



FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
WEDNESDAY 26th APRIL 2023: 6.00PM AT THE SCHOOL

<u>Present:</u>	Jo Blunden (JB), Bridget Ditcham (BD), Rachel Farris (RF), Keith Hay (KH), Ben Hockley (BHo), Phillipa Irving (PI), Michelle Law (ML), Belinda Rowland (BR) and Heather Williams (HW).
<u>Also present:</u>	Lucy Earl (LE – Part), Vanessa Neale (VN- Deputy Headteacher) Rebecca Marr (Clerk), Jim Mathieson (JM -Part) and Carol Simpson (CS – Business Manager).
<u>Circulation:</u>	All Governors, Vanessa Neale and Carol Simpson.

Item No.	Agenda items/Discussions	Action
1.	<p>All were welcomed to the meeting particularly LE (teacher) and JM (School Improvement Officer from WBC).</p> <p><u>Apologies</u> Apologies were received and accepted from Bryony Harding and Lucy Hill.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Declaration of interests</u> No declaration of interests was made.</p>	
3.	<p><u>School Improvement officer report</u> Questions had been sent to JM in advance of the meeting. Answers to the questions were circulated in a document at the meeting. In addition, JM advised the FGB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FGB has asked the right questions. • The steering direction of the school is to ‘step inside and feel the difference’. The Governing Body has to be clear what this means and to celebrate this as you can feel the difference of this school as soon as you enter via the team teaching, open plan and no restrictive school uniform. • Governors should be asking the question ‘so what?’ when presented with data or information. • Within the data they need to challenge the exceptions. Ask for an anonymous sample of children and follow their progress. • Ensure they seek stakeholders’ views. 	

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

- Undertake regular visits to the school for a range of purposes. Identify the SDP priority in the visit report or give an overview of what governors saw and any matters to be brought to the FGB.
- Governors to review the SEF and ascertain the impact of the work done under the SDP.

JM was thanked for his report. JM left the meeting (6.25pm).

4. **Approve the minutes of 29th March 2023**
HW proposed the minutes of 29th March 2023 as a correct record. This was seconded by JB. **The minutes were approved with one abstention.**

5. **Matters arising**
Circulate the SIO's report from the meeting on 28th March 2023 – Done. Item closed.

Data to be broken down into subgroups of SEN, EAL, PP as well as providing progress data – Item closed.

Governors to advise what they would like the SIO to cover at the next FGB meeting and to ask for case studies if they would like to see them – Done. Item closed.

Amend the policies, place on the school website and advise staff – Done. Item closed.

Liaise outside the meeting regarding the benchmarking data the FGB would like the Business Manager to produce for the next meeting – Done. Item closed.

6. **Governing Body organisational matters**
None.

7. **Headteacher's report**
The Headteacher's report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Q: Attendance is heading in the right direction. What is this as a result of and are we still experiencing families taking unauthorised absence?
A: Our attendance of 97.8% which is well below the national average. All subgroups are being monitored. We are seeing an impact from meeting with families where absence is a concern and writing letters home. Staff have been excellent in identifying the children where there are concerns. We currently have 33 children being monitored for persistent absence which has been reduced from a much higher figure. We are also taking a reason for a pupil's lateness from their family. We are still receiving requests for absence but where it is unauthorised parents are made aware.

8. **School Development Plan (item 9 on the agenda)**
Governors were reminded to have a focus on the SDP during school visits and to follow this through in their report. All governor visits will feed into the SEF which assesses the impact of the SDP.

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

Q: When will the updated SEF be ready for governor input?
A: By the end of the academic year although we are hoping to provide a draft at the next FGB meeting in June.

9. **Part II matter (item 8 on the agenda)**

There are associated Part II minutes which cover confidential information.

10. **Year end 2022-23**

The end of the financial year accounts and a variance report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The FGB noted that an additional income of £19,000 had been received from WBC on the last day of the financial year for educating children from Ukraine.

Q: Has WBC given any steer on what this income is to be used for?

A: No.

The year ended in a small surplus which is a credit to CS, ML and the staff given the challenging financial year. It was noted that the school has been understaffed for the majority of the year which has created this surplus.

11. **Budget for 2023-24- and 3-year budget**

A draft budget for 2023-24 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Another confidential document was shared which has been placed with the Part II minutes relating to this agenda item.

The FGB were advised:

- The budget has been prepared on a worst-case scenario with us being fully staffed. Last year we saved £44,000 by being understaffed.
- One unknown cost is energy. We have been informed energy costs are reducing however WBC have advised us that there will be a 78% uplift from last year on our gas costs and 50% for electricity. WBC have also advised us that they will start charging us 30% for the solar energy we produce. We are not sure how much solar energy we produce as the equipment is broken. We are waiting WBC to fix this.
- Only a small sum has been allocated for resources.
- We receive the bare minimum of funding per pupil compared to other schools.
- The Government has confirmed that they will refund schools for any additional wage increase over 4% but not for anything under 4% which may impact the budget further.
- The school is generating income and we have seen an increase in lettings. However, ensuring we have the right number of lettings is important as too many impinges on our teaching and learning and the time of our SLT. It also means it is difficult for the school to use the hall for school events if it is booked by other users. We however wish to offer the hall for the benefit of our local community. Now we have a Site Controller we will be able to advertise the hire of our facilities more.

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

- A previous deficit budget was submitted and there was no response from WBC. The year ended with a surplus instead.
- The financial pressure on schools is causing many to have deficit budgets.
- The deficit is due to lowering pupil numbers and a reduction in funding rather than the management of the finances. Funding is based on the previous October census so the income in next year's budget will be lower again.

Q: Do we need to be concerned about cash flow if we submit a deficit budget?

A: No, we do not need to manage cashflow as we are a maintained school. We are required to speak to WBC if we submit a deficit budget so they can provide additional support.

Q: Can we look at other savings?

A: We can look at teaching and learning resources and support staff. Some schools, due to financial pressures, do not have TAs for part of the school day but TAs are imperative to how our school teaches and if we do not have them it will impact on the quality of our pupils' education. It is 9 years since our extension was built and we are starting to incur some maintenance and repair costs.

The FGB considered whether to submit a deficit budget.

Q: What is the consequence of submitting a deficit budget?

A: We need to submit a balanced budget unless we have the authority of WBC. We have asked WBC for permission, but we have not yet received a reply. WBC may wish to suggest some changes to the budget, but these cannot be enforced.

Q: Are we confident we can justify the TA hours?

A: Yes, due to the staffing structure we have. We ensure we are making full use of all our resources as effectively as possible. New staff are offered fixed term contracts and the annual conversation with staff about what hours they would like to work next year creates some flex however we would not want to reduce hours significantly.

The FGB concluded that the school is being as frugal as possible, and a realistic budget has to be submitted. The underfunding of schools is a national issue and one which is clearly reflected in our budget. The FGB welcomes WBC to look at our budget and to make suggestions.

The FGB unanimously approved the budget for submission to WBC.

The FGB were advised that a three-year budget also needs to be submitted. The deficit worsens over the three-year period due to an assumed very small increase in funding with all expenditure increasing by 2 or 3%. The FGB noted it would be a beneficial exercise to look at previous 3-year budgets submitted and compare to the actual. The 3-year budget was agreed to be submitted after WBC's visit.

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

12.

Benchmarking

The FGB had asked the school to benchmark on 2 red rag areas identified on the view my financial insights tool: teaching and teaching support staff and non-educational support staff. A benchmarking report had been circulated to the FGB prior to the meeting.

The report was discussed; a summary of which was:

- Of the like schools the DfE compared us to 37% have deficit budgets compared to the national average of 7.6%. This suggests schools with our characteristics are underfunded.
- We are spending less on teachers than the average of the comparable schools.
- The agency and supply cost balance out. Ours is slightly higher as we use teachers known to the pupils to cover PPA time.
- Our education support staff average was higher, but our SEND levels are generally higher than the comparable schools, so we have more 1:1 staff.
- The difference in the non-educational support staff can be attributed to comparable schools using external providers for their wrap around care whereas we have playworker salaries included in this budget line.

The FGB decided that there was no further action as a result of this benchmarking.

13.

Contract review

A document setting out the school's contracts with their value and review period had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Q: What is the process for the review of these contracts?

A: It is an internal working document and there are different notice periods for each contract. Before any are renewed, we ascertain if we are still receiving value for money.

Q: Is there anything strategic for the Governing Body to consider?

A: It is an operational document but on the SFVS the Governing Body confirm that they have reviewed contracts. It is worth looking at the WBC contracts to check we still receive value for money.

Q: What is IT support?

A: Curriculum development mostly with some training on software. This is a contract we are keeping an eye on to ensure it is value for money. Our IT Support company attend on our behalf and share good practice.

14.

Inventory update

It was noted that KH and BHo had undertaken an inventory check. All was in order and there are no issues to be reported to the FGB.

15.

Pupil premium/Sports funding

The FGB were referred to the respective documents on the website setting out the funding and the impact.

LE and HW left the meeting (7.30pm)

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

16.

National issues

The FGB were updated on the strike action being taken on 27th April and 2nd May. The school will prioritise any school opening for Year 6 given the proximity of SATS and a pre-arranged Year 4 trip to Ufton Court.

The decision to strike weighs heavily on teachers minds and this impacts wellbeing. The FGB noted that despite the media not portraying the strike accurately that they appreciated the situation teachers found themselves in.

17.

Training/School visits

17.1 Governor training attended – none attended since the last meeting.

17.2 Link governor visits – Visit report forms will be circulated following HW's 2 recent visits.

18.

Health and safety

Nothing to report.

19.

Staff wellbeing

The SLT have reviewed staff workload in particular the writing of reports.

20.

AOB

The FGB were advised that The Piggott School and Altwood Church of England School in Maidenhead are forming a multi academy trust. A letter has been sent to parents of both schools and the consultation process has begun. The FGB will discuss this further once more information is known to consider any implications on the Colleton community.

Governors were reminded of the training being offered by WBC.

All governors were warmly invited to attend the Foundation Stage drop-in session on 18th May.

CS was thanked for her work on the school finances and in preparing the budget.

21.

CPTA

A report was given to the FGB; the highlights of which were:

- The recent quiz night was really successful.
- Theme of 50th celebrations is 'Through the decades at Colleton'.
- Article to go in RG10 magazine in which a request for memories will be made for the 'Now and Then' exhibition.
- Progressing the £50 for 50 years suggestion.
- A photo/memory book to be released at Christmas along with some 50th merchandise (tea towels, tote bags, calendars etc.).
- Children to do a design for the ticket for the big summer event. Inflatable assault course, photo booth with decades themed props, 70s silent disco, food and ice cream. 80s

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....

cocktails at the bar. Lots of ideas for stalls. Separate Pool Party

- The cream tea event the PTA would like to defer back to the school/governors as they felt that the current PTA don't have the contacts with old alumni/staff. This would make the event more time consuming for volunteers to organise than the other things they have planned.

22. Date of next meeting – 13th June 2023

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.

Next steps:

- 1: Add SEF to the next agenda
- 2: Pupil premium and sports funding to be reviewed around the end of 2023
- 3: To arrange a health and safety visit outside of the meeting

RM

ALL

ML/JB

Signed:..... (Chair)

Dated:.....