



St Laurence Governors FGB

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 10 21

Attendance, Ingrid Maher Roberts (Chair), Tim Farrer (Headteacher), Joanna Abecassis, Lauren Ash, Trudi Chatfield, Sean Cooper, Michael Dooley, Lindsay Driscoll, Kieran Kilgallen, Peter Lambert, Mark Lee, Tim Lerwell, Mike Smith.

Also, Lorna Lumb (DFO), R Beesley (Clerk), Jan Petty (Wiltshire Council, internal auditor)

Apologies, Ian Blagbrough, Tracey Walsh

11/21 Opening business, governors had attended a tea with new staff and the Head Students. This was felt to have been a very positive opportunity and would be repeated earlier in the term, next year.

12/21 Minutes of previous meeting 17 09 21 (business meeting on Strategy Day) - agreed
Actions: the new, Chair of Governors' annual report had been published. A link to this would be highlighted on the school's P/C bulletin

ACTION – clerk to send link to Chair's Annual Report to Parent / Carer bulletin

13/21 FCAR report for 2020-21 (carried over from July meeting)

The process of quarterly visits was outlined. A summary report has to presented to FGB.

Coverage in visits this year had included:

Purchasing, this included controls, records and segregation, petty cash and invoice sampling.

The school had moved to a fully electronic process and there were no issues to report.

Payroll, this included personnel files, contracts, overtime and supply payments. There were no issues to report.

Risk register, budget monitoring reports, website overview, related parties reporting, fixed asset register. It was recommended that the risk register be condensed, the restricted capital funds be added to the budget monitoring report and the fixed asset register include brought forward figures.

It was noted that governors are made aware of the highest scoring 6 risks (of the 87 in the register that SLT consider). The template used is that recommended by the school's insurer when it became an Academy.

Given that the processes for financial management were mature in the school and that there had been no change in staffing. It was suggested that the FCAR audit focus more on strategic items such as budget setting and minuting of monitoring.

Q – are there new requirements or learnings from other schools?

R – there are more online recording and reporting requirements, the reporting of monthly management accounts and awareness of and preparation for cyber security were mentioned by the ESFA.

ACTION - Governors were asked to note that the Related Parties document needed to be submitted to the DFO.

14/21 Headteacher's report

Updating additions to the report were:

In the light of the daily monitoring of the COVID situation, there had been a number of changes of approach. For example, mask wearing in corridors and the cancellation of in-person collective worship and briefings. The school was responding to a very fluid situation with spikes in cases across year-groups.

Advice to the school from Public Health England had now changed as a result of a problem reported with the Bath testing centre. A 3 points rule, even without a positive PCR test was now the guidance for self-isolation.

It was noted that attendance might be affected by parental holidays, ie. keeping students off school in case of infection spoiling plans.

There was no consistency of approach between schools.

Q – to what extent could there be a mix of online and in class teaching?

R – this is very difficult, especially for practical lessons, students in class cannot be supervised during practical work when the teacher is also explaining to an online audience. Remote learning has to be offered.

Note that attendance coding, as a result of over 100 calls per day is a time-consuming task. As a result, the reporting to staff of who is self-isolating and therefore requires the online classroom offer, is slower than desired.

Open evening had received approximately 1000 visitors and there had been brilliant feedback. The participation of Head Students, and year 7 students in public addresses had been a highlight. TFR acknowledged the tremendous team effort in planning and advertising, from cleaning to car-parking.

Sixth Form Open Evening, Thursday 4th November from 5pm, with addresses at 5pm & 6pm. Governors were warmly welcomed to attend and to inform TFR so this could be highlighted.

Policy updates, SLT has prioritised the statutory ones and a plan for Committee review and approval was the responsibility of Committee Chairs working with their SLT link. By the end of the year, the annual cycle would be complete

Challenge Partners visit, 22-24 November, the plan for this would be circulated to staff after half-term. Governors to note that the afternoon 23rd was the initial review feedback and morning of 24th, the final review.

Q – A level results, a photography grade had been changed from C to E as a result of an appeal, was there any comment?

R – the school had made it clear in communications that grades could go down as well as up, as the result of a review. TFR was fully satisfied that all procedures and policy were fully correct, the exam board random samples of work were agreed and there was no change to this or the data submitted. Note that the teacher of photography & head of Art were both new to the school since the postponement of formal exams and so there was no joint experience of the moderation of students' work. An appeal letter had been sent by the school in this specific situation, for example noting that the reviewed grade was based on a limited portfolio of work rather than the whole 2 years of classroom work that the teacher would have seen evidence of.

Note: it was suggested that Art assessment be monitored this year as grades would again be based on portfolios rather than exam work, note that this is portfolio this year too. Nothing shared with other students and no other grades were altered and all grades were accepted. And, the school would pay for an exam entry for this student, next year if desired.

Q – student leadership programme, was this just for senior students?

R – no, it depends on the group they are in, for example a House environment committee might have cross-year representatives. The aim is to broaden student leadership opportunities across years 7 to 13.

ACTION – Governors to inform TFR re: attendance at Sixth Form Open Evening, 4th November

- Governors to inform TFR re: attendance at the Challenge Partners final review, 24th November am

15/21 Committee minutes

C&E, Safeguarding & Child Protection and behaviour management policies had been updated and were very thorough. More staff and students were to be invited to meetings.

Safeguarding referrals on the return to school in September were high, a number of students had been noted in several instances, increasing the overall reported number. Attendance figures are within the national average, whilst historically low for St Laurence. TFR noted that parents are being cautious in this return to school period.

Q – home schooling, this was given as a reason for absence, how is that dealt with?

R – there are in-school approaches centred on reduced education provision (less than 25 hours) and alternative provision (still 25 hours), here we are recording elective home education. If this continued, the student is taken off-roll. In the last 10 months, those with poor attendance have received significant school input and EWO involvement when parents opt for home education.

Standards, The year 10 exam results had been received, this was found to be a weaker cohort, academically. Thus, the committee asked, 'what are great results for the school?' As a benchmark, 76% of the cohort with 5 or more 9-4 grades at GCSE, including English and maths would mark this (last year the figure was 84%). This would change per cohort.

Exam results at both GCSE and A level would be considered at the November meeting, any governor could attend. RE at KS4 would be discussed at the January meeting. And, boys / girls attainment later in the year.

Considering the SDP, having a great school with a great curriculum, SC asked if a strapline could be devised thus, 'if the school can show it is caring, inspiring and succeeding, demonstrating that people are it's treasure, in accordance with the SDP, it is a great school'.

Comment: Experiencing the school is the main learning opportunity for governors. The 3 OFSTED areas of: behaviour and attitudes; quality of education; personal development, could all be the focus of governor visits.

Comment: under the header of Inspire, it was suggested that external visitors and past students be encouraged to give talks. This was welcomed as a suggestion.

FFE, ML was the new H&S governor and a plan of activities was in progress. TL was the FCAR link governor with monthly requirements.

The CIF bids would be resubmitted with an alteration to the AEN building requirements. If these bids were unsuccessful, funding would be sought from the reserves and fundraising initiatives.

Strategy, Governors' input to the school website required a more active nature to encourage engagement. Committee chairs would be invited to contribute via a Q&A style of input.

16/21 School policies agreed this term

FFE – Sixth Form Bursary

Standards – Initial Teacher Training

C&E – Safeguarding & Child Protection, Behaviour Management

17/21 Admissions policy

This is an FGB responsibility delegated to the Headteacher. It requires a termly update on admissions in terms 2,4,6 for Strategy and would be a standing item on the agenda.

Q - the plan of the catchment area is very out of date. Should there be a faithful representation on a modern map?

R - It is not known who plans this map. TFR email comment received after the meeting. The map is created by the local authority and the school cannot change it (and indeed this would cause potential issues in the event of an appeal as well as friction with other schools). We have asked Wiltshire to produce a new version using an updated map. In the event of an

appeal we use Google maps in school to inform the decision so the map itself has almost no impact on the operation of the process.

This policy was approved

18/21 Appraisal policy

Note: there is usually there is a pay policy by this time but nothing has been received. The Appraisal process has to have been started by 31st October.

Q - section 19.2, asking for information on protected characteristics, whilst this is a Wiltshire model policy, TFR had a preference to remove this as it is very difficult to ask any questions like this, respondents can say that they prefer not to answer and any action taken after might be viewed as discriminatory. The equality form on recruitment did give an opportunity for this information to be recorded. Governor guidance was sought.

It was agreed to remove this section.

Q - Page 9, objective 1, needed clarification?

R – this is ‘student progress’. But note that this is not being used this year.

This policy was approved subject to the amendment.

19/21 Committee links and link governor roles

Committee chairs had been consulted over ways to allocate possible link governor roles in addition to existing ones. It had been agreed that if there were academic subject or department areas for monitoring, this would be via Standards Committee governors.

Well-being would be a further link governor role.

Note: TFR is governor member of Standards and for Strategy he is a governor member AND SLT link.

20/21 Parent governor election

There had been an error in the particular use of Survey Monkey and the election would be re-run with 2 candidates, with the result published on Friday 22nd October.

There was some discussion of the allocation of a parent governor to the vacant SLAT position.

21/21 Governor visits to school

TFR was keen for governors to visit the school, in operation as being able to speak from personal experience at an Inspection or formal, external monitoring visit, added a great deal of weight to any comments. Classroom visits were not the only way to gather such experience, meeting various groupings of students in discussion, attending extra-curricular or student leadership activities were just as useful. Collective worship was another occasion to see aspects of behaviour & attitude and personal development, for example IM, TFR and SC would liaise over a programme of classroom visits and student voice, ideally for governors to visit in pairs.

A governor visit report template would guide the interactions, with suggested questions. The approach would be to come with an attitude of learning.

Part of this process would be to create Student Voice opportunities throughout the year and with different groups of students.

22/21 AOB

TFR wanted to make governors aware of the situation at Westwood Primary School. OFSTED had judged this previously Good (across the board) school as Inadequate. As a feeder school to St Laurence, the school had a duty to support the Westwood. There had been personal contact with the Headteacher, the informal of support to the school and formal management support from Wiltshire Council for the education of the pupils and support of staff. It appeared that on the first day of the inspection a safeguarding concern had been raised and this meant that a more in-depth visit was then engaged in.

J Abecassis is also a governor there and reported a very positive parents meeting but acknowledged that the future direction for the school would be into a MAT, via the RSC.

