



Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting – Part A
Held on 9th July 2025 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 D Fox (DF)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mr P Hall (PH)	Staff Governor	Absent
Mr N McEvilly (NM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Dr A McGowan (AM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Father F Murphy (FFM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Dr T Newman Sanders (TNS)	Foundation Governor	Present
Ms M Ryan (MR)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mr A Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mrs J Cole (JC)	Parent Governor	Present
Mrs N Walsh (NW)	Parent Governor	Present
Ms S Nasser (SN)	LA Governor	Present
Mr T Richmond (TR)	Co-opted Governor	Present
Mr R Teague (RT)	Headteacher and Ex-Officio	Present

Attendees (non-voting) Mr D Jackson – Head of Sixth Form (*until pm*)
Mrs J Beeson (JB) - CEP Governance Clerk

	Minutes	
	Welcome and Opening FFM opened the meeting with a prayer.	
1	Apologies for Absence No apologies were received from PH. The meeting was confirmed to be quorate. There were no declarations of interest raised in respect of any agenda item.	
2	Minutes of the meeting of 2nd April 2025 The Chair said he was taking the minutes as read, there were no further questions or comments. DECISION: Governors agreed that the Part A and B minutes of the meeting held on 2.4.25 were a true and accurate record of the meeting. <u>Update on Actions</u> 1. EDI policy update –TNS & SN to discuss c/f action . 2. MAT presentation – the Chair advised this was on the backburner as the proposed legislation did not go through, however the guidance from the diocese was for all Catholic schools to join one of the 5 Southwark Catholic MATs before 2030. 3. Statutory governor training – completed . YE to provide annual governor safeguarding training in the Autumn term 4. State Schools Rugby festival – After discussions, the conclusion backed by Peter Bennett (the alumni funding the festival) is to hold this year's and possible future festivals at Ealing Trailfinders	



	which has the facilities. JF will have no role in the organisation or funding but will have a link for marketing benefits and guaranteed participation. The Resources committee chair confirmed that by the funding going through JF, it meant they were able to claim gift aid and keeps JF at the top of the festival list - completed. 5. The National College link had been distributed – completed. 6. Open days – completed.	
9.1	<i>(It was agreed to take this AOB item presented by DJ out of agenda order, to allow him to leave the meeting afterwards)</i> DJ distributed a handout regarding his proposal about 6th form uniform. He explained the context in line with the cultural shift after he had been 2 years in post as Head of 6th Form. It aligned with the Behaviour Policy, the culture of viewing non-academic measure on the employability report etc. He cross-referenced the Y12 data outputs versus the Y13 ones to demonstrate the positive changes which have arisen due to the routines being embedded. He said that with Mr Webb, they had an action plan for the next academic year, but the issue of uniform is niggling. They feel the proposed change to a more workplace presentation would help. He proposes this to be changed from September 2026 and gave a breakdown of the suggested options. He detailed the things which would not be allowed – hooded tops, no overt branding, visible jewelry, no headwear, no fashion accessories. Where there was any dispute over what was or was not acceptable, the final decision would be that of the 6th form leadership team. He concluded this could really help the cultural shift and would mean that the pupils would then have a suit for interviews e.g. jobs or universities. A governor asked about the no headwear for those with religious reasons e.g. Sikhs? DJ confirmed this was excluded. A governor asked how this requirement would be accommodated for Pupil Premium students? DJ responded they had the option to apply for a 6th form bursary and while there is no bespoke policy dealing with this, if they are eligible for PP they would put this in the bursary application. There would be a grace period for the first few weeks of term whilst this was approved and bought. He gave the example of the current 6th form blazer which costs £70 as opposed to a suit which can be purchased for £50-£60. It would also help those pupils because they would be able to buy it from the bursary money rather than have to buy one themselves for interviews. A governor queried if there was any contractual commitment with Hewitts? RT confirmed that he had spoken to Hewitts and they would require notice by December 25. DJ added that for the transition year i.e. the current Y11 students when they go into Y13, they would not be expected to buy both the blazer for Y12, then the suit for Y13. A governor asked about the decision over ties? DJ said this was largely a safeguarding issue, as not all staff would know all the 6th form, therefore without the JF tie they might just be any young man on the premises. They might consider lanyards but it was more to have a visible JF recognition.	



RT added that if the tie was not compulsory, the whole culture of wearing specific school ties, such as house, sport or music ties, would go.

A governor asked about the unbranded caps and why caps in general were being allowed?

RT said they would put that caps could only be worn if there was a serious need, (e.g. when exposed to the sun for a significant length of time) rather than for general purposes.

A governor said she thought it was a great idea and introduced the boys to the world of work. She commented that it might mean that sometimes the students might end up smarter than some of the teachers.

A governor said while she could see the benefits of the approach it was a shame that JF would not be identified with the outfit in the same way as the uniform, therefore they might lose some of their identity. There was discussion about the phrasing of the nature of the shoes.

A governor commented that if part of the rationale was cost, the initiative would need to be cost-neutral because the government are saying that schools should do less branded items due to cost.

A governor suggested they speak to the Y10s to establish any loopholes they might spot in the phrasing before it was published, if the decision is to go ahead.

A governor asked if they had consulted the current 6th form?

DJ said he had asked Y12 and the results was 40/20 in favour.

(DJ left the meeting)

A governor said he was opposed to the idea, because he felt that uniform is a great leveler and gave students a sense of identity and inclusion. However, if they were to go with this, the school tie system must remain as an absolute requirement.

A governor said she still had concerns about PP students. Although there might be the bursary, one suit was never going to be enough and they would probably need 2 or 3. She asked if they could apply more than once?

RT said that PP students were most likely to qualify for the bursary which was at different levels up to c£1,000 so would certainly cover these costs, as it had to for uniform costs currently.

A governor commented not many people wear suits for work these days anyway, so he did not think the workplace feel was correct. He agreed with the other governor about uniform being a leveler.

RT said that in terms of cost, the boys need a suit anyway so the bursary can help them to buy one.

A governor commented with regard to the blue, grey, black that one loophole might be the shades of the colour chosen. She suggested if it went ahead that they would have to be very clear in the expectations.

A governor commented that this would have to go to consultation with parents and staff, to allow the correct notice to be given to Hewitts if the decision carried.

The Chair of Governors said they were therefore being asked to agree in principle to the proposal to consult on whether to change to business suit or retain the existing uniform in the 6th form. The result of the consultation would then need to be considered at a subsequent FGB for a final decision.



	He asked governors to vote. The result was:- In favour of the proposal = 9 Against the proposal = 5. Decision – the motion was carried to go to consultation on the proposal to change the 6th form school uniform to a business suit. A governor asked who made the final decision following the consultation? The Chair of Governors confirmed it would be this board of governors at the December FGB. ACTION – Parent and staff consultation to take place in the Autumn term prior to the December FGB.	1.
3	Governing Board Business	
3.1	Visits:- NM had visited for the premises inspection. DF, MR & GG had visited to carry out an RE department review. DF commented he felt it should be recognised what amazing work the Chaplain Niklas Carlsson had done.	
3.2	Training – NW reminded all governors to send her certification of any training done to be held on the school's log.	
4	Headteacher's Report (<i>previously distributed</i>) RT highlighted various points in the report, including:- 4.1 Under Catholic Life:- • he reiterated DF's comment about what a great job Niklas Carlsson (NC) has done, • he also thanked FFM who has introduced weekly confessions, • pupils now realise the chapel is open for prayer • they are holding class masses, one class come to mass at a time and half of the boys generally opt to go, but they have the choice themselves rather something they are forced to do. The chaplain tees them up the week before it is their turn. • DF has done training on Catholic Social Teaching and raised awareness with the staff. • NC produces outlines for morning prayer which gives consistency. • Chapel prefects. RT said that staffing issues had caused challenges for the RE department this year., but that the department would be strengthened by new appointments next year. Mr Lawton had done a good job of 'holding the fort' in the meantime. A governor asked if the newly appointed Deputies will help with the delivery of RE or developing 'Catholic life'? RT confirmed that Phil Bennett will get involved in the 'Catholic life' strand..	
4.2	Admissions – the picture seems to be positive. There is the open day tomorrow (10.7.25).	
4.3	School Improvement priorities – There has been the focus on quality of teaching and good learning habits built through routines. They continue the work on behaviour. The key thing will be consistency of staff actions. Their report details the focus on leadership; estates and finance; schedule of governor visits; key information including the SEND summary; curriculum changes; inspections from	



	CSI and the 2025 framework.	
4.4	Deficit recovery – this was part of the reason for restructure of the SLT. The financial position is looking much more positive. There is projected to be an in year surplus in the next financial year 26/27 and the school to be clear of deficit in 28/29. This year's leavers costs will be £1.1m and amount to 13.4 FTE so with the replacements being 6.8FTE this amount to savings of £540K. Support staff figures are not listed because the ranges are narrower and therefore any changes are approximately cost neutral except when roles are withdrawn or introduced..	
4.5	The larger capital projects are listed.	
4.6	Contracts - the Co Chairs of the Resources committee have done lots with regard to the utilities contracts and they have reduced the grounds maintenance contract costs. With regard to the Harrisons catering contract, the staff are great, but the contract was due to finish and they have extended it for 2 terms to allow them time to review. Cleanology are due in on Monday because the costs have risen and although there have been some improvements, they are not monitoring the hours and value for money. A governor confirmed that he had checked that the school's check in and out system could be used for the cleaners. The Chair of Governors clarified for the board that the reason Harrisons had the contract was due to the previous company going bankrupt and Harrisons were the only company who would take the contract on. As part of the contract, Harrisons had provided shelter facilities and equipment during Covid and the costs of these will be repaid by December. A governor added that they have told Harrisons that the school will be going out to tender. The Chair of Governors added that once the new DFO is in role from September they will be able to look at this contract and once the 2 deputies and SLT is in place the board should become less operational and will be able to step back over the next 18 months.	
4.7	RT also advised regarding the completed capital projects that previously there had been limited support from the Archdiocese but this was changing and Marc Smith at Synergy was scoping out for projects which are 90% diocese-funded. The urgent outstanding projects are £170K for the science block, therefore costing the school £17K. However, this will not include the floors or false ceilings). There had been a survey done of the fire doors but many of those will be in the science block, therefore included within the £170K. The Chair detailed for governors how the system worked with Stat Log being the system used by the diocese for all maintenance jobs in excess of £2K, to allow them to have oversight of what is going on. Synergy is the external company of builders, surveyors etc who take the jobs from Stat Log and get the quotes. JF had previously not been using that system and owed the diocese money; now the school is paying them back, the relationship with the diocese has hugely improved. RT confirmed that the diocese will do the 6th form toilets.	
4.8	Part B minutes.	



4.9	Suspensions – RT advised that last year was a record year for numbers and this one had also started that way. However, in the last 2 half terms they had come down to single figures which he hoped was a reflection of something good. A governor asked if RT had to be involved in all of these? RT confirmed the final decisions were his. A governor asked if it was possible on suspensions to possibly have trending data from previous years for comparison? Another governor asked with regard to the reasons for suspensions, please could they be given a key of descriptors? RT agreed it was possible to configure the data differently to give more flavour – ACTION.	2.
4.10	Exam predictions – RT commented that given the weaker Y13 cohort it will be difficult to achieve the same absolute results at A level, but there should be an improvement on value added. JF had been named as 1 of only 3 schools in the borough with above-average progress at both GCSE and A Level. Regarding GCSEs, they have the most improved P8 in the diocese. This Y11 cohort had no previous KS2 data, therefore they had to predict P8 based on CATs. There is a sense that in this Y11 cohort there are fewer high fliers and they had a difficult run up to their GCSEs due to the change from a 3 year to 2 year KS4.	
4.11	A governor asked about the Catherine class and what were the plans for the current Y7 class in Y8? RT advised that Catherine predated him joining the school, but the intention had always been for it to be as a way into mainstream. The plan was always to integrate the current Y7 into Y8. The same governor commented this would mean more SEN pupils in class. RT agreed and said that having only six classes would present some challenges. Unfortunately, a seventh class is currently unaffordable. The governor added that the LA knows that JF is good for SEN so directs pupils here. RT said that JF ended up – with the best of intentions - overpromising and underdelivering because we do not have sufficient resources to meet need in all cases. The perception from out of borough is that Catherine is a funded resource which it is not. The number of EHCPs is increasing nationally but JF is getting a significant number of boys whose needs cannot be met. A governor asked what was happening to the staff from Catherine? RT advised 1 had been redeployed and 1 was leaving. Katie Hall has the largest teaching load for a secondary SENDCO in the borough, she has been overworking and that is unsustainable. She will be doing interventions and ensuring there is inclusive and adaptive class teaching.	
4.12	A governor asked if there remained any vacancies for September? RT confirmed the school is fully staffed.	
4.13	A governor asked whether the JF Old Boys' Facebook page was on their radar, as he had seen it and felt it did not given the best impression of the school. Were prospective parents to be looking at it, it would not be a positive picture. Whilst there was a lot on there which was positive, there was also	



4.14 4.15	some very negative. The Chair asked if he would also take it up with the links to the Old Boys to see who controls the content. RT confirmed he would check this out - ACTION. Staff absence – a governor asked about the number of people off sick as being 3.7 at any one time. A governor asked what level is deemed an expected level of sickness within the education sector? RT advised that the figures are skewed by a small number of staff with significant absence issues which were being addressed. He explained the scope of the triggers. There is currently one member of staff on long term sick. He has held meetings with the unions, including about the policies and one union suggestion was to have a Leave Policy separate from the Sickness and Absence Management policy. Sickness was not generally a problem, but other forms of leave were less controlled. A governor asked if they conduct return to work interviews after every period of leave? RT confirmed they do. He said that the Sickness and Absence Policy follows the Catholic Education Service model but with some additional local elements, but they do not have anything e.g. for carer's leave. He feels that it would be helpful to have clarity about these types of leave. A governor said from her professional background absence management was a minefield and the school needs to have HR support, but also to look at the HR support in terms of how much they get and is it quality support. RT agreed that the HR support had been patchy when they used Strictly Education last year. This year they have contracted with CEP who have 3 HR advisors. They are good and will come into the school but the only issue is that because there are just 3 of them, getting help quickly is not always available. There is no helpline. The Vice Chair advised that the school also uses professional legal advice and this is usually very sound. The Chair added that once they have a DFO in post, this will take some of the pressure off RT. He has not had anybody on site to support him with this type of issue, but the person recruited will have HR expertise. The Chair concluded there is a lot of information in the HT report and there are lots of positives which the governing board has ensured have happened, including the relationship with the diocese which has made a huge difference. It is important to have on record what has been achieved.	3.
5 5.1	Committee Reports Resources Committee – presented by NM & ATi The Co-Chair detailed, as previously discussed, that the deficit will go into surplus, whilst a lot can change this gives progress from the work done in the DRP working party. They have been holding 2 meetings per month. The Harrisons loan and the diocese loan will be paid back, therefore the budget can put aside funds for capital equipment.	



	The 3 key projects have been the energy, catering and grounds maintenance. The next envisaged is solar panels. There were 9 candidates for the DFO role and on Friday (11.7.25) they will be interviewing the shortlisted 4 candidates. Revenue is coming in gradually from lettings. RT added there are 3 camps in over the summer. The Co-Chair clarified for governors that all the capital projects listed a coming from government delegated funding and were not part of the governors' fund. He detailed that the lockdown system had been absolutely needed and the fire doors were to make the school fully compliant. Once these projects are done, the school can use the governors' fund for the nice-to-have things. He outlined that there will be IT projects coming up because a lot of the equipment is coming to the end of its life and some of these will be big budget items.	
5.2	Teaching Learning & Standards Committee - <i>presented by GG</i> The Chair detailed that the TL&S working party had worked on the restructure and the DRP. The full committee had presentations from the Head Boy and Deputy Head Boy which were brilliant. There were also presentations from 2 staff – Mr Tomlinson Head of Y11 who had detailed the range of strategies they were using to support the boys. Also from Mr Gamage who gave any overview of the enrichment programme. All of these showed the school at its best. Policies remain a work in progress – they are setting up a working party to review these in September. There was a discussion about the 6th form to go co-ed where the governors expressed mixed opinions. Now it was for RT to decide if and when this will go to the FGB for a decision. Another governor added that any change would at the earliest be 2027 because they would need to advise the diocese a year ahead.	
6	Catholic Life – covered under the Headteacher's report.	
7	Safeguarding RT advised they had received a visit from Hayley Cameron from Sutton LA to review practices in the school. KCSIE has just been revised but chnages are minor. Maria Lala has taken over as the Inclusion and Safeguarding Officer, as a replacement for Andrea Highfield who left earlier in the year. NM said he had seen a very useful summary of the changes in KCSIE, he will send this to everyone to read – ACTION.	4.
8	Policies for Review The governors were asked to review the Complaints Policy which had already been presented to the TL&S committee.	



	There were no questions or comments. Decision – The governors approved the Complaints Policy.	
9	AOB	
9.1	See previous agenda item.	
9.2	Part B minutes.	
9.3	Part B minutes.	
9.4	RT distributed email communication received from a member of staff, also representing other staff, suggesting that the Wellbeing Garden should either be renamed after or have a plaque dedicated to Andrew Dean who is leaving, in recognition of all the work he has done for the school. RT had confirmed this would be a decision of the FGB. A governor said their recollection was that the Wellbeing Garden was linked with a former student who had died, there is a memorial tree for him. The Chair said he had discussed this already with RT and the Vice Chair to gauge an initial reaction as to whether this was appropriate to name anything in the school after a member of staff, as there were many other names which sprang to mind who had not been recognised in this way and named three long-serving and well known former Deputy Heads and a Head of Music as examples. There was general discussion and governors were asked to vote. Decision – the governors were unanimous that this should not go ahead. A governor asked who would write to Markus Ford in response? The Chair said he would do this on behalf of the board of governors – ACTION.	5.
	Closure of Meeting The Chair referred governors to the list of FGB and committee meetings for the 25/26 academic year. The meeting was closed at 8pm by the Chair.	

Signed: _____	Print Name: _____
Date: _____	



Outstanding Actions and Actions 2024 - 2025

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 18th September 2024					
9	TNS to review the EDI Policy in liaison with SN	TNS / SN	Nov mtg	c/f 28.11.24 / 9.7.25	Open
12	MAT presentations for mid 2025	AT / RT	2025/tbc	Autumn term 26	Open
Meeting of 27th November 2024					
13	JB to report back on outstanding statutory governor documentation.	JB	ASAP	c/f NW & JB to liaise.	Completed
14	RT to ask TS to put together a business case to be presented as one bundle to the CoG. The timeframe being only once it was presented could it be scrutinised by the DRP governors.	RT / TS	ASAP	c/f 2.4.25. further information required.	Completed
Meeting of 2nd April 2025					
1	NW to distribute National College safeguarding link and government Prevent link. Governors to send their certification back to her.	NW – all govs	a.s.a.p.		Completed
2	DRP to report to the next FGB on the outcome of the rugby festival decision.	DRP	9.7.25		Completed
3	RT to check about liaison with parishes about open days.	RT	a.s.a.p.		Completed
Meeting of 9th July 2025					
1.	Parent and staff consultation regarding change to the 6 th form uniform to be held.	RT / DJ	Prior to 3.12.25		Open
2.	Configure future suspension data with previous year trends.	RT	Ongoing		Open
3.	Check out the JF Old Boys Facebook page and who controls the content.	RT	ASAP		Open
4.	NM to send the summary of changes of KCSIE to governors.	NM	ASAP		Open
5.	Letter to Markus Ford with regard to his request.	AT	ASAP		Open