with other schools. Steve Wigley from the LA would be supporting the school going forward and would be attending governor meetings. Governors thanked NB for all of his support.</p> <p>e) Health & Safety The LA has informed a governor that legally the school needs to buy into H&S cover. SW is working to resolve this and has reached out to the H&S team at Wiltshire Council and will look at options to source externally.</p> <p>- Final comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC gave notice that she would resign as Parent Governor and a new safeguarding governor would need to be sought. DB formally thanked RC for all of her efforts over the past year, especially for her work on safeguarding within the school. - TA agreed to undertake Safer recruitment training. - The clerk directed governors to <u>Sharepoint</u> where a folder of documentation had been created relating to the outcomes of the ERG. - Governors thanked HL for all of her inputs positive influence on the governing board. - Governors thanked NB, MC and KN for attending the meeting. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting closed at 20.45pm.</i></p>	<p>TA</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FGB – Thurs 12 January 2023 at 6.30pm b. Date for diary: Safeguarding training – 01/09/2023 	