



The John Fisher School
Part A Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting
Held on 19th March 2025
At the school

Governors:			
Mr Noel McEvilly (NM)	Foundation Governor - Co-Chair	Present	
Mr Aidan Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor - Co-Chair		Apologies
Mr Andrew Theobald (AT)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Ms Grainne Grabowski (GG)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Dr Anita McGowan (AM)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Dr Tony Newman-sanders (TNS)	Foundation Governor		Apologies
Mr Robert Teague (RT)	Headteacher and Ex-Officio	Present	

Attendees: Mrs Y Epale (YE) Diocese *from item 3*
Mrs J Addison (JA) - CEP Governance Clerk

ITEM	MINUTES	Action
1.	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest NM opened the meeting with prayer and welcomed those present. Apologies of absence had been received from ATi and TNS which were accepted. The meeting was confirmed to be quorate. There were no declarations of interest in any agenda items.	
2.	Minutes from the previous meeting The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated for review, there were no amendments. <u>Update on Actions</u> 13th November 2024 1 – The meeting with the LA will be held on 24th March. Action closed 2 – The rugby festival money is still pending but is estimated to raise just under £3000. Tax relief from gift aid and one sponsorship payment are outstanding. Q: Are you confident the money will come in? A: Yes. DECISION: The Part A and Part B Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2024 were AGREED to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
3.	Deficit Recovery Plan RT met with SMS this afternoon and work continues on plans to bring down costs. The status quo budget is important as it shows that if the school does not reduce costs a deficit of £6.4m would be achieved. The school is demonstrating it is serious about the plans to reduce the deficit and savings will have more impact on future years.	

	It is important to show a bad budget and what impact the savings will have. The budgets have assumed a 3% increase in funding and salaries. PPG has been frozen, and the Sixth form is modelled as it currently is. Q: Is this a realistic picture? A: It is likely the Sixth form numbers will increase, but it seems prudent to under promise and overdeliver. School lettings are estimated to be £30k with a 3% increase, although it is hoped these will be expanded. The in-year surplus/deficit is falling, and the current prediction is that the school will break even in 2027, and possibly a year earlier. Q: Is parental income included? A: No, there is no allowance for this. Q: Are the revised energy costs included? A: Not yet, but these have been provided by ATi and are expected to be significantly lower than previously, possibly up to one third of the previous year's costs. Governors noted the projections which were good, and it was prudent to be conservative. <i>YE joined the meeting.</i> The briefing sheet shows the plan to reduce FTE teaching staff by 6 per year, with the model seeing a reduction in two staff at higher, middle and lower levels of experience. It is important to show an accurate picture of where the school is and the impact of the proposed savings. An analysis of spending will be re-run and provides useful information in support of the deficit reduction plan. The ongoing pressures on budgets are impacting schools' decisions around joining CATs as this may bring about economies of scale. Relying on natural wastage of six staff per year sees recovery in three years, but Governors felt there was a case for making further redundancies and accelerating recovery. RT noted that the staffing structure is tied into a two-year curriculum so it cannot be cut back much further than outlined without impacting on this. Q: How are the energy savings being made? A: The school has used an independent broker. There are 9-10 meters around the school which were all with different suppliers. In October this year all will be aligned on one contract which will have a lower unit rate due to the scale. The Smart meters are also now working, and the school is working to lower consumption. This will be supported by the upgrade to LED lighting. Q: Is intelligent lighting the next step? A: This would require re-wiring of the school and is too great a cost to consider. <i>One item is reported in the Part B Confidential minutes.</i> Q: Will the budgets be sent to the LA in advance of the meeting? A: Yes, we are keen to be transparent.	
4.	Partnership work and fundraising <i>The marketing strategy drawn up by KB was circulated.</i> The website is looking better and is improved day by day with mobile functionality. The feedback has been positive. Admissions data so far is positive, and the waiting list has grown with some Catholic pupils changing preference. It now stands at approximately 80 pupils. Sixth form applications are also healthy at this point in time. There were good A level results in the previous year, but these were received too late in the year to change minds.	

This year the school is in a stronger position, ranked 4th for value added at A level and with above average progress at KS4 and KS5.

The increase in capacity for external students admitted to the WCGS Sixth Form has had an impact.

Q: Has there been any increase in applications as a result of VAT on independent school fees?

A: There is no evidence of this so far.

IH is taking over recruitment and using the tools in TES, so more data can be reviewed on impressions, click-ons and resulting applications.

The school performs better than average except for converting views into applications.

Q: Does the school advertise anywhere other than TES, other schools use the Catholic Teaching and DfE groups, and social media such as Linked In?

Q: The contract with TES is useful and provides a range of tools, but IH and KB will be asked to explore alternatives.

The Rugby awards evening will be held in March.

Governors noted that KBs plan includes a lot of sports events, but not many whole school events.

RT responded that it is hoped this will change over time, but there has not been the capacity to focus on this at the current time.

Governors stated that in the past there have been quiz and music events.

RT confirmed that a St Patrick's night event which was linked to the Six Nations and a quiz night and race night are coming back.

Q: Are these being organised by the JFA?

A: They are, and there is the opportunity to get someone new in charge.

The sports department are the face of the school due to the contact time and exposure to families at matches and are an attractive feature of the school.

There is a challenge in balancing teaching and learning and extra curricular provision, and it will take time to ensure a balanced provision of sport, music and drama.

Governors noted that KB had been employed as alumni coordinator and the focus of her work should be Faith, academia, then sports and music.

The plan is ambitious, but there needs to be a clear vision on which it is based.

YE noted that Oscar Romero Trust have done a lot of work on marketing and that their advice should be sought.

RT reported that a 'secret shopper' exercise had been carried out last year.

Q: What was the response to them phoning the school?

A: It was last year, but it is likely it was not answered but things have improved.

Governors would like to see a clear USP for the school identified to provide a reason for parents sending their children here.

Q: What has happened to the music department?

A: All funding from JFA last year was used to support music and art. Music lessons were provided for PPG pupils, but this does not build up school music in an effective way. The school is looking to provide cheap group lessons and instruments to target those lacking in the school and help to build the orchestra.

There is a service provided by Cognus which might be suitable.

New computers were provided for the music department to support Music Technology.

The choir is strong and there was good feedback from the carol concert but there is a lack of capacity to do more.

Q: Are there drama performances?

	A: There are some, but more opportunities need to be provided, however the drama course is unlikely to run next year as it is not sustainable. There was a production last term, but they need to be more ambitious in order to sell the school. Governors raised concerns that the proposal for the rugby festival sees the school making a profit from other state schools which does not seem appropriate. The event should break even, or any surplus share with the other schools. Governors would like to see less of a focus on rugby and more realistic goals aligned to a clear vision. Work will be done with KB to revise the strategy. ACTION: A clear vision for the marketing strategy to be set with KB There is good primary school engagement. Plans for a preloved uniform shop in the container by the Sixth Form have not materialised so alternative options will need to be considered. In looking at how to reduce the costs of uniforms, the school is considering a blazer from a different supplier which is a slightly different colour and opting for a white or blue shirt which would be less expensive than grey. A proposal is being drawn up taking account of the need to limit branded items to three, the blazer, jumper and tie.	3
5.	Facilities update The design for the toilets has been improved to include 10 cubicles and a communal area which can be equipped with CCTV. A classroom has been vacated for use by the contractors as it is no longer being used for Chaplaincy. The staff toilet and DT toilet upgrades will be funded by the Diocese. Vape alarms are not included as the Diocese will only support what they would do for all other schools, the school would have to pay the extra. This cost cannot be justified at the present time, but the design has been drawn up with this in mind. Governors expressed concern that the fire door works are not included on the plan even though a fire risk assessment in August 2024 found them not to be in accordance with regulations. Doors were wedged open, excessive gaps and missing hardware identified. The issue is not included in the Health & Safety report or on Statlog and no remedial works have been carried out. <i>This item is recorded in the Part B Confidential minutes.</i> Two quotes have been received for the ceiling in the science block and the work will be completed over Easter. Q: Have governors seen and approved all of the cots included on the plan as those in red total £116,035? A: Not all costs have been confirmed, and most have not been agreed but will be used for discussion at the DRP. Governors asked that more information is included in the document which should clearly prioritise the works, and include information on how they will be funded, when approval was given and who is responsible for them. ACTION: Priority works plan to be updated with more accurate and detailed information. A fire drill was carried out with alarms heard in most areas as it has been upgraded. CCTV has also been upgraded. Three quotes have been received for Plough Lane, but the work is now on hold. One boiler is awaiting a part before the works can be completed.	4

	Carpets are a low priority although staircases are in need of annual paint refreshes. The Sixth Form Centre Servery boxing in has been completed, and a roller shutter is now required for this and the Sixth form office so the site can be let out. The first aid room costs have been agreed, and work is scheduled for the Easter break. Two meetings with Cleanology to discuss the remaining deep clean hours have been arranged but they have not turned up, so a meeting has now been scheduled with what is hoped is the right person. Once updated quotes for works have been received, they will be forwarded to governors for approval via email. Q: What are your priorities? A: The toilets, canteen, science block and locking system if there is no rebuild. The toilets are likely to be done during study leave and a temporary toilet is included in the cost. Governors suggested that consideration is given to purchasing rather than hiring temporary toilets as this may prove better value for money in the long run. The school is ensuring all current issues are included on Statlog.	
6.	HR Update <u>Recruitment</u> The school has been short of one RE teacher all year as they have proved difficult to recruit however one has been recruited for next year. Three staff are on maternity leave, and one is abroad. There has been a reduction in FTE for Maths, so supply staff have been used to fill the gap. Expressions of interest in the invigilator role have been received and so they should be filled shortly. The Data and Exams officer is a key role. IH is looking to refresh the recruitment pack which should help to fill the role. The leavers listed are since September, but the joiners include those replacing staff who left last year. There is a high turnover of LSAs and there is a vacancy for food tech coordinator. Q: Why do the number of leavers and joiners not match up? A: IH has included a list of all people who have started in new roles rather than just those new to the school, so the report will need some finessing. Governors appreciated the report and will work with I to ensure it contains the relevant information. <u>Sickness and Absence Report</u> The school is looking at education focussed software which can be used to track absence more accurately. <u>Training</u> The report has been taken from sims and counts inset days and one period sessions, so does not present an accurate picture. Q: Has there been any impact on absence numbers? A: There is no comparison with last year yet, but the new sickness and absence policy is due to be implemented. All absences are followed up with a return-to-work conversations, and there is clarity in the informal and formal procedures. Staff are very stressed, and this is contributing to some absences, and work needs to be done to address the culture around absence. Other absences are broken down and include interviews, medical appointments and compassionate leave.	

	The recommendations for the Sickness Absence policy will be sent to the committee for approval once agreed by the unions. Q: There are 12 recruitment companies used with a heavy reliance on Future Education, why is this? A: There have been more long-term supply staff for maternity, long term absence and vacancies. Q: How is absence captured? A: For planned absence a form is filled in for approval by line managers and the Headteacher which is then entered on to SIMs. If it is unplanned, they should inform their line manger and the cover supervisor. This goes directly on to the system and a return-to-work meeting is held although these have proved controversial. Q: Are there any staff raising particular concerns? A: There is one in particular and one who hit the trigger points has been supported. Any capability issues are addressed through the appropriate policies. IH is providing good HR support and is capable of managing recruitment and line managing stie staff and will be supported by the receptionist. Support from SMS is in place until September, but a solution needs to be found for the long term.	
7.	AOB There was no other business to report.	
8.	Confidential matters See Part B minutes.	
9.	Next meeting dates: - Resources – Wednesday 11th June 2025 @ 5.30pm FGB – Wednesday 9th July 2025	

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Actions list: -

No	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 13th November 2024					
1	Meeting with LA – date proposed 12.12.24 @11am (meeting prior to this at 10am)	Govs/RT		A further meeting will be held on 24.03.25	Closed
2	How much did the rugby festival raise?	RT		Final figures are awaited.	Open
Meeting of 19th March 2025					
3	A clear vision for the marketing strategy to be set with KB	Govs/RT/KB			
4	Priority works plan to be updated with more accurate and detailed information.	RT/DL			