



St Laurence Governors – Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 9th December 2020 via Microsoft Teams

Present: Lauren Ash Trudi Chatfield Fergus Stewart
Ian Blagbrough Sean Cooper Lindsay Driscoll (Vice-Chair)
Michael Smith Peter Lambert Tim Lerwill
Joanna Abecassis Mark Lee Michael Dooley
Kieran Kilgallen (Chair)

Apologies: Ingrid Maher-Roberts

In Attendance: Emma Roberts (Clerk) Lorna Lumb (for Item 33/20)

ACTION

29/20 **Welcome/Apologies**

Apologies were received and noted from Ingrid Maher-Roberts. It was noted that Joanne Abecassis would join the meeting later. The meeting was quorate.

30/20 **Register of Pecuniary Interests**

None recorded.

31/20 **Minutes & Matters Arising**

Minutes of 14th October 2020 were approved as a correct record.

32/20 **Matters Arising**

JA reported that she had asked the Diocese to review the issue of dual appointed Governors on the Academy Board and Governing Body.

It was reported that Fitzmaurice Trust was to meet the following week to discuss. MS to follow this up.

JA/MS

33/20 **Audit Report**

JS was invited to give a brief overview of the audit. Governors noted that the accounts were ready for signature; the Audit having been completed with a combination of both on site fieldwork and some remote review. The clearance meeting had taken place in person, to discuss a very small number of matters arising. JS reported that one minor point was around fixed asset reconciliation but this had been resolved. Governors noted that the points raised through Audit in the previous years has been resolved and were not repeated this year which was to be commended. As a principle, JS reported that the Regularity report required additional testing this year due to COVID measures but that no points had been raised. In response to a question, JS reported that Auditors

Clerk

- C had seen some irregularities through the lockdown period in other similar school settings, due to change in working practices, and some lack of rigour, but this did not apply at St Laurence. By contrast, JS commended the robust balance sheet position, relative to other Academies.
- C The Chair asked about the level of reserves and how this compared to other schools. JS replied that the school is slightly above the mid range and that this represents a comfortable cushion.
- C The Chair of FFE Committee asked JS what the experience of other schools had been in relation to the in-year balanced budget. JS confirmed that he was not having to deal with significant queries from schools this year and it felt like schools were not having to have the same level of difficult decisions they had perhaps struggled with the previous year.
- C A Governor sought clarification on the use of the term 'unmodified', and it was confirmed that this meant 'unqualified'.

The Chair sought approval from the Governing Body to sign the Accounts forthwith.
Action: The Governing Body Resolved to approve and sign the Accounts as at 9 December 2020.

LL/Chair

LL left the meeting.

34/20 **Headteachers Report**

FS presented his report (circulated with the agenda) which provided an update as at Term 2 2020-21. Governors noted that the term had been difficult due to year group self isolation, especially within the Sixth Form. FS shared the results of the parent survey from Year 9 parents following their self isolation. It was noted that this process of gathering data had been repeated with following groups that had been sent home. Governors noted that the results were very favourable and testament to the commitment of the teaching staff.

Moving on, the Governors noted the results of the staff survey; noting in particular the slight increase in the feelings of safety amongst staff given the additional modifications.

- C Reviewing other staff matters, Governors noted that unfortunately the new Head of Drama had decided to renege on her acceptance of the new position. Advertising would follow for a new appointee and the interim arrangements have been managed by current senior staff. Governors queried the reasons for the change of heart, and FS shared some of the details surrounding the communication of the decision. It was noted that the interim plan was to prioritise exam classes, and a new teacher had been
- C contracted on a fixed term.

FS advised that C&E had considered a tranche of information around behaviour and attitudes, and whilst there had been some challenges with small sections of students, this was being resolved.

FS finished by commenting on his tenure as Headteacher, thanking Governors for their support. The Chair reflected on the successes of the tenure of FS and the huge improvements achieved within this time.

35/20 Safeguarding

C The Chair invited LA to report on the safeguarding developments in her role as Governor lead for safeguarding. LA reported that the Safeguarding Audit had been completed, with a highly effective rating and only two areas with targets for further development.

C The Chair of the C&E Committee advised that the C&E Committee had considered safeguarding at length at its last meeting, and in particular noted the excellent reputation of the school for SEND and behaviour management. Furthermore, he noted that, the reputation was driving further admissions of students with additional needs, and the same time as CAMHS and other services were becoming less accessible, which was driving the need for the school to take further responsibility. The Chair invited FS to comment, and he confirmed that the CIF bid would enable additional facilities for SEND support, and this was, in his view, a pressing area of need. The team was described as excellent, and it was recognised that the school was increasingly recognised as an exemplar for children of all needs. FS went on to share his view that it **was** important to be a welcoming school but whilst having realistic boundaries. **Chair/LA**

KK recognised that this will be a strategic issue for Governor review for next term when the detail of the CIF bid is known.

36/20 Admissions Policy 2022/23

C The Governors noted the Admissions Policy for 2022/23 which was appended to their agenda pack, and was brought for review and determination. The Chair informed governors that considering the Admissions Policy was part of a formal consultation process, the timetable for which was set out in the report. Following a short debate, it was resolved to determine the Policy. The motion was proposed by KK and seconded by PL. **Action** The Admissions Policy 2022/23 was determined by the Governing Body. **FS/Clerk**

37/20 Skills Audit

Governors noted that their respective Skills Audit submission should be returned to ER as soon as possible. The Chair suggested that the Governor Awayday in April would review the data, to inform future recruitment suggestions and that the Skills Audit data would be first reviewed by the Strategy Committee meeting on 11 January 2021. **ER/All Governors**

38/20 Committee Reports

Strategy

Governors noted the minutes of the meeting of Strategy Committee held on 9th November 2020.

Standards

Governors noted the minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held on 23rd November 2020. SC advised that there had been good progress in assessment progress at both GCSE and A Level. In general progress levels were good and the Committee was content.

C&E

Governors noted the minutes of the meeting of the C&E Committee held on 24th November 2020. PL advised that the Committee focused on work on sexual harassment for years 7-13 and being clear about acceptable behaviour. The Committee had noted the continued downward trend on exclusions and reviewed performance which was outstanding. As Chair of the Committee, PL thanked FS for creating a school which is both academically outstanding and has an environment and culture of support.

FFE

Governors noted the minutes of the meeting of the FFE Committee held on 25th November 2020. IBS advised that the focus of the Committee meeting was the Audit, reviewing the SIF bid and the context around focusing capital funding as match for the bid for AEN buildings. FS advised that the work carried out last year to prepare the project for the bid remains the same with only the context of the bid has changed for this year.

39/20 Any Other Business

KK wished everyone a Merry Christmas. JA spoke on behalf of the Governors to celebrate the spiritual, human and academic achievements of FS during his term as Headteacher. Governors wished FS a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Next meeting will be 10th February 2020.

(The meeting ended at 7.00pm.)

Signed..... Date.....
(Chair)

