

**GUILDHALL FEOFFMENT CP SCHOOL**

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Guildhall Feoffment School held at the school at 6pm on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Present: Fiona Catherine-Thompson (FCT) Deputy Headteacher  
 Shan K Don (SKD)  
 Ros King (RK) Chair  
 Kristian Lee (KL)  
 Andy Mathews (AM) Headteacher  
 Megan Rich (MR)  
 Tiffer Robinson (TR)  
 Colin Smith (CS)  
 Sumathi Sundram (SS)  
 Ben Tanner (BT) arrived 18.08

In attendance: Toby Cunningham (Governance Professional)

<b>1</b>	<b><u>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b>	
1.1	Apologies for absence were received from Emma Rees, Rachel Pryor and Lara Knights	
1.2	Governors consented to these absences.	
<b>2</b>	<b><u>PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS</u></b>	
2.1	No declarations of pecuniary or other interests regarding items on the agenda were made.	
2.2	Governors noted the requirement to update the register of pecuniary interests and to publish it on the school's website.	
<b>3</b>	<b><u>CHAIR'S ACTION / UPDATE</u></b>	
3.1	The Chair confirmed that no action had been taken.	
3.2	The Chair gave the following updates:  RK reminded Governors to put advance questions on GH by lunchtime on the day before the meeting at the latest. The staff needed time to consider the questions; answers will either be posted in the meeting folder or given during the meeting.  RK had been appointed Chair of the River Lark Catchment Partnership. She recently joined Y5 class on a river field trip. The pupils took water samples and tested them at school, the data was then uploaded onto the RLCP website so that pollution could be tracked along the	

	catchment area. This will be done on a weekly basis, and taken on by the Eco club in the summer term. It is a great opportunity for pupils to engage in meaningful citizen science.																															
<b>4</b>	<b><u>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</u></b>																															
	<p>RK Welcomed CS to the meeting after their appointment as co-opted governor.</p> <p>RK advised that she had undertaken training on Cyber Security. KL agreed to take responsibility for Cyber security as the link governor.</p> <p>National College training on cyber security can be found <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>AM advised that the training linked with elements of the KCSiE and the school was working with the Local Authority (LA) on compliance, and that the Governors' role was to monitor what the school was doing to meet compliance.</p> <p>RK advised that there was a 'Big Listen' consultation on the Ofsted website, anybody could take part and there was a link to engage pupils in the consultation.</p> <p>AM advised that the School Council would have a look at the consultation. AM advised that Ofsted were due in the next academic year, in recent months many schools had dropped from 'Outstanding' to 'good' but All Saints Primary School in Lawshall had maintained its 'Outstanding' rating.</p>																															
<b>5</b>	<b><u>MINUTES</u></b>																															
5.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (copy on GH), having previously been circulated, were <b>confirmed</b> and signed by the Chair																															
5.2	<b><u>Matters arising from the minutes</u></b>																															
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Agenda Item</th> <th>Action</th> <th>By Whom</th> <th>By When</th> <th>Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10.1</td> <td>LK will undertake the NC equivalent training and compare and report to board</td> <td>LK</td> <td>January</td> <td>Deferred/open</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.3</td> <td>Three year finance plan for capital expenditure and mid-term forecasting</td> <td>AM</td> <td>March</td> <td>closed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.3</td> <td>FCT advised that she was looking at technology grants and KL offered to help.</td> <td>FCT/KL</td> <td>March</td> <td>ongoing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>Public Sector Equality Duty deferred to next meeting</td> <td>AM</td> <td>March</td> <td>July</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>Budget Plan 2024/25 deferred to next meeting</td> <td>AM</td> <td>March</td> <td>open</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Agenda Item	Action	By Whom	By When	Status	10.1	LK will undertake the NC equivalent training and compare and report to board	LK	January	Deferred/open	6.3	Three year finance plan for capital expenditure and mid-term forecasting	AM	March	closed	6.3	FCT advised that she was looking at technology grants and KL offered to help.	FCT/KL	March	ongoing	14	Public Sector Equality Duty deferred to next meeting	AM	March	July	15	Budget Plan 2024/25 deferred to next meeting	AM	March	open	
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<b>6</b>	<b><u>EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE</u></b>																															
	<b><u>Headteacher's Report</u></b>																															
	Governors received a written report from the Headteacher (copy on GH) and the Headteacher invited questions:																															

	<p><b>SKD I terms of the premises update can you give more detail about the playground dispute?</b></p> <p>AM We had the playground resurfaced over the summer and it has started to crack. We have not settled the full invoice and are working with the contractors to rectify the issue. We hope that remedial repairs will take place over the Easter break.</p>	
6.1	<p><b><u>Current budgetary considerations</u></b></p> <p>AM went through the budget rationale document (copy on GH)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooling the building in summer. The quote to fit air conditioning was prohibitively expensive. The hiring of units for the summer term was more affordable and was in the proposed budget</li> <li>2. Staffing plan 2024-5 Staffing costs had risen significantly due to pay rise and pension contributions. There is some flexibility to account for any staff changes and cover for absence.</li> <li>3. Plan for Caretaking – The school cannot afford a caretaker, so the staff will continue to manage the school premises as they have this year.</li> <li>4. Pressures on the SEND budget. The LA send budget was £23mn overspent and all schools must lose 5% from their funding to help reduce this deficit. This also means that SEND funding is reduced across the county making it more difficult to get funding for pupils under the EHCP process.</li> <li>5. PP and SP grant – There are no cuts to the provision and will match previous years. spending and effectiveness</li> <li>6. Sports Premium – Spending</li> <li>7. Costs of school meals - Vertas have increased their charges and we have had to raise the price of school meals accordingly. They have also increased the cost of swimming by 40% so we have had to look at this.</li> <li>8. Efficiency savings e.g. equipment</li> </ol> <p>See Confidential minutes</p>	
7	<p><b><u>Budget 2023-4 To receive a report and commentary on the current budgetary position, including a virement report</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To <b>approve</b> Budget Assumptions</li> <li>b) To <b>approve</b> 'Budget Rationale' KL well documented and clear</li> <li>c) To <b>approve</b> 'Budget Spreadsheet 2024-5'</li> </ol> <p>AM advised that the 2024/25 budget was forecasting a year end deficit of £70k. The school had £400k in reserves, however this was unsustainable in the long term going forward. The largest expense is staff costs. The school is looking at ways to raise revenue (as discussed in the confidential minutes) and the actual pay award might also lead to an end of year breakeven figure.</p> <p>AM advised that the LA had given the school permission to over recruit pupils for the next academic year. This was not a formal increase of the Pupil Admissions Number (PAN), but a temporary measure to support the demographic changes in the local community. The current PAN was 45 but the school had been given license to recruit up to 52 pupils in years 5 and 6, and up to 48 in all other years.</p> <p><b>Governors asked if the higher number of pupils would impact on the budget for next year?</b></p> <p>AM advised that the grant per students lagged a year so would be in the income stream for 2025/6.</p>	

**Governors asked if the LA could reduce the numbers and force pupils to leave the school? And if this would make the school full in terms of pupil numbers?**

AM advised that once a pupil was enrolled they could not be removed, but the LA could advise the school not to replace a pupil that left mid-year. AM advised that the current Y6 has 52 students but Reception under recruited, which might continue to drive low numbers as that class moves up the school. The school continued in its efforts to recruit pupils both at the normal intake stage and throughout the year. Reception has recruited well for next AY year

**Governors asked about staff pay rise at 5% - was this considered accurate in the current climate?**

AM advised that the LA had advised a pay rise likely to be agreed between 4-6%, the projected overspend will be less than the difference between four and six percent. The Unions are likely to ballot again but with inflation falling below 4% and looking to continue a slow decline, and with interest rates signalled to fall in the future, 5% looks like the maximum; in reality it would likely be less than that. Notwithstanding, the school was required to find an additional 5% pension contribution and this had really impacted the budget

AM advised that he had followed advice from the LA financial advisor, he had made significant cuts to next year's curriculum resources budget. This was justified because of the high spend in resources in previous years (e.g. massive investment on books).

SS raised the issue of the variance from the actual in year costs and the predicted costs of trips.

AM advised that the aim of trips was to break even in the year. The current deficit reflected the timing of payments out and collecting money in from parents. The amount for next year was the money that would come across from PP funding.

SS commented that this made the budget very hard to follow, how were governors to examine the current expenditure to date against a proposed budget if the lines weren't comparable?

AM agreed to provide a more detailed narrative to accompany the numbers in future.

AM in terms of staff there were no anticipated redundancies in the plan. There were several colleagues on temporary contracts, some of which was to cover maternity leave. Not all these staff will be retained.

Governor questions sent in advance and NH response:

***Budget 2024/25***

***1. At what date does any change of funding kick in after changed pupil numbers in the October census?***

*The Basic Entitlement Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) is based on 317 pupils for 2024/25 (from the October 2023 census). Any change in pupil numbers reported on the October 2024 census, will effect the AWPU funding from 1st April 2025, and this will be shown on the Strategic Plan (Year 2). In response to an additional question received from RK - Do we request financial compensation from other schools for children who have transferred to us from them after the October census? No, we are not able to request School Block Funding from other schools for children who have transferred to us following the October census. However, on occasion, we have requested, and received, other types of funding for children*

	<p>transferring to the school mid-year e.g. Pupil Premium for LAC children. Please also note that SEN High Needs Funding is applied for on a termly basis however these payments are subject to a termly lag.</p> <p><b>2. Why are FTE numbers for staff and support staff not entered in the plan?</b>  This was an omission, from the top of the budget plan, apologies. The average FTE numbers for Teaching Staff and Support Staff for 2024/25 are as follows: Teaching: 16.94 average Support: 16.8 average</p> <p><b>3. The small increases in postal and telephone charges actually look like a small drop in yr 1.</b>  Telephone charges do have a small increase (£4569 this year, budgeted £4800 for next.) I think the query raised must relate to postal and bank charges. In an attempt to include the most up to date out-turn figures for 2023-24, I re-ran the Governors Report and put in the latest figures just before uploading the budget plan to Governor Hub. A small additional spend was therefore thrown up for bank charges and postage. I would therefore suggest the postage charge is increased in the budget to £43 and bank charges to £28 – an overall increase in expenditure of £6.</p> <p><b>4. Have we spent the time-limited grants (eg tutoring) in full for this year? Where is this documented?</b>  NTP 2023-24 was the final year of funding for the NTP (National Tutoring Programme), for which we have already received two payments. We are due the final payment in 2024-25 as detailed on the budget plan. This is due to be spent by the end of the academic year. The programme is delivered by support staff and therefore the associated expenditure is included in the staffing budget for support staff. Fiona-Catherine is monitoring the programme and maintaining the records of tuition delivered. We are reporting each term on the School Census, and a final report is due in September 2024. It is anticipated that the NTP funding will be used in full by the end of the academic year. PE &amp; Sport Premium 2023-24 funding - 7/12 already received and remaining 5/12 due in 2024-25 as detailed on the budget plan. This is due to be spent by 31st July 2024. The expenditure is being monitored. The budget plan allows for the full expenditure (or claw back) on the 'Special Facilities – Supplies and Materials' line of the budget.</p> <p>The board <b>approved</b> the Budget Assumptions, Budget Rationale and Budget Spreadsheet 24/25</p> <p>RK thanked NH for her detailed annotation of the Budget Spreadsheet</p>	
7.1	<p><b><u>To discuss the development of a Strategic Financial Plan, 2024/27 .</u></b></p> <p>AM advised that in the long term there needed to be consideration to the changing spending needs on curriculum resources. With the development of curriculum resources on apps and the needs for students use digital resources the school needed to look at how it could meet the pupil needs within the constraints of tight fiscal environment.</p> <p><b>Governors asked regarding the current arrangements for IT budgeting and what the future requirements might look like?</b></p> <p>AM advised The capital budget was consistently being used up by building projects, that were essential and took immediate priority. This invariably left no money for IT replacement. The current school hardware and data storage was nearing end of life. He was considering a cloud based storage option and looking at how the use of old mobile phones and tablets might be used to replace current stocks.</p> <p>FCT Advised that she continued to look at grant funding and sponsorship for IT resources, and to see if deals could be struck on purchasing with other schools. The school would look</p>	

	<p>to raise funds from events and the Friends of Guildhall. She advised that there was also a potential parents leasing scheme, which would allow them to keep the hardware at the end.</p> <p>AM advised the planning approach would help SLT make key decision on providers, i.e. Apple or Android, Google or Apple storage and support services.</p> <p>AM requested that Governors approve an annual rolling IT budget of £7-8k per annum outside of the capital expenditure line, this would help with planning developments in the mid-term.</p> <p><b>Governors asked the timetable for a formal IT proposal?</b></p> <p><u>AM advised he would have a three year plan drafted for the next meeting in May</u></p> <p>KL asked if the school would be better of joining a trust?</p> <p>RK advised that the board would lose autonomy and that its current independence was helpful in recruiting excellent staff</p> <p>AM advised that the reserves would likely be absorbed by a trust.</p> <p>TR noted that often schools with performance or financial issues are advised by the LA to join a trust and therefore they are full of underperforming schools absorbing all the trust resources.</p> <p><b>Governors noted the role that the Bury School Partnership could play in supporting CPD and sharing best practice, but there were limited opportunities for financial partnerships.</b></p>	AM
<b>8</b>	<b><u>SAFEGUARDING, WELLBEING AND HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</u></b>	
8.1	Minutes of Pay and Staffing Committee including Report on recent Staff Wellbeing survey	
	<p>AM advised that TA staff were happier and the new appraisal process appeared to be working for them.</p> <p><b>KL asked why there was such a low response to the staff survey?</b></p> <p>AM advised that whilst 17 was a low number colleagues were given ample opportunity to answer the survey. He advised that it was anonymous and in the future would consider an on-line option.</p> <p><b>BT noted the responses were largely positive but was concerned that 30% disagreed that behaviour was good.</b></p> <p>AM advised that behaviour in the school was much improved and this had been observed by staff, governors and visitors. Some staff may have unrealistic expectations of age related behaviour of pupils at lunch and break times; we are trying to encourage oracy and do not want to impose silent corridors. However SLT identified an issues in terms of the corridors and transition between classes during the staggered hours for break time and we are working on a plan to encourage quietness in these areas.</p>	
8.2	<b><u>Safeguarding</u></b>	
	AM was meeting LK in morning – deferred to next meeting	
8.3	To consider pupil wellbeing, including progress on implementing any changes relating to the recent pupil survey(s) on Maths	

	<p>FCT advised that pupils had completed a survey and this was being processed for the next meeting. The report will include a summary discussion held at class councils regarding student voice. The school had invested in some ‘Early Minds’ workshops conducted by Suffolk Mind. The workshops had proved very useful in helping children understand their feelings and emotions and giving them strategies to manage themselves. The school would be sending more information to parents to help them understand what the children have learned and teachers will be trained on the techniques to help students apply them in the classroom.</p> <p><b>Governors thought the workshops sounded very exciting and innovative, they noted how pupils could use the techniques and support each other with them. KS thought that a child being able to understand and express their feelings would be better able to manage themselves and improve their wellbeing and learning. RK asked if this was linked to metacognition.</b></p> <p>AM advised that whilst not directly linked there was evidence that SEMH issues impacted on a child’s ability to learn and would help them develop emotional intelligence.</p> <p><b>TR thought that if this was embedded in the school it would of great benefit to all in the school community.</b></p>	
<b>9</b>	<b><u>Governor Monitoring Reports</u></b>	
9.1	<p>RK asked Governors if they found the new monitoring form useful?</p> <p><b>Governors found the form helpful as a starting point and agreed it was up to the governor to explore the issues beyond the form based on the nature of the monitoring visit, it gave a good structure and consistency to reports.</b></p> <p>BT asked if the plan that every question is answered? He advised that during his visit he deep dived into areas within the form but didn’t cover every question.</p> <p>SS advised that the form triggered the conversation, but she didn’t ask all the questions or cover all the topics.</p> <p>KL advised that it was difficult to give all the questions time within the time constraints of the monitoring visit</p> <p>AM advised governors that it was fine to email questions to staff and then cut and paste responses into the report.</p> <p>RK advised the first set of questions were designed to be asked before the visit, the next batch were for use during the visit. She advised that not all questions need to be answered in full detail, they were designed to trigger a conversation, that will differ in different visits. RK advised that the governors should not feel constrained by the questions and can ask their own questions as relevant to the visit. However, the safeguarding question had broader implications than might initially be presumed (including health and safety posed by a particular lesson activity, and online safety) and was usually applicable to most visits.</p> <p><b>Governors discussed their visits and complimented the behaviour and attitude of pupils. A governor recommended the science project wall display, which demonstrated how different subjects are linked in different years. Governors were pleased how the curriculum joined up subjects and integrated themes.</b></p> <p>BT asked if all subjects were linked?</p>	RK

	<p>AM advised that some subjects were more discreet and their individual curriculum made it difficult to link to others without creating artificial links.</p> <p>TR left the meeting at 19.29</p> <p>RK asked if the school found governors' reports useful?</p> <p>AM Advised that it gave the SLT the opportunity to articulate good practice triggered discussions with subject leaders.</p> <p><b>Governors advised that they would like to see more subject presentations from main subject leads and the SENDCo and DSL.</b></p> <p>BT asked about questions that arose about the whole school that the subject lead was unable to answer.</p> <p>AM advised that governors should not hesitate to email AM and he would respond.</p> <p>AM Advised that the music monitoring visit had been very useful. It verified the schools SEF judgement that it still required improvement – it was very helpful in focusing the SLT on what is required to improve. The subject lead had returned from maternity leave and had missed some planning and development time last AY</p>	
9.2	<p>Please see the following reports in the Governor Monitoring folder on GH</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RE</li> <li>2. Writing</li> <li>3. Maths</li> <li>4. Science</li> <li>5. Music</li> <li>6. Art</li> </ol>	
<b>10</b>	<b><u>COMPLIANCE</u></b>	
10.1	<b><u>Policies for Review or Approval</u></b>	
	<p>Governors reviewed and <b>approved</b> the following policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Lettings and Hire Charges and Conditions. Governor's asked if the school should charge a higher bond/deposit? AM advised that the hire related mostly to local sports clubs and small events. Higher bond costs could be prohibited and confirmed there was a hire contract that included damage to school property.</li> <li>2. Health and Safety AM advised that there had been a H&amp;S visit and a Fire Safety visit, all urgent actions had been completed.</li> <li>3. Certificate of Validations</li> <li>4. PCS DSS Certificate</li> </ol> <p>CS and SKD left the meeting at 19.42</p>	
10.2	<b><u>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</u></b>	
	<p>AM advised that there had been no issues since the last meeting. GDPR support was provided by the LA. KL was then named Governor for GDPR.</p>	



10.3	<b><u>Website Update</u></b>	
	RK requested governors who hadn't yet provided a 200 word summary and photograph for the Governors webpages done so asap so RK could have them uploaded to the site.	
11	<b><u>GOVERNOR HEADLINES AND THE KNOWLEDGE</u></b>	
	There were no items to discuss	
12	<b><u>REFLECTION ON THE MEETING</u></b>	
	<p>Governors discussed the impact of the meeting on the governing body's strategic priorities.</p> <p>Governors discussed the budget rational and how it was useful to understand the process of financial decision making. Governors found it useful to interrogate the numbers but needed greater narrative explanations of variances between current accounts and future budgets.</p> <p>Governors and SLT were pleased with the number and quality of monitoring reports and how they were helping the school improve.</p>	
13	<b><u>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></b>	
	<p>Governors confirmed that the next meeting would be held at 2pm on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.</p> <p>Governors agreed the programme of meeting dates for the remainder of the 2023/24 academic year as follows:</p> <p>11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024</p> <p><u>RK advised that the board would set dates for next year at the next meeting.</u></p>	RK/ AM

The meeting closed at 19.57.

Signed

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Dated

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### Action Log

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom	By When	Status
7.1	<u>AM advised he would have a three year IT plan drafted for the next meeting in May</u>	AM	May	Open
13	Proposed FGB meeting dates for 2024/25	RK/AM	May	Open

