

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Minutes of a Resources Committee Meeting– 22 February 2022, at 3.30pm held remotely

Outstanding Governance reminder:

Governing bodies should have a strong focus on the core strategic functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
4. To maintain and develop the Catholic nature of the school

In this meeting governors will be mindful of equalities issues in all agenda items

Present: Pier Anscombe, Paul Barber (Headteacher), Mel Fane (Committee Chair), Giulia de Rosa (until 5.30pm), Dee Simson (Associate member)

In attendance: Kim Breckell (School Business Manager SBM)

Apologies: Bryan Rossi-Anderson

Quorum: Three governor committee members. Three/four governor committee members were present. The meeting was quorate throughout.

Clerk: Ruth Ali

Minutes signed by: _____ Agreed on: _____

Questions/Challenges

Actions

Resolution

1.	Prayer, welcome and apologies The Headteacher opened the meeting in prayer. Apologies were received and accepted from Bryan Rossi-Anderson.	Actions
2.	Declaration of business interests or interests of loyalty in agenda items None.	
3.	Minutes of the last meeting 25 January 2022 Papers circulated: Minutes <u>3.1 To agree accuracy of minutes</u> The minutes were agreed as a true record. <u>3.2 To discuss matters arising, including action points – if not elsewhere on this agenda</u> Min 3: There has been no response from Mark Brunet to a meeting request to discuss the solar panels; the Headteacher will chase. Min 6: Agency spend was for INA and Y2 cover TA. ASC contract deferred, due to the amount of business on this agenda. Min 12: Not sure whether Bryan has taken part in Entrust Benchmarking course. All other actions have been completed or are agenda items at this meeting.	
Staffing		
4.	Verbal Update on Staffing The Headteacher updated governors:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y4 TA is now in place • Y2 TA recruitment has been unsuccessful; teaching personell is being used to do this role • Fixed Term INA in Reception is due to start w/c 28 February. • Teacher absences due to Covid before the half term holiday were successfully covered through TAs. • Site manager recruitment has been unsuccessful. A temporary person is in place who has experience of site management and is working on a casual basis. This will reduce spending on Nviro and the cost of a Grade D site manager. <p>Governors asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you want to re-evaluate the site manager post? You have managed well with site cleaning, but how are we filling gaps in terms of maintenance? –The pool for recruitment through the Schools Vacancy bulletin is small, and we will reconsider our recruitment strategy in terms of where and how we advertise and the timing of it. Evaluating how we work with the temporary person will enable us to ascertain what grade is needed. <p>Site manager recruitment will be a rolling agenda item.</p>	MF
5.	<p>Staff Absence Statistics Autumn Term</p> <p>A verbal update was given. Up until 22 January, absence rates, including Covid related, were within control. However, the end of Spring 1 was challenging. This means that absence rates are a-typical and cannot be used statistically for forward planning.</p> <p>It was suggested that consideration should be given to how absence statistics should be used, for example by focusing on particular absences such as long term or non-Covid.</p>	
6.	<p>To discuss results from Staff Survey and actions <i>Papers circulated: Staff Survey summary, Staff Survey responses teaching staff, support staff, spreadsheet</i></p> <p>Ten responses were received, which were overall positive. However, support staff are keen to meet as a group again and to feel as part of a larger staff body. Actions have already been taken to address this and to move into a more visibly collegiate way of working.</p> <p>Governors noted the professionalism of staff expressed in the comments, as staff would like to be more involved and use their training. The survey responses were felt to be a credit to the leadership of the school.</p> <p>An area of concern mentioned more than once was around gossip, and governors asked whether this came as a surprise. The Headteacher is confident that endeavours aimed at empowering colleagues to call that type of behaviour out will be successful over time.</p> <p>No further follow up for governors was identified. It was suggested that, when governors come into school for monitoring visits, they could at the same time revisit these questions.</p>	
Covid		
7.	<p>To receive an update on unusual Covid spending</p> <p>There was an increase in the cost centre of Caretaker Supplies, but this is still under budget. Nothing else extraordinary to report.</p>	
Finance		

8.	<p>To discuss the SEND Strategy, to include allocation of support staff</p> <p>The Headteacher explained that he would like to discuss the recruitment of support staff and ascertain governors' views around whether or not to continue replacing support staff like for like.</p> <p>Regarding the SEND strategy, the Headteacher proposed to invite the SENCO to a future meeting to discuss her vision for SEND moving forward, the children currently in school and how they will be supported, and what the data is showing about what type of children the school is attracting.</p> <p>The committee would then look at how this fits in with the school's vision and ethos.</p> <p>The Headteacher, SBM and SENCO will discuss what the strategy would look like and bring it to the committee for scrutiny. Governors asked how this would impact on the budget, and the Headteacher explained that he would work within the parameters of the draft budget.</p> <p>This will be an agenda item at the next meeting.</p>	
9.	<p>To discuss the Supply Cover Strategy, including review of Staff Absence Insurance</p> <p>The SBM reported that she had received a renewal notice from the current Staff Absence insurance provider and has also approached the company most popular with other SBMs for a quote. The other company was considerably more expensive (by £1,000), and she therefore proposes to renew the cover with the current provider (at a cost of £2,500).</p> <p>One claim has been submitted for a teacher on long term sick leave. It was highlighted that moving to another provider would not cover existing conditions. Cover is for £150 per day for 190 days.</p> <p>Agreed: <i>The committee agreed to continue with the current Staff Absence insurance provider at a cost of £2,500.</i></p> <p>The Headteacher explained that the amount spent on supply cover was unforeseen, and there is no other way of funding it. In order to submit a balanced budget, a smaller amount has to be allocated than in the previous year, and the discussion around additional adults and SEND support has an impact on how much can be spent on supply. It would be beneficial to work out a way of covering supply without going through agency, for example by creating greater opportunities through CPD or creating extra roles which could be utilised for supply cover when necessary.</p> <p>Governors noted that benchmarking indicated that the school was slightly above average for support staff, but that this had been a strength when short staffed. However, although the number of support staff was higher, the cost was not too high.</p> <p>It was recognised that having additional staff would help when cover is needed, but that it is not cost effective if cover is not required. It is also unlikely to see a similar scenario again, and when setting the budget, this cannot be considered as average or norm.</p> <p>It was suggested that opportunities should be explored for sharing staff with other schools.</p>	
10.	<p>School Budget</p> <p><i>Papers circulated: Budget Monitoring Report, Services to Schools, Budget Summary, Draft Budget</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To consider the Budget Monitoring Report</i> 	

The SBM explained that feedback had been received from the LA; this was the request to increase the forecast for electricity and gas. Unreconciled items have cleared, which has contributed to an increase in the surplus (this is now £46,754).

Questions were invited:

- Why do we have a reduced forecast for “other premises expenditure”? – We are not predicting any further expenditures.
- There is a reduction in “curriculum” spend; are you able to manage that? – Staff have been asked to hold off spending, so except for some incidentals, no major expenditure is expected.
- To review Music Provision

The committee discussed the current music provision and agreed that the Ofsted focus on the curriculum and the quality of the provision mean that it would be unwise to stop it. The service provides good value for money and has an impact on children in terms of curriculum breadth. In addition it affords teaching staff more release time (45 minutes), which means they can take their PPA time at home. The cost of the service is £6,000 per year, and the committee agreed that it would not be possible to employ a music teacher for that.

The Headteacher pointed out that Reception are not using that service, but he is looking at Y6 stopping around 1 March, which would allow Reception to have lessons from that provider.

Looking at the draft budget, the committee highlighted that the music cost jumps out as a large expenditure, compared to curriculum subjects, which could give the impression that it has a higher focus than other subjects. The Headteacher explained that the £6,000 does not only cover curriculum resources (as is the case for curriculum subjects), but also the member of staff. If staffing cost was included in curriculum subjects, the cost would be similar.

Agreed:

The committee agreed to continue with the current Music Provision, but to continue to review it on an annual basis.

Governors would like to consider the impact of the provision and see some evidence of what has been learnt. However, this is hard to measure.

- To review Governor Training budget

This was set at £500 last year and has been spent. It was suggested that it should be reduced to £300 this year.

£350 has been spent on a governance review, and the chair is planning to undertake a chairs’ development course at a cost of £250. It might be beneficial to undertake the governance review annually, but the course cost would be a one off. The Headteacher highlighted that the school is expecting an Ofsted inspection in due course, and it would not be the right time to cut back on governor training. Economies of scale could be explored, for example doing bespoke training courses together with other boards in the Deanery. **The Headteacher will propose this to the other Headteachers.**

Meanwhile, it was agreed that the governor training budget should be set notionally at £300.

- Services to Schools

PB

	<p>The committee reviewed the services they are currently subscribed to. The SBM highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall cost has not increased by much. • HR service has reduced, as it is based on the number of staff, which is lower than previously • ICT pre-paid credits allow for six extra visits per year. The SBM has queried whether this is reimbursed if the service is not used. • ICT46, at £360, is a new charge related to Covid; this is because more staff were having access to VPN working from home. <p>Governors asked whether school feels that HR support provides value for money, and what other options there are. The SBM explained that her preference is to remain with Services to Schools, as this is generally better value for money than going outside, which could mean additional expenses. Obtaining quotes for staff absence insurance for example was time consuming. Her only query would be ICT pre-paid visits; all other services appear to be reasonable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>To agree the draft budget</u> <p>The draft budget is based on the assumption of 30 children coming into Reception.</p> <p>Governors asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the budget include a carryforward for the INA role in Reception? – Yes, the assumption is the same number of adults attached to that class. This is a reason why the SEND strategy should be discussed more. • Is one full time D grade TA current or extra? – Current. • Is having a second cleaner only until July realistic? – This depends on whether a Grade C or Grade D caretaker is employed. If a Grade C caretaker was employed this would free up some budget to have a second cleaner. The SBM could provide a few different scenarios. • Why do we need to increase agency and supply? – The assumption at first was to allow for two weeks’ absence at £10,000. However, this appeared low considering how much was spent this year. This was £25,000, which is high, but was due to ongoing Covid. A medium figure, between £10,000 and £25,000, could be appropriate. • Why have you only allocated £1,500 to FSM? – This was added before the additional payment for this year came in. It is not clear how the LA comes up with these figures, so the budget is based on last year’s figure. • When will governors receive the three year projection? – This should be completed w/c 28 February. <p>Governors thanked the SBM for the very realistic budget.</p>	
11.	<p>To discuss plans for Sports Premium spend</p> <p>The Headteacher explained that the Sports Premium will continue to be spent according to the plans published on the website and evaluated against it for next year.</p> <p>Similar to other schools, Covid necessitated parameters to be stretched. The SBM highlighted the Sports Premium training course on BEEM; this will be circulated to all.</p>	KB/MF

	The Headteacher advised governors that the Sports Lead is undertaking a Sports Deep Dive in June, which governors are invited to join. This could include a live discussion on the spending of the Sports Premium - w/c 6 June.	
12.	To receive a report on and, if required, authorise write-offs or disposals, if any None.	
13.	Benchmarking Deferred. Some benchmarking would be covered when considering the Self-Assessment Dashboard under item 14. Areas for further investigation could be identified then.	
14.	<p>Compliance <i>Papers circulated: SFVS, Self-Assessment Dashboard DfE, Related Party Transactions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>To discuss the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)</u> <p>The chair reported that she had met with the SBM to go through the document. Last year's answers were amended and tweaked. Questions were invited; there were none relating to the SFVS checklist.</p> <p>The committee considered the Self-Assessment Dashboard and agreed that they are aware that supply cost and premises costs are high. Premises cost is due to Covid cleaning, which has been discussed in various Resources Committee meetings and has been minuted. The same applies to supply staff, which is high due to long term absence.</p> <p>The committee agreed that they understand the figures and what causes them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Update on addressing actions from Financial Audit report</u> <p>The SBM gave a verbal update:</p> <p>Action 1: Not reported Action 2: Not reported Action 3: Not reported Action 4: Completed Action 5: Completed Action 6: Completed Action 7: The Headteacher and the SBM still have to go through the School Development Plan costings as part of the three year budget. Action 8: The SBM has started to write up purchase orders; this is also part of the Financial Procedures document referred to in the Scheme of Delegation. Action 9: Budget monitoring expense analysis reports will be discussed with the committee at some point (deadline 1 April). Action 10: Scheme of Delegation has been approved. Action 11: Financial Procedures are still being drawn up and will be shared with the committee via the clerk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Insurances</u> <p>The DfE buildings survey has taken place, but not the survey from the diocese. The SBM will chase. This item will be re-visited when both reports are available.</p>	KB/RA
Buildings/Grounds/Health and Safety		
15.	<p>Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>To receive a report from the H&S Link governor</u> 	

	<p>No report; the H&S link governor will conduct a visit in the next couple of weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Fire Drill Report</u> <p>Nothing to report; one is scheduled for this half term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Accidents Report</u> <p>None to report.</p> <p>The SBM advised the committee that, following the allergy incident, B&H recommended a change to online ordering at lunch times. This is up and running and seems to be working well.</p> <p><i>Giulia left at 5.30pm</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>School Trips needing approval</u> <p>Residential: The Headteacher explained that two residential trips are planned; one for Y5 (May) and one for Y6 (end of year), three days each. Questions submitted by email last year are still relevant and will be answered in writing, with extra information being added as relevant.</p> <p>Hazardous: Reception will go rockpooling in the Summer term; this has not yet been booked. Risk Assessments can be shared with the committee.</p>	MF
16.	<p>Buildings</p> <p>Paper circulated: Strategic Property Action Planning and Delegation Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Strategic Property Action Planning and Delegation Document</u> <p>No changes to the document since the last meeting.</p> <p>The chair has completed Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning training and suggested that the same document could be used to incorporate that process. The document will be brought back to the next Resources Committee meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Update of VASCA</u> <p>Morgan Carn undertook a site visit together with PD Harris for the flooring costed into the VASCA bid; areas were listed. Should the VASCA bid not cover the whole cost, DFC can be used. The flooring would mirror that outside Y1 and Y2, and it is hoped that the work can be completed over the Easter holidays. Dee will write a check for Morgan Carn for £6,000 and finish completing the forms for the VASCA bid.</p> <p>The committee was advised that the Governors Fund currently stands at £30,088.44.</p> <p>Gift Aid Declarations are up to date (around £200).</p>	
Policies and other statutory documents		
17.	<p>Due for review/approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Accessibility Plan</u> <p>Deferred; to be approved at the next FGB meeting.</p> <p>Policies due for review next term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Expenses Policy (Summer 1) • H&S Policy (due Summer 1) • Premises Management Documents (due Summer 1) • Lettings Charges (due Summer 2) <p>The meeting closed at 5.40pm</p>	MF