



## Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting – Part A

### Held on 22 November at 5.30pm

### At The John Fisher School

Mr A Theobald (AT)	Foundation Governor - Chair	Present
Ms G Grabowski (GG)	Foundation Governor – Vice Chair	Present
Mr N McEvilly (NM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Father F Murphy (FM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mr A Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor	Present
Ms M Ryan (MR)	Foundation Governor	Present (arrived at 5.50pm during item 7)
Dr A McGowan (AMG)	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Mrs J Cole (JC)	Parent Governor	Present
Mrs N Walsh (NW)	Parent Governor	Present
Ms S Nasser (SN)	LA Governor	Present (arrived at 5.54pm during item 7)
Mr T Richmond (TR)	Co-opted Governor	Present
Mr R Lawton (RL)	Staff Governor	Apologies
Mr R Teague (RT)	Headteacher and Ex-Officio	Present
Mr D Fox (FX)	Foundation Governor	Present
Vacancy	Co-opted Governor	Vacancy
Vacancy	Foundation Governor	Vacancy

#### Attendees

Mr D Mawer (DM) - Assistant Headteacher (departed at 5.50pm)

Dr Tony Newman Sanders (TNS) – (Foundation Governor (subject to the satisfactory completion of the relevant procedures)

Ms Y Epale (YE) – Education Commission

Mrs N Bedlow (NB) - CEP Governance Clerk

Item	Minutes	Action
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Opening</b></p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting at 5.39pm with prayer. The Chair welcomed DF and TNS (observing whilst completing process) as new Foundation Governors to the Board. The Chair went on to introduce NB as the Clerk for the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair updated the Board that; the decision to invite RT to accept appointment for a second additional year had been <b>AGREED</b>. The Chair thanked RT for accepting the Board's proposal, confirming that; RT's term had been extended to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025.</p> <p>The Chair went on to advise the Board that with the completion of TNS's appointment, the Board had a full complement of Foundation Governors and one vacancy for a Co-opted Governor.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from: <b>RL</b> (ill), <b>AMG</b> (Family Business), <b>NS</b> was expected to arrive late, <b>MR</b>'s absence was noted with the expectation of her possible late arrival. The apologies were <b>ACCEPTED</b> and <b>AGREED</b> by the Board.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Quorum</b></p> <p>The meeting was declared quorate and commenced at 5.42pm moving directly to item 7; the Safeguarding report.</p>	



<b>4</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b> No declarations of interest were raised in respect of any agenda item. The Chair advised the Board to ensure they had completed the Code of Conduct and were advised to sign and return to the Clerk.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Part A and Part B Minutes from the Previous Meeting – 20 September 2023</b> The Part A minutes of the above meeting were <b>AGREED</b> to be an accurate and complete record and signed by the Chair for retention by the school. The Part B minutes of the above meeting were <b>AGREED</b> to be an accurate and complete record and signed by the Chair for retention by the school.	
<b>5a</b>	<b>Actions Part A</b> It was noted that the proposed extension to the Headteacher's contract had been <b>AGREED</b> .	
<b>5b</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b> None were identified.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Headteachers Report</b> The Headteacher offered the Board an executive summary of the Report circulated prior to the meeting. The Headteacher advised the Board that the main focus since his arrival was understanding the School, identifying areas of improvement and how the School could consider repositioning itself.  The Headteacher outlined the School's strengths, and contextualised the perception of the school in terms of a decline in admissions (the Headteacher clarified that although 2023 was demographically a <i>bulge year</i> for the area, a further decline in the number of applications was recorded), behavioural reputation, and academic performance. The Headteacher advised the Board that; for the school to flourish, perception must be changed. A separate Report entitled <i>Repositioning JFS</i> (also circulated prior) outlined the case for significant academic change.  Academic performance in 2023 ranked the School; penultimate in terms of the key indicator of Progress 8 in relation to all other Catholic secondaries in south London, and all other Sutton secondaries. The key indicator of Progress 8 was considered average but against the local competition, was actually lower.  Since July The HT had consulted with various members of staff to identify the following School Improvement Priorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To improve behaviour and culture throughout the school.</li><li>2. To improve academic outcomes at GCSE and A Level, especially for the disadvantaged and those with high prior attainment.</li><li>3. To review the whole school curriculum</li><li>4. To further develop the Catholic ethos.</li><li>5. To work with Governors to continue to reduce the DRP and ensure that they are provided with relevant information to hold senior leaders to account</li></ol> The paper suggested that in order to reposition the school to be more attractive to the local community the School should be a shift in the balance toward a more	



	<p>academic school. The Headteacher advised the Board that the current bar to enter the 6<sup>th</sup> Form was low. It was inclusive and in keeping with Catholic ethos, however, it could be doing a disservice for some pupils by not offering the appropriate subjects and they should be directed to colleges with a wider curriculum offering.</p> <p>The balance of subjects taught was 50%, either Sport or Social Sciences. The Headteacher advised that the Board make adjustments, to provide the next step for pupils if in their best interests. The Headteacher advised the Board that; a 6<sup>th</sup> Form of its current size, should focus on catering well for A Level, not wider curriculum subjects. Attaining better A Level results would affect the way the school is perceived.</p> <p>Finance was also a consideration; a more selective 6<sup>th</sup> Form would result in a decrease in numbers. On that basis the Headteacher suggested that the Board consider adopting a mixed 6<sup>th</sup> Form, citing St Philomena's as a feeder School who might like a Catholic alternative to A Level provision.</p> <p>The Headteacher updated the Board that Lower down the School the process of rebalancing the curriculum had already begun. The purpose was to shift focus to subjects which support literacy and learning in a wider way. The Headteacher reassured the Board that the Curriculum offering was good, but it required streamlining, to best serve students' interests.</p> <p>The Headteacher advised that streaming would be introduced from Year 7. Each cohort would be divided into two bands in three forms, offering scope for a differentiated curriculum. Data indicated that this would result in one form in each band comprising pupils with high prior attainment.</p> <p>Assessment and reporting arrangements could be more informative and clearer. The HT advised that it should be as transparent as possible to all stakeholders. The Headteacher was introducing academic enrichment, which consisted of a programme of seminars to help change the tone of the school and place emphasis on academic endeavour. Recognition breakfasts have been introduced to recognise and celebrate achievements, raising the profile of attaining academic achievement (including Music).</p> <p>The Headteacher advised the Board that the School must continue to improve Teaching and Learning whilst also driving improvements in behaviour. The Headteacher had been liaising with other schools to share best practice and design a new Behaviour Policy, accompanied by a handbook for staff. The Headteacher updated the Board of an INSET Day scheduled for Friday, 24 November to introduce principles underpinning the new policy.</p> <p><i>Q. Do we need to approve the Behaviour Policy before it's implemented?</i> A. Yes, and it can be approved by email. We can bring forward the policy but at the moment the effort is going into the handbook. (RT)</p>	
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	<p>The Chair confirmed that the Board would agree the Behaviour Policy by email and the Teaching and Learning Committee would review the policy in December.</p> <p><i>Q. Do we have to change our admissions policy for that [mixed 6<sup>th</sup> Form] and we couldn't start that until Sept 2025, does the DfE need to approve it?</i></p> <p>A. We would have to re-register; it isn't proposed for this September. (RT)</p> <p>The Chair advised the Board to focus on the Strategic policy – operational detail would be priorities of Committees.</p> <p><i>Q. Would there be a consultation?</i></p> <p>A. Yes we would go out to consultation with an advised timeline. (RT)</p> <p><i>Q. Are we talking about having girls in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form or a joint 6<sup>th</sup> Form?</i></p> <p>A. A mixed 6<sup>th</sup> Form at The John Fisher School would mean, girls joining at 6<sup>th</sup> Form. This would not involve sharing teaching, the distance from St Philomena's is not practical. (RT)</p> <p>The principle of a mixed 6<sup>th</sup> Form and the differences between mixed and shared 6<sup>th</sup> Forms were explained. The Board discussed mixed facilities for toilets in keeping with Local Authority guidance.</p> <p><i>Q. How does raising standards fit in with having a mixed 6<sup>th</sup> Form?</i></p> <p>A. Research in terms of a co-ed context varies, in terms of our context, there is a clear need to push the academic side of the School. Increasing the pool of students who can access courses, helps with economies of scale. Single sex education works really well 6<sup>th</sup> Form is more complicated, the culture of boys schools can vary, we are one end of the spectrum culturally and some re-balancing might not be a bad thing. (RT)</p> <p><i>Q. Do you envisage a 50/50 split 6<sup>th</sup> Form?</i></p> <p>A. These are the early stages I would not do any more without the approval of governors. Close to 50/50 would be best for all. It might take more than a couple of years to achieve. This would enable us to broaden the curriculum; it's very skewed towards Sport and Social Sciences. There is a worry about the narrowness of the curriculum in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. The obvious school for us to link with would be Wallington Girls but it is not Catholic which is a pre-requisite. (HT/CoG)</p> <p>The Headteacher advised the Board that Thomas More had closed their 6<sup>th</sup> Form leaving The John Fisher School the only secondary school in the immediate area offering a Catholic 6<sup>th</sup> Form. The Board discussed the motivation regarding more limited places at 6<sup>th</sup> Form. The HT advised that attention to Pathways for boys would be identified at an early stage that would best serve their interest.</p> <p><i>Q. What is the situation with moving onto University?</i></p> <p>A. We looked at destinations recently at FGB we have a high proportion going to non-Russell. The most popular was Nottingham Trent. (RT)</p>	
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	<p>Other works undertaken included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Tree work, installation of extra fire doors in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form building.</li><li>ii. LED replacement lighting undertaken; the outdoor area (car park lighting) was pending to be completed before the end of the month.</li></ul> <p>NM advised the Board that; the visit from the Health and Safety Inspector was rescheduled for Monday, 04 December.</p> <p>NM updated the Board that a recent Health and Safety walk identified lights in the old building that needed to be replaced, scheduled for January 2024. NM reassured the Board that there should be a significant reduction in energy consumption and expenditure.</p> <p>NM advised the Board that £331,000 was allocated to energy bills based on the 2022/23 budget. The current budget cumulative deficit of £510,000 was a significant reduction on the anticipated figure of £800,000+. NM noted contracts that were up for renewal including; Gas and Electricity (March), Cleaning (April) and Ground Maintenance (September 2024).</p> <p>The Chair explained that the deficit was historic and that with oversight of the Debt Recovery Working Party the Local Authority should be repaid within three years GG substantiated; the debt had been reduced significantly, due to the efforts of the working parties. Working parties met monthly to monitor finances and consider where money could be saved.</p> <p><i>Q. What did the lighting cost?</i></p> <p>A. It was a total cost of £55,000 and we received £51,000 from the Education Service; we also got better maintenance for the boilers. It is not rocket science when you consider the costs of LED, it should prove very beneficial. (NM)</p> <p>NM reviewed the boilers, which were serviced costing £4,500. NM advised the Board that a quote was also obtained for a sump pump, for the boiler in the Science block, as there was currently no hot water, effecting the showers. The quote was approximately £8,000 for a water heater, and £3,500 +VAT for the sump pumps. The SBM had sought approval via Chairs Actions.</p> <p>Four boilers were back in action with one to repair. NM advised the Board that the approximate expenditure on heating was £25,000. There was also asbestos in two boiler rooms. If anything were to happen to those boilers all four would have to be replaced at a potential cost £100,000. The life expectancy on the current boilers was estimated to be 7-8 years.</p> <p><i>Q. Do the Health &amp; Safety Inspections get anxious about legionnaires?</i></p> <p>A. For a sum of money they will do a test, but they will have to confirm the pressure of the water is adequate. I will get a quote for that as well, if the pressure is adequate we can remove the tanks. (NM)</p> <p><i>Q. Can we not apply to the Diocese for SCAR money, I think we should put a small case together for £100,000?</i></p>	
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	<p>A. We should be able to do that in few years after we have paid off our debts. We will be prioritising work with the Headteacher in order to present to the working party. (CoG)</p> <p>NM updated the Board regarding Audits, noting that <i>Baxters</i>, the external Auditors, last audited accounts in 2021. NM had requested a quote for an external audit on all bank accounts. The previous audit found significant issues, which were rectified.</p> <p>NM updated the Board regarding Harrisons catering contract (May 2022). A contract was signed with Harrisons caterers not approved by the Governing Board. Harrison invested £64,000 on a loan, which the school drew down on extending the terms of the contract now ending in 2028 (£28,000 drawn down).</p> <p>The dual fuel contract was held with a consultant. NM explained the claw back process and how energy companies apply VAT.</p> <p>The Chair explained that the school budget was currently over £8million. Termly meetings with Sutton Local Authority to review our Debt Recovery Plan are held and the staffing budget was down to about 80% of our total Dedicated School Grant from the Local Authority. The Chair advised that; one of the strengths of the School was the long-term commitment of many of our staff, but that this also presented us with challenges in terms of funding and pay scales. NM noted that a large number of staff were at the highest pay point on their relevant pay scales.</p> <p><i>Q. Is there a strategic staffing plan in terms of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form?</i></p> <p>A. There is a plan for that Robert is working on. (CoG)</p> <p>The Debt Recovery Working Party has explored the possibility of bringing cleaning in-house. The current contract (£130,000) was anticipated to rise to £186,000 in April 2024. In-house modelling did not identify significant cost savings and three quotes were to be obtained.</p> <p>The SBM proposed to enter into one year contract commencing April 2024 with <i>Cleanology</i>. The School will revisit the proposal when considering the expansion of the maintenance team. The Board discussed the logistical considerations of bringing cleaning in house. NM noted that an Estate walk identified that deep cleans were stopped approximately six years ago and should be reinstated.</p> <p><i>Q. What does a deep clean mean?</i></p> <p>A. All sorts, under urinals, power hosing, toilets etc.</p> <p><i>Q. What does a deep clean mean financially for the school?</i></p> <p>A. £7,000 for the whole school based on a 140-man hours, at the London Living Wage. (NM)</p> <p>NM advised the Board that the walk had also identified that lack of doors in the toilets was a safeguarding issue and a porter block of toilets could be organised for</p>	
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<b>8b</b>	<p>£9,000. GG noted compliance issues in relation to Health and Safety in respect of the lack of appropriate doors.</p> <p><b>Updates from TL&amp;S committees held on 10 October and 21 November 2023</b></p> <p>GG advised the Board that two meetings and one working party were convened focusing on achievement. The Committee met with DD head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form regarding the Uniform Policy, late attendance and more rigorous processes and procedures</p> <p>Plans include raising the entry level to 6<sup>th</sup> Form with potential to expand to 300 for a mixed 6<sup>th</sup> Form. GG noted that a BTEC PE was not viable. The Committees has also reviewed the time students spend on site.</p> <p>Data had been presented to the Committee with a tracking system for all Key Stages. New data packages had been agreed and bought across the school for KS3, 4 and 5. The Committee had engaged in a data exercise themselves and found the data and follow up questions to be instructive in terms of subjects the School was not performing well in, subjects and groups in need of improvement. It was noted by the working party that only one group achieved beyond their potential in 2023 and the more able particularly under achieved. Teachers predictions and PPE's had been unreliable. GG extended thanks to the Headteacher for the data packages bought on behalf of the Committee, considering it a good investment.</p> <p>The emphasis on data was impacted by class targets. Staff now know the grade distribution for each class bringing more accuracy to their predictions. The Board were advised that the School's expectations and standards must be raised in terms of academic achievement and behaviour.</p> <p>The Committee had also reviewed progress made by Pupil Premium students and exams for Yr. 11 noting it was too soon to consider progress and a calculation for Progress 8 properly. The working parties spent considerable time reviewing data and also identified 68 policies that required updating. The HT had delegated this matter to SLT to review and update policies for presentation to the Board in January 2024. In addition the working party was concerned about the lack of marking across the school as raised by the recent governor visit and TLS meeting.</p> <p>Line Management was being introduced to better hold departments to account and the School would adopt a more holistic approach by involving parents. GG noted that some operational matters were raised around English and that PM targets were going to include one related to accurate predictions.</p> <p>GG advised the Board that the next meeting would look at progress of disadvantaged pupils, SEND and the behaviour policy. Recommendations from TL&amp;S meetings were that a basic review is undertaken of the standard of teaching learning and marking across the School would.</p> <p>In terms of policies the school would adopt CES models as appropriate</p>	
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	<p>The Headteacher and GG proposed: the most urgent policies (statutory) would be prioritised and agreed/approved by email.</p> <p><b>Resolution: The Board AGREED the proposal to prioritise and approve policies.</b></p> <p>The HT noted that there was uneven practice in terms of marking and a lack of distinction between monitoring, marking and practice. The number of pieces of work that should be marked varied. Discussions had been had, and it was agreed that there should be a distinction between monitoring and response to feedback.</p> <p>The Board discussed the importance of gap analysis and the Chair updated the Board regarding a recent and comprehensive monitoring visit (including Catherine Class) he conducted with the Vice Chair and another governor. The Chair noted a vast mix of pupil experience in the classrooms but was impressed by the inspirational atmosphere of the Catherine Class.</p> <p>It was noted that improvements could be made in terms of standards of cleanliness and maintenance. AT summarised issues identified during the Governor general monitoring visit by the 3 governors. Some maintenance issues noted were historic and more than 2-3 years old. The Board discussed the logistical challenges of managing split lunch breaks and classes in session and the desirability of moving to a single lunch break.</p> <p>GG noted displays were poor, classrooms dire, and the building was not fit for purpose. However GG went onto advise the Board that the students were polite and courteous.</p>	
<b>8c</b>	<b>Confidential item – see Part B</b>	
<b>8d</b>	<p><b>Admissions Committee Update - 16 November 2023</b></p> <p>The Committee met with the Admissions Officer who presented admissions data for the Yr. 7 cohort. The data indicated a diverse range of religions and that 1/3 of Yr. 7 were non-Catholics. The Committee had expressed some concern in response to the decrease in first choices. Having considered and discussed the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Changes in perception</li><li>ii. Lack of marketing</li><li>iii. Decrease in numbers of Catholic children</li><li>iv. Impact of competing provisions.</li></ul> <p>The Committee agreed to convene a working party to consider ways to increase admission numbers via marketing. SN advised the Board that; the minutes of the above meeting were to be agreed and distributed.</p> <p>SN advised the Board that 100 applications had been received in respect of 2024 The current year 7 had 10 EHCPs and much of the cohort exhibited significant SEN requirements. SN went onto advise the Board that 21% of the whole school had SEN needs and EHCPs were increasing exponentially nationally.</p>	



<p><b>8e</b></p> <p><b>Admissions Policy update.</b></p> <p>The Board were advised that the Admissions Policy required a six-week consultation period on the website and was one of 68 policies that were being updated. The Board were advised that the Local Authority would also be consulted as part of the process. YE advised the Board that; the Admissions Committee must meet to approve the policy, if not virtually then by email.</p> <p><b>Action: Approve the Admissions Policy. (Admissions Committee)</b></p> <p><i>Q. How do you define practising?</i></p> <p>A. By canon law the form removes issues relating to attending Mass (Saturday /Sunday) on a weekly basis. The new form allows for parish priest to acknowledge practising Catholics. (YE)</p> <p><b>8f</b></p> <p><b>SLE Committee Update</b></p> <p>Thanks was extended to the Headteacher for sharing the SLE committee information. It was noted that; the appointment for a new Chaplain was pending and that the Mass rota introduced in December had been covered.</p>	<p>SN had reviewed the Admissions Policy in line with updated diocesan guidance and that approval/ratification was required from the Board. SN updated the Board regarding the changes to diocesan guidance and confirmed that the Committee had also considered the Admissions Policy for the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. SN updated the Board that; an Admissions Categorisation Meeting had been scheduled for Saturday, 25 November and invited volunteers.</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Policies - Agree a process for onward approval of Policies.</b></p> <p>As noted in item 8b the TL&amp;S Committee identified 68 policies that required updating. The HT had delegated this matter to SLT to review and update policies for presentation to the Board in January 2024. Recommendations from the TL&amp;S Committee was to undertake a review and adopt CES models. The most urgent policies (statutory) would be prioritised and agreed/approved by email.</p> <p><b>Resolution: The Board AGREED the proposal to prioritise and approve policies</b></p> <p>As noted in item 8f the Board resolved that; the Admissions Policy would be approved by the Admissions Committee and ratification by the Full Governing Board.</p>	
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Confidential Items</b></p> <p><i>Item 8c was reported in the Part B Confidential minutes.</i></p>	
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Action: review meeting dates for 2024 to allow committees time to return minutes prior to FGB meetings. (NB, AT, RT)</b></p> <p>The Chair briefed the Board regarding an ex-student who had been subject to extensive negative press coverage. The Chair confirmed that there had currently been no link between the ex-student and the School in press. The Chair would continue to monitor the press coverage and update the Board accordingly.</p> <p>The Chair updated the Board that during the October half-term correspondence</p>	



	<p>was received from the ex-student's family regarding support. At the time of the incident; records were forwarded to the police as per their request. Records passed on regarding the ex-student, with the exception of two, were destroyed in 2022 under standard Policy. The Chair was overseeing the situation with external advice.</p> <p>The Chair reminded the Board to use the proforma report to record monitoring visits.</p>	
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Future Meetings</b></p> <p>The date of the next Full Governing Board meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, 20 March 2024.</p>	
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Closure of Meeting</b></p> <p>The meeting was closed at 8.40pm by the Chair with a vote of thanks to the Board and new Foundation Governors.</p>	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Action Points

### Outstanding Actions and Actions arising from 2023-24

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
<b>Meeting of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023</b>					
1.	Safeguarding update for Governors (and inhouse google quiz to be completed	DM/GB	December	Training platform, link and details to be sent	Open
2.	Send specific governor training to DF.	DM	ASAP		Open
3.	Approve the Admissions Policy.	Ad Com			Open
4.	Review meeting dates for 2024 to allow committees time to return minutes prior to FGB meetings.	NB/ AT/RT			Open

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
<b>Meeting of the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2023</b>					
1	All governors to return their annual statement to JB.	GB	ASAP	2 declarations received at the meeting	Open
2	Updating the website	RT	tbc	Held over from 22-23	Open
3	Recording studio update	RT	tbc	Held over from 22-23	Open
4	Breakdown of the reasons for sickness absence to be made available for discussion by the Governors for discussion	??	22.11.23		Open
5	TLS committee to review link governor categories and merge where appropriate	TLS	10.10.23		Open
6	The names on the link governor list to be				Open



	updated with the new/additional governor roles.	AT	22.11.23		
7	Web filtering governor to be nominated	DM/AT	22.11.23		Open
8	Roles and responsibilities for web filtering and reporting to be established	DM	22.11.23		Open
9	Governors to use their JF log-ins to the National College to complete safeguarding management modules	All	ASAP	Add to governor training schedule once completed.	Open
10	Safeguarding quiz link to be sent by DM	DM / JB	ASAP		Open
11	Any governor comments on the Safeguarding Policy to be sent to AT by the end of the week for presentation at November meeting	All	22.9.23	Agenda item for 22.11.23	Open

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of the 20 <sup>th</sup> of September 2023					
12	Anti-racism angle to be addressed and brought to TLS	JC	10.10.23		Open
13	SN to scrutinise the Anti-racism policy to ensure alignment with Equalities Act	SN	10.10.23		Open
14	RT to arranged a lockdown drill and report back to governors	RT	22.11.23		Open