



St Laurence Governors FGB

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 July, 1700 in the school restaurant

Presentation by senior student Chloe Smith on achievements this year (Michaela had spoken to governors and at the Awards Evening this year).

Ms. Smith spoke about the joint work of the senior students during the year, whole-school charity events were a focus for Comic Relief and Children in Need. The team of other student leaders around the Seniors was commended. A 6th Form event was Libya Aid with small stalls. At the end of term 2, a collection of food cans, Christmas jumper day & shoe box appeal plus Dress it Forward (with a collective worship companion) were all held. This latter will be a continuing charity for '24-25. The Poppy Appeal & Remembrance Service were fronted by the Seniors'.

Highlights from the involvement with School Council: cafeteria improvements were promoted, rewards for students with 100% positive behaviour, developing the legacy of year 13 – a film devised and acted by students entitled 'we need to talk'. Themes here included the environment, personal consent & conflict.

A quiz evening was held to generate funds for the self-arranged Prom'. A Yearbook was devised and created for year 13 students and a final assembly for year 13 was coordinated by Seniors.

The new Senior Students were commended to governors. The community of the school was, on reflection the most appreciated aspect of St Laurence School and a specific part of this is the number of student-led groups.

Governors congratulated the Senior Students on their work and contribution to the wider school community.

Governors present, K Kilgallen (Chair), T Farrer (Head), A Craddock, M Smith, M Lee, D Roberts, A Dixon Patterson, P Robertson, M Lee, P Lambert, A Ensom, T Chatfield, M Peters

Apologies, L Ash

Not present, M Smith

Also, R Beesley (Clerk)

There were no additional declarations of interest,
Governors completed annual declarations forms for '24-25.

45/23 Minutes of previous meeting 22 May, the minutes were agreed.

Actions, TF - final Safeguarding Effectiveness Report, to be presented at term 6 FGB (see section 6)
KK & TF – finalised core strategy document, meet to agree this, to be presented in this meeting (see section 4)

46/23 Budget for '24-25

Significant points made by DR, for '23-24 effectively a breakeven budget had been set but a c£50-90k deficit was the outturn, supply costs being the most significant overspend. The Reserve is £950k. The budget for '24-25 was based on assumptions that were examined by FFE, an operational deficit has been set, again to be funded from Reserves. The position in September '25 would still be above the 5% Reserve threshold.

It was the determination of the Committee that a breakeven position be the desired direction of travel.

Other governor comments, the 3-year budget forecast without structural change in spending or income suggests that the Reserves would be exhausted in that period, therefore, a one-year budget is recommended, given that TF and LL will be working on structural changes to manage the budget to a balanced position. Year 7 projections are 215 rather than the PAN of 232. The staffing profile is one that is experience-heavy and thus cost-heavy.

As chair of FFE, DR moved the proposed budget for next year, seconded by ADP and all present agreed.

47/23 Head's report

Additional points made by TF, a significant Art Exhibition had been held on Monday, being well received and very successful in promoting excellence in art, design, graphics and photography. The work of the student who had died was displayed at the exhibition.

From September, the teaching staff is a full complement with specialist staff in all classes. There will be a change to the Computing curriculum due to a late resignation.

Question, will all classes be taught by specialists?

R, all staff have a PGCE in their main subject and another, some staff teach their second subject. There had been deployment of staff to maintain strength in subject coverage. Governors commended TF on the retention and successful recruitment of teaching staff.

Wellbeing lunches are continuing with staff and the report has been circulated. It was emphasised that this was a confidential document.

Parental engagement work continues, led by Ms Barber.

Pupil wellbeing groups, via the connection with Discover Christchurch were very positive.

The Strategy document has been developed into an implementation plan by SLT.

The Flourish programme from the Salisbury Diocese is to commence, to encourage more young people to engage with leading public worship.

Question, will this connect with work of the Chaplain and Wiltshire Youth for Christ?

R, ideally yes but it would depend on student direction. The Chaplain had developed two faith groups for different age-groups. Many students visit the Discover Christchurch opportunity. Further funding has been requested to expand the work of the Chaplain.

Results are on 22nd (GCSE) and 15th (A level) August, all exams were reported as passing off well, with no issues of mobile phone use and no students failing to attend.

The careers Gatsby Benchmarking process, via Compass careers, had just reported and the school retained its 100% success.

Staff wellbeing report

Welbee summary and plan

There are improvements in all areas since last year. The 'flavour' of the comments is much more positive and TF concluded that the work done this year had been strong and impactful.

There has been a very positive impact from the new catering contractors.

Survey free text comment section

A reminder please that this is a confidential document and should not be shared with others or placed on the website in case the anonymity of the respondents is compromised.

Question, what reflections are there for SLT to action?

R, TF will develop the action plan.

Admissions report

This report is made to governors in terms 2,4 & 6 and it is duty of governors to ensure that admissions are in line with the published Admissions Policy.

Additional points made by TF, in the case of the decision to electively home educate, the main motivation is over student anxiety. National figures are high but 3 past students have now returned to St Laurence. Where there are any safeguarding concerns, these are passed on swiftly from the school to the local authority department for oversight.

There are 40 new starters, for September in year groups, other than year 7.

Year 12 numbers will be different, depending on results (there are more external applicants than before).

Year 7 numbers are currently 215 without EHCP students (7) in year 7.

Governor comments,

The wide range of students admitted to a comprehensive school, with a generous and welcoming admissions policy, can have an impact from some students disproportionate to their number.

Question, has there been any impact from proposed, Labour manifesto policy of charging VAT on private school fees?

R, there have been two indications of interest since the Election. Most student applications are from ex-Melksham Oak pupils.

There was a short discussion about the recruitment of students from outside the town.

Question, what information is available on year 11 students and Sixth Form intentions?

R, after interview, all students are rated 1-4, depending on their declared intentions. Careers interviews are held to ensure that each student is on the best trajectory for them. St Laurence is benefiting from the closure of A level subjects at other schools. Bath College is the major competitor, due to their range of courses and facilities.

It was recommended that a report on Sixth Form recruitment be given to Standards. **Action** - ABL

Question, what is the capacity for Sixth Form and the financial benefit of its growth?

R, there is capacity to grow and the funding is slightly more than each Key Stage (however, Sixth Form students do not attract additional Pupil Premium funding)

267 is the current, combined year 12 & 13 total but accommodation could take 300.

In terms of students per class, whilst the average number for classes is 18, there are small groups for some subjects (French, German) and music is taught in a joint year-group). There was a short discussion of the staffing implications of the small groupings. There was a further discussion of the implications for MFL in the school.

For governors to note, an action plan including a department review and student voice was ready for the new HoD.

The potential of technology helping with languages was mentioned. The potential of extra-curricular connections was discussed. Governors offered to meet with the new HoD over this latter suggestion.

It was recommended that governors meet with the new HoD, once established.

PR left the meeting at this point.

48/23 Strategy, document

KK introduced the document which had been collated by ADP.

The strategic objectives had been agreed, their ordering was discussed.

Success criteria including OFSTED and SIAMS should be mentioned. These criteria are the result of all things working together and being done well. They are implicit objectives. Under these headers, the school could aspire to move from good to outstanding and maintain the excellent judgement (now termed 'living up to the Christian values'), both via external validation.

Specifically on staff attendance, this was thought hard to account for, especially in the short-term. Reducing the amount spent on supply cover might be a criterion. Given there is a lot of time & effort put into staff wellbeing, there should be a benefit in better attendance. The wellbeing action plan will refer to success criteria.

Comment, unfortunately there is little pattern to the absence and it could be deemed outside the school's influence. It was suggested that the school's values be more visible in the document with 'people are our treasure' more significantly placed than on every page, in the footer.

The objective on the community could be better specified.

There was a clarifying discussion on objective 6, governance. Recommendations were made for the meeting schedule. To be amended and circulated. **Action** – clerk.

Next steps

An SLT / governors' sub-group joint session in September to finalise the above questions, adding measurable targets for agreement.

An October Strategy Day prior to half-term would be planned for SLT and governors, to share the implementation plan for 5 years to September '30.

49/23 Committee minutes & update from Chairs, folder

Standards (LW),

For year 9, data reported showed a closing PP gap for maths (interventions are in place for English), dynamics in learning groups and changing attitude for students dropping subjects were discussed.

For year 10, the cohort are strong measured against FFT 50 but FFT 20 is the aspiration. Conservative grading from some staff is a pattern for this year. There is a small number of students who are not predicted to achieve maths / English at grade 4 or more, interventions are in place.

For year 12, a positive report was received with many students gaining perfect attitude and learning behaviour scores.

Action passed to FGB – Pupil Premium link governor, postponed to September.

FFE (DR)

Comments aside from the '24-25 budget, as above. A value for money internal audit had been concluded and external H&S audit with a new contractor (the score of 87% was strong as a baseline). Some capital works are planned over the summer. An accommodation review would be important step, for next year. Budget vigilance was a key point to marshal the return to a breakeven position. DR acknowledged the significant work within the finance, IT and compliance teams. Governors thanked all those staff for their work.

KK asked for a clarification to the minutes on the benchmarking of senior staff. **Action** – clerk.

C&E, this meeting was not held

Safeguarding, verbal update to FGB (PL for L Ash),

There had been an ongoing update to parents over online safety. An audit report on this issue was produced with 3 minor risks were indicated. Smoothwall monitoring had resulted in significant progress to reduce access to inappropriate content and competent & speedy challenge to any who tried to access such.

Mental health workshops had been well received.

Safeguarding Effectiveness final report

No further comments

Strategy, this meeting's notes form the basis of the document in section 4

Careers, verbal update to FGB (L Wicks) presentation received from L Woodley

There had been successful visits to university. Two aims for '24-25 were: to better support students with less social capital and thus less access via parental networks to opportunities for wider experiences; and, to have more of a STEM focus for careers, via clubs.

50/23 Scheme of delegation review

Comments received from governors would feed into the review suggested by the Strategy work.

Action – clerk and Chair, in September

51/23 AOB

From A Dixon Patterson, proposal to upgrade NGA membership to Gold level (i.e. to enable independent advice for FGB) and subscription to the Key for Governors (for further reference material). Notes

It was agreed to upgrade to NGA Gold and to explore the Key for Governors as a bolt on to the Key for School Leaders

The clerk was thanked for his work over a tenure of a little over three years and wished well for the future. A presentation was made.

The meeting closed at 1900.