



Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

Staffing, Finance and General Purposes Committee FINAL Minutes

Wednesday 19 June 2019 at 4.00pm in the Board Room at the School.

Membership:

Andy Wright (Chair) (AW)	LDBS	Present
Alex Allan (AA)	Headteacher	Present
Angela Frain (AF)	Staff governor	Present
Jacqueline Greenlees (JG)	SJCF	Present (from 4.50 pm)
Rev Laura Jørgensen (LJ)	ex-officio	Apologies
Munsur Ali (MA)	Local Authority	Not present
Matt Piper (MP)	PCC	Present
Zarina Lawley (ZL)	Parent governor	Apologies

Observers / in attendance:

Lizzie Webb (LW)	Business Manager	Present
Hasina Khan (HK)	Acting Deputy Head	Present
Christine Beaumont (CB)	Senior Finance Officer City of London	Present
T Shortland	City	Not present
Madalina Brockmann	Clerk	Apologies
Veronica Martell	Minute-taker	Present

PART 1: Non-Confidential

Action Log

13 February actions

Item	Action	Responsible	By	Status
6.2 (7.2, item 16)	Approach Lightmongers Livery regarding funding for more efficient classroom lighting	Business Manager		PENDING – LW to write
6.2 (item 10.4)	Look into options for funding for the Strings Project. A decision will be required soon to set expectations for the two classes entering year 3 in September.	CB		PENDING
6.2 (item 11.4)	Prepare a list of all School accounts, with details pertaining to institutions, account signatories, sums, and proposed changes and submit to the next Finance Committee for approval	Business Manager		PENDING
6.2 (item 18.3)	Headteacher to locate 5 year plan which may include risks. Clerk to seek HLT guidance on appropriate risk template and circulate to Business Manager.	Headteacher Clerk		PART COMPLETED, see min 6.3.5
6.3.3	Business manager to write to Musicians' Company re: Strings sponsorship	Business manager	next F&GP meeting	
6.3.3	Information about the school's need for sponsorship to be publicised through newsletter.	Headteacher	next F&GP meeting	
6.3.4	Report back on discussions with the City re: childcare charges	Headteacher / Business Manager	next F&GP meeting	
6.3.5	Risk register: to be presented to the next FGB	Business Manager	Next FGB	
7.1	Fundraising: AF to forward link to Foyle Foundation to LW	Angela Frain / Business manager	ASAP	
8.1	Copy of budget monitoring report 2019-20 (up to P2) to be sent to Clerk for forwarding to Governors. Governors to send comments or queries within one week to LW.	Business Manager	26 June	
8.2	Budget coding to be reviewed and amended	Business Manager / Christine Beaumont	by autumn term	

8.2	Budget report to have a column of notes	Business Manager	next F&GP meeting	
8.4	Headteacher to communicate to all parents that continuing use of a paid-for service (eg childrens centre or play centre) is dependent upon keeping up with payments for these services.	Headteacher	ASAP	
8.4	School business manager to review debtors ledger to identify all debts which are old and to seek to have conversations with parents informing them that service will be withdrawn unless payments of all old debts is made	Business manager	by next F&GP meeting	
8.6	GDPR: report back on GDPR audit to next committee meeting	Business Manager	next F&GP meeting	
11.1	Exit interview policy: Headteacher to locate model policies and committee to discuss further	Headteacher	next F&GP meeting	
11.2	LW to check on process for payment of VAT by the school (for lettings).	Business Manager	next F&GP meeting	
11.4	Consideration of Data Protection Policy – deferred to after the GDPR audit.	Business Manager	next F&GP meeting	
12	Risk register to be drawn up and presented to FGB for approval	Business Manager	Next FGB	

<p>1. Opening prayer: The meeting was opened with a prayer.</p>
<p>2. Welcome The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.</p>
<p>3. Apologies and governor attendance</p> <p>It was noted that apologies were received from LJ and ZL and JG sent apologies for lateness, as she was detained at her school. JG arrived at 4.50pm.</p>
<p>4. Declaration by Governors: of any personal and pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda not included in the Annual Business Register</p> <p>None were declared.</p>
<p>5. Dates of the forthcoming meetings and events</p> <p>It was noted that the next FGB would take place on 10 July 2019, to be followed by social drinks.</p>
<p>6. Minutes of the previous meeting; non-confidential minutes of committees and updates:</p>

6.1 Approval

The public minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of **13 February 2019** were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the following amendment:

- Min 8.1, delete "Textbooks were sponsored by Ironman".

6.2 Action points

Item	Action	Responsible	By	Status
7.2 (item 11)	Work on a Lettings Policy for the next Committee meeting in February 2019 13.02.19 see item 18.2 of these minutes. The policy will be circulated electronically to the Committee for comments then be submitted to the following FGB for ratification.	Business Manager	27.03.19	DONE, agenda, min 11.2
7.2 (item 16)	Approach Lightmongers Livery regarding funding for more efficient classroom lighting	Business Manager		PENDING – LW to write
10.2	To re-work numbers employing headcount calculation for Early Years and submit to governors.	Business Manager		DONE, LW – sent to FGB
10.3	The governors agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to review the SFVS with the Business Manager and formally approve it before it was sent off.	Chair of Committee / Business Manager	Beginning of April 2019	DONE
10.4	Provide answer to governors on professional fees at the next Committee.	Business Manager		DONE, agenda, min 8.2
10.4	Look into options for funding for the Strings Project. A decision will be required soon to set expectations for the two classes entering year 3 in September.	CB		PENDING
10.4	Charges for childcare: have further conversations and report back to the governors	Business Manager and Headteacher		DONE, agenda, min 6.3.4
10.6	The Clerk would send the Chair of Governors a list of governors whose business interests forms were outstanding. The Chair would	Clerk / Chair		DONE, all completed.

	remind everyone to send the completed forms to the clerk.			
11.2	CB to send details of the Child Care Affordability scheme to the Business Manager.	CB		DONE – scheme being reviewed
11.2	Report on CCFC write-offs at the next Committee meeting.	Business Manager		DONE, agenda, 8.4
11.3	Circulate the analysis with the new budget figures at the next Committee meeting	Business Manager		DONE – circulated at FGB
11.4	Prepare a list of all School accounts, with details pertaining to institutions, account signatories, sums, and proposed changes and submit to the next Finance Committee for approval	Business Manager		PENDING
18.3	Headteacher to locate 5 year plan which may include risks. Clerk to seek HLT guidance on appropriate risk template and circulate to Business Manager.	Headteacher Clerk		PENDING, see min 6.3.5

6.3 Matters arising

6.3.1 Swimming costs at £17k, min 10.4, p8:

In response to a question from Governors, the Head Teacher confirmed that classes in years 3 and 4 would get two terms of swimming each. Year 6 children who couldn't swim would have an opportunity to catch up.

6.3.2 Bulge class, min 10.1, p6:

Governors were informed that there was a gap of £4k between the £5k that the school had to cover the additional costs of musical instruments and the total cost of £9k. It had been thought that the Foundation would cover the costs, but these were greater than initially thought.

6.3.3 Strings Project, min 10.4:

The Business Manager reported that she had not been successful so far in securing donors for the Strings project, but would continue to work on it, including writing to the Musicians' Company.

ACTION: Business manager to write to Musicians' Company re: Strings sponsorship

Q: The amounts of money being offered from fundraising efforts were relatively small. Could some organisations be approached for more significant amounts?

A: Many organisations preferred to give to charities, particularly well-known ones. As the school was not a registered charity, it would be necessary to use the Foundation, which would need to be done with care. A list of discreet items with smaller price tags had been drawn up and this could attract some donors.

Q: Was there a way of putting out a message regarding the need for sponsorship and donations to the wider community through parents?

A: This would be done through the newsletter. The skills audit of parents would be useful in indicating what corporate bodies parents had links to.

ACTION: Information about the school's need for sponsorship to be publicised through newsletter.

6.3.4 Childcare Charges, min 10.4:

Governors were informed that the childcare charges were set by the City of London and had not increased since 2014. The Head Teacher and Business Manager had been looking at making childcare charges more sustainable and to cover costs. An increase was necessary but this had to be balanced with affordability and the need to protect vulnerable families. The current structure was complex. The aim was to bring in the new sustainable structure by September 2020 and charges would then be increased annually by up to 5% a year. Eleven families had been consulted for their views on how best to approach the increase and to give parents sufficient warning.

A Governor commented that two families had been in contact to express concern about the consultation. The school reported that one family had contacted the school to discuss the proposal.

Governors also questioned the value of the consultation when the increase would come in after the children of those families would have left. Governors were informed that parents might also have younger children and it was also helpful to know how the poorest parents could transition to the higher charges.

Governors commented that there was a recognition that charges were lower than in other towns and cities.

Governors were advised that the City would need to agree the charging structure and there was a meeting the following week.

ACTION: Report back on discussions with the City re: childcare charges

6.3.5 Five-year plan and risk register, min 18.3:

Governors were informed that the 5-year plan had not been located. Risks had been identified and a risk register would be presented to the next meeting of the FGB.

Action: Risk register to be presented to the next FGB

6.4 Chair's actions

None were noted.

7. Working Parties:

7.1 Fundraising Working Party

The governors noted the update provided in the Business Manager's report, which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The Business Manager reported that a meeting of the Fundraising Working Party was planned for the following week. She updated Governors on donations received from companies, as follows:

- £1k from Hoare and Co for two pergolas on the rooftop.
- £7.5k from Miller Insurance towards the Library.

Q: Are there any capital projects on the list for possible sponsorship?

A: Fundraising tended not to be for capital projects. Capital funding was generally raised from developers through s106 agreements.

A governor suggested that an application for grant funding could be made to the Foyle Foundation (of Foyle's bookshop) which provided support to arts and learning, in addition to providing grants towards school libraries.

ACTION: AF to forward link to Foyle Foundation to LW

7.2 Capital Works Working Party

The Business Manager reported that she had met the committee chair to discuss current capital plans and projects. Further information regarding capital works was discussed under the Premises update [see *min 9*].

Governors asked for their thanks to be recorded to the Sir John Cass's Foundation for additional funding received towards the painting of the main hall.

8. Finance (enclosures)

Governors referred to the Business Manager's written report, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda, during discussion of finance items.

8.1 Monitoring of spending plan / school budget 2019-20

The Business Manager reported that the budget for 2019-20 had been agreed by the FGB. She apologised that she had been unable to meet with CB to finalise the budget monitoring report for the end of period 2 until earlier that day. She reported that 16.6% of the budget should be spent by the end of period 2 and the budget was on track. 15.2% of the staffing budget had been spent.

ACTION: Copy of budget monitoring report 2019-20 (up to P2) to be sent to THE Clerk for forwarding to Governors. Governors to send comments or queries within one week to LW.

8.2 Outturn – School and Children's Centre budget 2018-19 (enclosures)

A copy of the Out-turn reports for the school and children's centre for 2018-19 had been circulated with the agenda.

Governors **noted** that the in-year balance at the end of 2018-19 for the school was a deficit of **£42,082.19**.

The governors challenged the report presented in a number of respects, seeking clarification from staff. Explanations were provided by staff in response to these questions. In particular, governors raised the following issues:

- **Budget coding:**

There were some significant over- or under- spends with some budget lines. Eg Teaching Assistants (TAs) monthly pay (BN107) was underspent by £140k.

Governors were informed that some of the differences were matters of coding. Eg TAs had been employed to look after the play centre (BN180), which had had no budget allocated.

Governors commented that it was difficult to scrutinise the budget as there were many examples of where different budget lines had had expenditure but no budget allocation, or vice versa.

Governors were advised that the problems with the coding were recognised and that LW had inherited the budget for 2018-19. LW and CB would sort out the budget codes over the summer. This would make the consistent financial reporting easier, particularly with SEN where it was currently difficult to show that income for SEN had been spent on SEN because of the way SEN TAs had been coded.

ACTION: budget coding to be reviewed and amended (LW / CB)

- Premises and maintenance:

Governors commented that there appeared to be a significant overspend in the repairs and maintenance budget (£33k allocated, expenditure £90k). Governors were advised that there had been income for this additional expenditure. In future, it would be helpful to annotate the report to provide explanations where these issues arose.

ACTION: budget report to have a column of notes (LW)

- Professional fees (BN100):

Further to min 10.4 of the previous meeting, Governors were advised that this budget line covered a range of expenditure, such as Speech and Language support, Grow partnership, scheme for supporting well-being for staff and consultancy fees for a number of activities. It was noted that Professional Fees budget line would be reviewed as part of the wider review of budget codings.

- ICT (BN114):

Q: What was the expenditure on ICT?

A: Windows 10 had been purchased last year and there would not be a similar expense in 2019-20.

DECISION:

- Budget Outturn report for SJC school for 2018-19 was **APPROVED**.
- Budget Outturn report for the Cass Child and Family Centre for 2018-19 was **APPROVED**.

8.3 School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) (enclosure)

Governors **noted** that the SFVS had been approved and submitted. The final copy had been circulated with the agenda.

8.4 Debt write-offs: Cass Child and Family Centre (CCFC) and play centre

Governors were reminded that the write-offs identified in a confidential report that had been circulated to members had been approved at the previous meeting. An agreement had been made with the parents and services would be removed.

Governors discussed how to reduce bad debts, which recognised that the threat to remove service (children's centre or play centre) needed to be consistently applied. Clarity was sought on a number of issues:

Q: Some of these debts date back for a long period. To keep on top of this, had the school prepared a list of those with debt so that they could be followed up with a threat of withdrawal of services?

A: The school needed a system to reduce the risk from non-payment. The Business Manager had had discussions with the City about bringing in the Parent Pay system, which required parents to pay upfront for childcare. However, there were technical problems in fitting this with SIMS and further discussions were taking place.

Q: Shouldn't some of the cases, where a family was vulnerable, be an issue for social services?

A: Social Services had started to pay for some after school classes, but the school picked up the other debts.

The governors affirmed that, although taking such action would be difficult in any individual case, it should be done to indicate to all parents that the sanction was real. There was also recognition that only informing parents that the service might be removed when the debt was old was too late as often the parent had ceased using the service by that time. Governors said there was a need to inform parents that continuing use of the service was dependent on keeping up to date with payments and that conversations with parents who had fallen behind with payments about the possible withdrawal of services needed to be held on a timely basis.

Governors agreed to return to the discussion under confidential items.

ACTION: - Headteacher to communicate to all parents that continuing use of a paid-for service (eg childrens centre or play centre) is dependent upon keeping up with payments for these services. (AA)

ACTION: School business manager to review debtors ledger to identify all debts which are old and to seek to have conversations with parents informing them that service will be withdrawn unless payments of all old debts is made (LW)

8.5 Income generation audit outcomes

Governors were advised that Audit had signed off on one of the outcomes from last year's audit in relation to debt recovery. The school would continue to work on recovering monies related to dinner debt amounting to £3k, by meeting separately with the ten parents who owed money.

Q: Would it be helpful if a governor attended the meeting with parents to emphasise the seriousness of paying the debts?

A: It would be better initially to leave it to the Headteacher and Business Manager.

At 4.50pm, JG arrived.

8.6 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliance

Governors were advised that a GDPR audit was due in July or September.

Action: agenda - report back on GDPR audit

8.7 Fire Risk assessment update

Governors noted from the Business Manager's report that the school was waiting for a response from the City regarding the replacement of fire doors.

9. Premises Update (enclosure – Business Manager’s report)

The Business Manager referred to the information on premises contained in her report. She highlighted that she and the Headteacher had met with the Foundation to look at how money was being apportioned for the programme of works. The school was awaiting a feasibility report on the water pipework before applying to the City for funding via the Foundation.

Governors sought clarification on a number of issues:

Q: Would CCTV be part of the programme?

A: The school would be writing a business case to get the City’s approval for s106 funding for CCTV.

Q: Would the works on the school be subject to VAT?

A: When money came from the Foundation to the school governors’ account, the school could not reclaim VAT. Money could be reclaimed where s106 money came from developers.

Q: Could the Foundation spend the money directly, rather than through the school as it would mean an additional 20%?

A: That could be looked into, but that would have significant implications for the Foundation. It would need a Memorandum of Understanding and agreed accounting system before proceeding.

Q: Will s106 be used to fund the water pipework replacement?

A: Probably not. It was likely to come from a different grant from the City and partly from the Foundation.

Q: Would the CCTV be installed in the flat as a child protection measure to cover any 1 to 1 meetings?

A: It wasn’t part of the planned programme and 1 to 1 meetings did not tend to happen in the flat, but in the library, which was visible from outside.

9.1 LCVAP and summer works

Governors **noted** the information and correspondence from the Diocese of London Board for Schools on the school’s bid for funding for premises works, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda.

10. Contracts Update (enclosure – Business Manager’s report)

10.1 Catering Contract

The Business Manager referred to her report and highlighted that the school was waiting for further information from the School Buying Consortium in Tower Hamlets before deciding whether could achieve value for money and the bespoke service SJC required from joining the consortium in 2020. The school would continue with Brookfield for the time being.

10.2 Service Level Agreement for the Children’s Centre

Governors were advised that this would move to a deed with the City next year, but there was some frustration over the time being taken to resolve this.

<p>11. Policies</p> <p>11.1 Exit Interview policy Further to action 7.1 from the FGB minutes of 27 March 2019, Governors discussed the value of having an exit interview with departing staff. The Headteacher informed governors that no staff were expected to leave that summer and she was sceptical of how honest teachers would be in such an interview.</p> <p>Governors commented that it would be useful to know the reasons why staff left the school and therefore there should be an opportunity for them to share this information.</p> <p>ACTION: Headteacher to locate model policies and committee to discuss further</p>
<p>11.2 Lettings policy (enclosure) Governors were advised that the Lettings Policy, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda, had been revised to take on board school values and the Headteacher's veto. No comments had been received from the Foundation.</p> <p>Governors discussed the lettings policy and sought clarification from staff, as follows:</p> <p>Q: Did the school charge VAT on lettings and if so, how was this passed on to HMRC? A: The school was required to charge VAT. The lettings invoices went through the City's accounting processes.</p> <p>Action: LW to check on process for payment of VAT.</p> <p>DECISION: The Committee AGREED the Lettings Policy.</p>
<p>11.3 Debt recovery policy Governors were advised that this policy had been previously discussed and approved.</p>
<p>11.4 Data Protection policy</p> <p>Action: Data Protection policy deferred to after the GDPR audit.</p>
<p>12. Risk Register See minute 6.3 5 above.</p>
<p>13. Reflection: how have the governors upheld the vision of the school in this meeting? Governors noted that they had discussed support for vulnerable families as part of their discussion on debt recovery.</p>
<p>14. Any Other Business There was no further business.</p>
<p>15. Confidential items See Confidential Part II minutes</p>

The non-confidential part of the meeting closed at 5.15 pm.

