



Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting – Part A
Held on 27th November 2024 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	Present (until 7.45pm)
Mr N McEvilly (NM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Dr A McGowan (AM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Father F Murphy (FFM)	Foundation Governor	Present (until 7pm)
Dr T Newman Sanders (TNS)	Foundation Governor	Absent
Ms M Ryan (MR)	Foundation Governor	Present (until 7.40pm)
Mr A Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mrs J Cole (JC)	Parent Governor	Present
Mrs N Walsh (NW)	Parent Governor	Present (until 7.30pm)
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 T Street (TS) – Head of Rugby
Mr B Walder (BW) – Schools Management Services Ltd
Mrs J Beeson (JB) - CEP Governance Clerk

	Minutes	
	Welcome and Opening FFM opened the meeting with a prayer.	
1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from: TNS which were accepted. 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 18th September 2024 The Chair said he was taking the minutes as read, there were no further questions or comments. DECISION: Governors agreed that the Part A minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2024 were a true and accurate record of the meeting. <u>Update on Actions</u> 1. MR confirmed there were still issues with her JF email address. She had been in contact with Reuben but the solution had not proven workable. AM confirmed that hers had been reset but was not yet tested – c/f action. 2. Link governors – AT confirmed that he had sent this out but since RT had added some further categories. AT will resend the updated list for governors to propose their willingness to take on the link role – c/f action. 3. Completed. 4. Safeguarding training – only some of the governors had completed due to potential confusion on	



	the access format. AT will resend the link for governors to complete and governors were to forward their completion certification to JB – c/f action. 5. Completed. 6. Completed – RT confirmed they have not been given the actual dates of the inspection, but had a dry-run format on 30.1.25. 7. EDI policy update – SN confirmed she had liaised with TNS but they had not discussed further c/f action. 8. Completed – RT confirmed that they had looked at the guidance and decided it would be dealt with through the RHSE and Equality policies rather than have a specific policy.	
3	Governing Board Business	
3.1	Phil Hall was welcomed as the newly-elected staff governor.	
3.2	Juliette Cole had been re-elected as a parent governor for a further four year term of office.	
3.3	Governor visits – DF, GG and MR had visited the RE department; DF was involved in work on the spiritual life in the school; JC had visited to review the SCR; TR had observed the Catherine class and talked about the school's SEN provision.	
3.4	Governor training – NW maintains a database of governor training, so asked if any governors would advise her of any they undertook. The safeguarding training is still outstanding for various governors (see action 4)	
3.5	RCAOS Code of Conduct for Governors – AT outlined that even though the school has its own governor Code of Conduct which had been signed off at the September meeting, this was a required additional document. He asked for any outstanding returns to be made to JB and for an update of returns (including pecuniary interest outstanding returns to be advised to him) – ACTION.	
4	Report on recent State Schools' Rugby Tournament – <i>presented by Tom Street, Head of Rugby</i> <i>(Tournament brochure and overview presentation distributed)</i>	
4.1	TS outlined that his dream to set up a state schools' tournament had been long held, as there are not enough opportunities for pupils in the state sector to showcase their talent. JF used to participate in the prestigious St Joseph's Rugby Festival but this now only includes independent schools so they had lost their place to Trinity. He had put this together with the help of Mr Dean and Mrs Butterworth. The JF festival had included 12 teams from top state schools, with 270 students able to showcase their ability. Already 2 scholarships from universities had been received as a result of it. The festival had been live-streamed and received 35000 views. The revenue was £56000 and the profit £5911. The festival had been covered by the BBC, Daily Mail, Times, Telegraph and Rugby World.	
4.2	A former student/alumni of the school, Peter Bennett (PB) had funded the accommodation for all participants and they had developed strong links with the Hilton Group which they will continue to use for such things as their rugby dinners and other events not simply for sporting events. TS said they would market the school using the video already created at the event. He felt this event had enhanced the wider reputation and profile of the school, attracting academies and university scouts. Equally importantly it had created lasting memories for students of their time at JF. They had attracted sponsorship giving all 12 teams their own sponsor. 5 of the sponsors have already identified that they want to do it again next time. Banners of the sponsors were around the ground. Rugby World had referred to it as 'a seismic moment for state school rugby'. They have also received	



	positive individual feedback from the Directors of Rugby and Headteachers of the schools involved.	
4.3	They had already been approached by 8 more schools who want to be involved next time. The 11 visiting schools all want to be included again. The referees all want to come back too. The aim is to push the tournament to 16 schools. TS praised the contribution made by a team of parents (including Governor NW) who worked tirelessly throughout the event on marshalling, food and drink provision etc. He said this contributed to the success of the tournament and they had received multiple positive comments from visiting parents about the nice feeling created by JF. The tournament was visited by lots of alumni including Ben Waghorn who was at the school 2 years ago and now has a professional rugby contract with Harlequins. There had been suggestions of other things they might do next time to expand the offer in terms of food, marquees etc.	
4.4	Next steps – PB has said he will continue his sponsorship for 3 years. Therefore, the proposal/aim is that in year 2 they will have 16 teams generating a profit of £20000; year 3 introduce a one day girls' competition; year 5 a national state schools 7s festival. They have to establish how to make sport self-sustainable. They also aspire to mirror this for cricket, basketball and beyond sport for a national state school choir festival. The goal is for JF to be the first in other areas, be sustainable and bring people together.	
4.5	He opened the floor to governors' questions. A governor asked where did the profit achieved go? TS replied it will go into the tournament for next year and allow them to grow it. A governor asked what age group the boys were? TS said they were Under 18s, rather than Under 16s to avoid promising Under 16s being poached for Private School 6th forms. A governor asked what capacity there was and how big could it be? TS said 16 teams as a maximum. A governor asked about the projected £20000 profit projected and how this would be made? TS said their aim was to keep the cost of entry as low as possible, so each team would have a sponsor of £2500. Some teams already have their own sponsors. A governor asked if there were to be any loss where would that money come from? TS replied that PB has committed to cover any shortfall if it arose. The Chair of governors (AT) commented that this was a very ambitious enterprise and that when he had given permission for it to go ahead it was for a one-off event at no cost to the school. Now TS was looking to establish something on a long term basis, so the governors would have to think about it because of the school's finances are an issue. The tournament has the JF name attached and	



therefore if anything went wrong, the school would have to deal with it. He asked given the title of a State School Festival, whether there was any suggestion that the competition might move around the schools involved?

TS replied that his vision was to keep it as a vehicle for JF to market to alumni, the shortfall was covered and it was a massively positive thing for the school. He said it had never been made clear to him that it was only for one year.

AT commented that what they had achieved was remarkable but required further consideration.

A governor stressed that all the costs involved were covered and next year had also been committed to by PB.

A governor asked what insurance had been used to cover the event?

TS replied they used Team Medic, doctors and Return to Play which is a concussion protocol. They had covered this all free of charge. There were also 2 medical vans which included cover for any visitors attending not only the players. He said that Andrew Dean had sorted out separate insurance cover for the event.

A governor asked how much this had cost?

TS said he did not know that.

A governor asked what was the anticipated costs for next year and how much of this was PB willing to cover as she felt there had to be some maximum involved? She also asked about what risk assessments and public liability cover was in place? Without this sort of information she felt it was impossible for governors to make an informed decision. There must be a definitive document setting out the terms and conditions in place.

AT agreed that the governing body needed to see a business case, with all the issues laid out because JF's governing body would be legally liable. It is wonderful that PB will sponsor the event, but he asked if there was a written agreement rather than a gentleman's verbal agreement in place so that the school has surety of the commitment. CoG emphasised that this was an important missing piece with a rationale.

A governor said as part of the cost benefit analysis that the governors should also take into account the rebuilding of the school's reputation which this tournament was very aligned with. It was a great vehicle for promoting the school.

A governor agreed that it was great for the school and the cultural capital, but felt that the governing body needed to see the full proposal and business case with all the level of detail.

A governor said the tournament had brought JF to the attention of a lot of rugby clubs and it was getting the school's reputation out to the wider community.

A governor said he thought it was spectacular and wondered if one of the governors with a business background might be involved in creating the business case to be able to bounce ideas with.

A governor said she endorsed all the positives around the tournament, however there is a need to look at all the aspects covered – legal, insurance etc.

A governor observed that these queries did not negate the amazing work done, just that the



governors wanted to ensure the school is safeguarded on all grounds.
A governor asked about how the food provision had been managed because from his work background and contacts would be able to support any future event.

A governor asked what time of year they were proposing to hold it next time?

TS said it would be the same time as this year i.e. around the October half term weekend.

A governor asked what was the rough estimate of people on the site?

TS said this varied because of the dreadful weather on the Sunday.

The same governor asked if they had had to limit numbers?

TS said they would have to, but in terms of the local residents they had contacted them all about the event and received several messages of thanks for the early notification.

NW said that they had issued wristbands on entry to limit/monitor the numbers attending.

The Chair of governors thanked TS for his presentation and role in running the tournament which he said had been amazing.

TS asked if there is a real possibility that they might not be allowed to run the tournament next year?

AT replied that this would be for the governors to decide based on the business case.

(TS left the meeting at 6.15pm)

4.6 AT commented that he was very impressed at what had been achieved, but the extent of it had not been discussed, just a conversation with RT and AT. As a result it had never come to governors to approve even as Chair's action. It had simply been presented that they had always been involved with St Joseph's and having been removed from that tournament, they should have a go at doing it themselves. There was never the slightest suggestion that it would be a long term project, and this had a huge implication and therefore was a decision for the governors whether it went ahead. If it becomes a regular fixture it has got to be done properly. There are cost implications for the school because staff are being paid to work at the weekends and also if they are organising this they are not doing wider school responsibilities.

A governor commented that the staff give a lot of their time and she thinks it should be looked on as a positive. The governors should support them.

A governor replied that he agreed but they must also be aware this is a school not a rugby department. The school is a lot more than just rugby or sport. The sports department have done this without much consultation with the school. It has to be a whole school exercise. If they are going to carry on running the tournament, it is the governing body's legal responsibility, and they have to be certain that everything is being done correctly.

A governor added it was also about the cost of how this was run? How many children were involved and how much does it fit into the extra-curricular timetable and how much impact did it have on the children's education and learning?

A governor said that it was also about the marketing of the school and could it be seen as just a rugby school? The balance has to be drawn and therefore the governors should be careful in this



	deliberation. A governor said he recommended that it goes ahead again. A governor commented that staff get paid and the current school finances were 'like a sieve'. RT replied that 5 staff were paid for it and that will come out of the sponsorship by PB. A governor said he felt a £20000 profit target was very ambitious. A governor said a lot of assumptions had occurred and if it were to go ahead next year that the governors need to know there has been sufficient planning in terms of risk assessments, health and safety, indemnity insurance etc. There appeared to be too many assumptions and little documented. Much was based on the goodwill which had gone into it. She was in favour of the benefits but before it goes ahead that the governors have done their own due diligence. A governor proposed that the PE team get professional advice and get the documentation to the governors for the next meeting. The Chair asked for RT to comment who said it was a great event for the school and he agreed with the possibility of great publicity, but his reservations were that there are a lot of pupils and is this the best use of the resources for the number of pupils in the school? A governor said there also needed to be a mapping of enrichment for all pupils to assess their entitlement plus staff costs and time. A governor commented it was hard to quantify the knock-on effect in the area of marketing in terms of enhancing 'bums on seats' and future survival.	
4.7	A governor proposed the governing body agreed in principle that the tournament can go ahead subject to all the points which have been discussed and seeing a proper business plan, together with some written undertaking from PB that he has underwritten the event. They have done a stunningly good job but this is not giving them the agreement to go on repeatedly. He suggested the organising team should be given until the end of the term to present their business case. A governor said they did not want to see a 'Mickey Mouse' business plan so the team might need help in preparing it. A governor commented that PB is a very qualified businessman, as are other alumni involved, who would be more than able to support the organising team to prepare one. The governing body need to be given full details and be reassured that all aspects are covered. A governor suggested this was a tight turnaround for a draft and was that a little unfair? A governor replied that if they want to run this next year, they will need to have many things in place by then with interested parties.	
4.8	A governor disagreed that this should be given any agreement in principle until they have received the document. The governors should neither agree nor disagree at this point, otherwise it is hard to come back from that. A governor agreed with this not being the stage to agree in principle before they have done any analysis but give the commitment any agreement would be subject to the caveat of	



4.9 4.10 4.11	finances/legals/insurance being presented and approved. A governor added that there should already be a risk assessment and some preparation in place from the event this year, so some of the work required for the business plan is in theory already done. A governor said that it needs to be established whether this is a commercial event. A lot of hard work went into this year's event but to take it to the next level needs to have everything in place The Chair of governors (CoG) said that the governors therefore need to establish what the timeframe should be for presentation of the business case. Another governor said it should be also decided to whom it is presented and when because there is no FGB again until the end of next term. The CoG felt that the business plan would have to be circulated to the governors by email and agreed by email rather than he made a Chair's action. A governor thought it might take too much time for all the factors in the business plan to be assessed and be in place, so potentially they were looking more at this being a bi-annual event due to all the resources it required. A governor commented that would exclude every alternate year group from taking part. A governor felt that procedurally the decision should not be made by email, rather a proper meeting by Zoom or that they should appoint 2-3 governors to make the decision on the governing body's behalf. The CoG said RT should speak to TS to ask him to put something together covering the issues and the sooner they get that back to the governors the sooner they can give a decision having taken professional advice. The governors do not want to stop it happening but it is for them to make a case which mitigates the risks and protects the school. The timeframe would be driven by the organising team and that the information should come in one bundle not be drip-fed. He proposed that the Debt Recovery Working Party (DRP) which includes himself, GG, NM, ATi should make the decision - ACTION. Decision - it was agreed that this course of action proposed by AT should be the way forward in deciding on behalf of the governing body whether the 2025 Rugby Tournament was able to take place at John Fisher.	15.
5 5.1	Committee Reports Resources Committee – presented by BW of SMS Ltd. AT introduced BW to the FGB giving the background of the financial management staffing in the school over the last year. He said the governors had been given to understand that the school would have an in-year deficit of £125K and an accumulative deficit of c£500K, but that with the progress being made that within 3-4 years the school would be back in surplus and have repaid the outstanding debt to Sutton LA. However, it turned out mistakes had been made in the year end accounts for 23-24. In that the Archbishop wants the school to have joined a MAT within 2 years, this influenced the decision not to recruit another finance manager as they would then have to make that person redundant. Sutton LA had recommended BW's company as had the Archdiocese; hence the school had appointed	



	them initially to do a forensic audit of the last 3 years so as to establish the true position and how we got to this point. SMS had since had to take over the actual financial management because the school does not have this expertise in house.	
5.2	BW outlined that they had presented to the Resources Committee on 13.11.24 and given an initial report; today (27.11.24) they had re-run the figures having processed all the back pay for support staff and teachers (of which 85% of the salaries were correct excluding things like TLRs and some threshold increases – all of which will be corrected in the December payroll). This allowed them to feed in the figures for this month and the latest figures for November are very close to what they said in the initial report. There are some other general issues to look at but then they can move onto the forensic analysis. The 6 other bank accounts have not yet been reviewed. They need to understand what is going through these accounts and whether they should be fed into the main account.	
5.3	The whole structure needs looking at. Income is largely from the LA which totals £8.4m of which £7.5m of that is known because it is based on the per-pupil funding model. In terms of expenditure, the school has bought a monitoring package which will allow them to project the numbers with a degree of certainty. All the information on the spreadsheet distributed is coming from the school's financial system (FMS). The forecast is to the end of March, normally SMS would also present a written report to support the numbers, but this was only generated today.	
5.4	Of the £8.4m the school is on track to spend £9.1m i.e. a £700K in-year overspend. Of this £112K was the error from last year already spoken about. This is a significant overspend. There is also a £670K deficit brought forward from last year which places the school £1.3m in deficit.	
5.5	The LA are very concerned and they have a meeting with the LA scheduled for 12.12.24. There are a lot of challenges to get cash, therefore they have to negotiate with the LA for cash advances and the LA have been very supportive. £930K additional cash has been advanced. The DRP now need to write a plan of how they will reduce the debt. There will be integrated curriculum planning and all non-staffing will be reviewed but based on benchmarking is in line with comparative schools. The main area to target has to be the teaching staff which are significantly higher to bring them back in line. There is an embargo on other areas of expenditure where there may be some smaller savings. No money is yet allocated from lettings so that will be chased up.	
5.6	The 2nd page is the balance sheet. There have been 3 payroll providers over the last 3 years and no reconciliations done with the control accounts. Therefore, they have to go through all of these to understand why the school had not previously run out of cash before and what has changed? A governor asked about the impact of the NI increases? BW replied that the government will fund these like they did the pay grants but it will be based on a per pupil formula. Due to JF spending more on staff they will lose out from this as the funding will not cover the cost. The school must get its expenditure in line with the norm. The formula is based on roughly a MPS6 whereas JF have the majority of staff on UPS.	
5.7	AT confirmed that for their meeting with the LA they have to have credibility to let them know that the school and governors know what has happened. They do not charge the school interest on the loan but quite rightly want to know when/how it will be repaid. YE said that she is aware of several LAs which would not allow a school to have continued like this	



	and Sutton have been generous.	
5.8	A governor said it would be helpful to know the differential of the JF staff bill and the funding received. It was also for them to look at the income and expenditure compared with other schools. She also felt the way the money is distributed across the school in terms of the staffing structure and they need to be mindful of the full picture. BW replied that the school on non-staffing expenditure and support staff is in line, it is just the teaching staff and the TLRs are high. He said all the metrics are done in the integrated planning system based on teacher contact time. JF's average is 0.68 whereas it should be 0.78 – he had not yet done the analysis across the different subjects. There are plenty of options but this cannot be changed overnight. Redundancy has cost involved therefore there are no savings, because the school picks up the costs, therefore it has to be managed through natural wastage. A governor said this approach took several years for that to happen. The CoG thanked BW for this presentation. <i>(BW left the meeting)</i>	
5.9	Admissions Committee <i>(presented by SN)</i> SN highlighted that the committee had met on 10.10.24. to look at the final applications as referenced in RT's report and held an Admissions categorisation meeting on 25.11.24. They had reviewed the Admissions Policy 2026 and agreed a minor change to provide clarification about category A students, therefore only being a clarification did not have to go to consultation. They had also considered whether a category for the children of staff should be detailed. The decision was the provisions in the policy were adequate. The CoG commented that thanks to Kirsty and SN the categorisation meeting had run very smoothly. He thanked all the governors who had participated.	
5.10	Teaching Learning & Standards Committee <i>(presented by GG – report distributed)</i> GG highlighted that the committee had been given an excellent presentation at their meeting on 9.10.24 by the Head of 6th Form. There are now 103 pupils in Y12 and the number of A* grades achieved in summer 2024 had improved. The entry criteria for the 6th form had been reviewed with minimum grades for entry, however it should be noted by governors that this had financial implications. At the meeting on 20.11.24. the committee had an in depth presentation by Nick Owen on A level and GCSEs and the PPE data. They had also been given a very interesting overview by Iestyn Jones on subject reviews which took a new approach and targeted pupils to follow and assess their learning while peer led personalised learning communities for teachers had been set up. Teachers could choose which learning community they joined. The external consultant review in October had given the AHTs training by Sharon Waterman in how to do book looks beyond compliance, i.e. going to the pupil's depth of learning demonstrated by the book. On 22.11.24 this was cascaded by SLT to all subject leaders.	
6	Headteacher's Report <i>(previously distributed)</i>	



	RT highlighted various points	
6.1	The new chaplain is in role and doing very well; they were preparing for a dry-run of the CSI with which DF was helping them; they plan to introduce the Oscar Romero award; the recent school review had been very well received and they were already implementing some of the suggestions; the partnership with Greenshaw Learning was going well.	
6.2	Vaping was an area of concern as this is a vehicle being used for drugs. This is the school's current focus for action.	
6.3	Admissions – numbers of application was up and might increase again in December with late applications, which is very positive set against the background of falling numbers in Y6. Gaps in pupil numbers are being filled from the waiting list, with a PAN of 180 in Y7-9, 189 in Y10-11 and the intention to increase the numbers in the 6 th form.	
6.4	There had been 1 fixed term exclusion which was then rescinded when they had engaged with Croydon LA. There were 2 permanent exclusions involving drugs. A governor asked if the police had been involved? RT said they had. A governor asked if among the exclusions there were repeat offenders? RT replied 7 had more than 1, so the vast majority were not repeats. The same governor asked whether managed moves were being used? RT replied these were harder to get at the moment	
6.5	There are 263 students on the SEN register. A governor asked how many had EHCPs? RT replied it was around 27 of them. The SEN numbers were increasing across the board in the LA and nationally. A governor commented there were more in Y7 and Y8 than the higher years and was this a trend? RT said it was a reflection of the national trend. TR (Link governor for SEN) commented that a half of those excluded were on the SEN register, which made them over-represented. RT said this reflected the national trend also. YE said she had spoken recently to the Head of the Virtual School who had a placement at JF and commented they had said that Catherine was amazing. PH (staff governor) commented that this only covered Y7 and Y8 which meant that when those students went into Y9 they find it exceedingly challenging because they cannot be supported as they have been in Catherine. A governor added that Sutton LA knows JF as being good for its SEN provision so recommends it,	



	which might contribute to why the numbers are increasing.	
7	Safeguarding Due to time constraints, the CoG proposed that RT's report was circulated by email to governors – ACTION.	15.
8 8.1	Policies for Review (<i>previously distributed</i>) Health & Safety Policy. AM commented that she had some amendments to propose, it was agreed that she would let RT have these to be resubmitted for approval at the meeting on 4.12.24 – ACTION.	16.
9	Confidential (PH left the meeting – 7.45pm) See part B minutes.	
	Closure of Meeting The meeting was closed at 20.00 by the Chair. FGB meetings this academic year:- • Wednesday 2nd April 2025 • Wednesday 9th July 2025	

Signed: _____	Print Name: _____
Date: _____	

Outstanding Actions and Actions arising from 2024 - 2025

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 18th September 2024					
2	Governor email addresses to be checked for problems.	RT	Immediately	c/f from 28.11.24 still outstanding emails.	Open
4	TL&S committee asked to come up with academic link governor roles	GG / TL&S	Autumn term	c/f from 28.11.24	Open
6A	Safeguarding training link to be resent	AT	Immediately	c/f from 28.11.24	Open
6B	Governors to send certificate to Clerk	All govs		c/f from 28.11.24	Open
6C	Letter of assurance for the school to confirm governor training on KCSIE	JB / RT	Upon completion by all governor	c/f from 28.11.24	Open
9	TNS to review the EDI Policy in liaison with SN	TNS / SN	Nov mtg	c/f from 28.11.24	Open
11	Terminology of 'statemented pupils' to be amended.	RT	Nov mtg	As part of EDI Policy	Open



				review	
12	MAT presentations for mid 2025	AT / RT	2025/tbc		Open
Meeting of 27th November 2024					
13	JB to report back on outstanding statutory governor documentation.	JB	ASAP		Open
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		Open
15	RT to distribute the Safeguarding Report to governors by email.	RT	ASAP		Open
16	AM to send H&S policy amendments to RT for resubmission at the next FGB	AM / RT	4.12.24	Agenda item	Open