

MINUTES OF MEETING

School: West Bridgford Junior School
Meeting title: Second spring term meeting of the governing body (finance)
Date and time: Thursday 27 March 2025 at 6.15pm
Location: At the school

Membership
'A' denotes absence

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | | Mrs C Bancroft (head of school) |
| A | | Ms K Boxall |
| | | Ms J Elbourn |
| | | Dr L Gibbon |
| | | Mr J Hanspal |
| | | Mrs C Hughes |
| | | Dr L James (chair) |
| | | Mr C Martin |
| A | | Mrs E Nixon |
| | | Ms C Shawcross |
| | | Mrs C Wheeler |
| A | | Dr S Whitton |
| | | Mr J Willis (executive headteacher) |

In attendance

Mrs B Arnold (associate member/deputy headteacher)
Mrs L Eadie (school business manager) – left 8.05pm
Ms C Baird (clerk to the governors)

GB/19/25 Apologies for absence Action

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Boxall, Mrs Nixon and Dr Whitton.

It was

resolved

that the governing body consent to these absences.

GB/20/25 Declaration of interest

Mrs Hughes stated that she is the chair of governors at the infant school. Mr Hanspal stated that he is a governor at the infant school. Dr James stated that she is a foundation governor at Bluecoat Aspley School. Mrs Wheeler stated that she is employed by a local primary school.

There were no other declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for items on the agenda.

GB/21/25 Review of membership and terms of office ending in the next 12 months

Governors noted the ongoing co-opted governor vacancy.

GB/22/25 Approval of minutes of spring term strategy meeting and review of actions

The minutes of the spring term strategy meeting held on 30 January 2025, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the chair.

Review of actions

GB/08/25 – The executive headteacher gave an update on the whole school survey, stating that the same questions would be sent from both schools but that it had not yet been decided if two separate surveys would be sent. Governors noted that the survey would contain some questions based on Ofsted parent view and some questions about the collaboration.

GB/10/25 – Ongoing action: Mrs Bancroft to further review the cyber security policy. **CB**

GB/11/25 – Ongoing action: Dr Gibbon to arrange a spring term SCR check. **LG**

GB/23/25 Review and approval of policies

Governors **approved** the following:

- Governor induction policy (subject to minor amendments)
- Governing body code of conduct and addendum
- Complaints policy
- Charging and remissions policy

GB/24/25 Inventory

Governors noted the inventory document which had been uploaded to Governor Hub.

Governors **approved** the write-offs as detailed in the document.

GB/25/25 Overseeing financial performance - financial reporting

Year-end reforecast and school budget for 2025/26

Governors noted the documents which had been uploaded to Governor Hub. Mrs Eadie stated that final governor statement would be received on 31 May 2025. Governors noted the five-year budget forecast and the impact of projected falling pupil numbers on the school budget.

Governors noted the governor questions which had been received in advance of the meeting and the answers documents which had been uploaded to Governor Hub.

In response to further governor questions, governors discussed how significant swings in budget forecasting between governor meetings could be avoided in future. Mrs Eadie stated that she and the executive headteacher monitored the budget monthly. Governors **agreed** that it would be useful for governors to receive six budget reports every year, noting that the finance policy would have to be updated accordingly. Mrs Eadie to look at the most effective ways of providing the additional budget reports to governors. **LE**

Q: Are you confident that the school will be able to keep the carry-forward?

A: Yes. Due to falling pupil numbers, the carry-forward will be allocated to supporting the budget going forward. We are confident that we will not use our reserves this year.

Q: Did the school receive any additional funding to cover the increased NI contributions?

A: These were not fully funded and there was a shortfall of c£6,000.

In response to a governor question, Mrs Eadie explained the drop in lettings income due to changes in lettings arrangements.

Q: What income is received from the holiday club?

A: £100 per day.

Q: Reiterating the concern that we do not want to be presented with a non-balancing budget for 2025/26, are there any areas which could be looked at for savings?

A: The budget for 2025/26 is still in draft and all commitments have not yet been added. It will be finalised over the next two weeks and reviewed by Mrs Eadie and the executive headteacher and then circulated to governors. **EHT/LE**

Q: Are there any more savings from the collaboration which could be included in the budget?

A: Mrs Eadie and executive headteacher to look at this in detail. **EHT/LE**

Q: What are the predicted numbers for September 2025?

A: There are currently 75 first-choice applications.

Q: Have any out of catchment applications been received?

A: Currently two second choices.

Governors thanked Mrs Eadie for her work on the budget.

SFVS 2024/25

Governors

approved

the SFVS for 2024/25, subject to minor amendments.

Services for schools

Governors

approved

services for schools, as detailed in the document on Governor Hub.

Q: How many year groups go swimming?

A: One. The cost includes transport.

Outstanding actions from autumn term finance meeting

GB/97/24 - Mrs Eadie to confirmed that the sports premium spend on supply cover was within the guidelines.

Sports premium

Mrs Eadie stated that the sports premium funding had been spent in its entirety and informed governors that a new reporting system for sports premium was now in place, for completion by 31 July 2025. Governors **agreed** that it would be useful to have more detail provided on the sports premium spending.

Maintenance plan

Governors noted the maintenance plans for both school sites, which had been uploaded to Governor Hub. Governors had a detailed discussion the security of the school site and the importance of assessing any risk to children and staff in school. Mrs Eadie stated that quotes were being sought to replace the front door, install an intercom or camera and install an emergency system in the school, with the possibility of a panic button being explored.

Governors noted the suggestion that all staff be provided with walkie-talkies for communication, with the executive headteacher stating that this system works well at the infant school. Executive headteacher and Mrs Eadie to explore provision of walkie-talkies for staff.

EHT/LE

Q: How do staff and children know when to implement a lockdown drill?

A: There is currently no way to do this and the emergency plan has not been fully tested.

Q: The maintenance plan mentions replacement of the fire alarm panel – could this include provision for two types of alarm?

A: No, this is just the control panel for the fire alarm.

Q: Is site security an issue at Cottages?

A: The fence is higher at Cottages. A lockdown/emergency evacuation drill has not yet been held at Cottages.

Q: How soon could the work to the front door detailed above take place?

A: It is hoped that this will happen over the summer holiday.

Governors

approved

the maintenance plan.

Health and safety

Governors noted the health and safety action report which had been uploaded to Governor Hub, including improvements made since the previous report and actions to be taken. As discussed above, governors noted the action to further develop the emergency plan, communicate it to staff and test it.

Q: When will the emergency plan be tested by?

A: This will be done before the next finance FGB meeting on 26 June 2025, with feedback to be given at that meeting.

Agenda

Governor questions received in advance of the meeting

Q: In the Summer term, governors were asked to approve an in-year deficit budget of £34.5k, significantly reducing the brought forward balance of £114.1k, and resulting in a low carry forward to 2025/26 of £79.6k. In the Summer term, after the mid-year review, a slight improvement was reforecast, reducing the in-year deficit to £20.5k, with a carry forward of £93.6k. At this Spring meeting, the latest full year reforecast has swung from an in-year deficit of £20.5k to an in-year surplus of £39k, which will result in a carry forward of £153k. This is a £59.4k swing from the Mid-Year position (£73.5k swing from the Summer/start of the finance year).

With only 10 days of the financial year left, has all expenditure and income for the financial year been included in this £39k surplus? How can we avoid such significant swings in forecasting between governor meetings?

A: Significant underspend in many areas of the budget, itemised on separate report, however these figures are not set as yet, as the accruals are still being finalised. We are still putting through orders, so carry forward will reduce; also, accruals aren't set yet so the carry forward will reduce further, eg Income includes Hoodies and PGL deposits, all of which are in the wrong year.

Q: The SFVS checklist guidance asks “Q3. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school’s budget position at least 6 times a year?” As we only receive budget monitoring reports once a term, should we as a minimum consider reviewing interim budget monitoring reports between meetings to ensure timely response and reaction if strategic matters/challenge might arise?

A: Our Finance Policy says Governing Body – To determine the level of detail, minimum frequency and general format of financial information to be provided to the Governing Body, especially in relation to budget monitoring reports. Budget reports can be sent 6 times a year if agreed.

Q: LE figures are from a November reforecast but the last figures supplied to governors in the Autumn term for review were reforecast reports dated 17 October 24, Please can future variance reports start from the last set of reports governors were issued? There has been movement between 17 October and November, especially on the teaching staff reforecast, and it makes the variance analysis incomplete. (eg November to March a £13.15k variance for teaching identified on LE analysis but comparing 17 October to March there’s only a £3.9k variance).

A: No problem, monitoring is carried out monthly. However, sometimes governor meetings can miss the most up to date report.

Q: There continues to be a significant difference in the income and cost of catering (Mid-Year Reforecast £79.8k income/£99k cost. Last year £72.5k income/£92.3k cost). Has this been reviewed?

A: Catering income is only for pupil paid meals, and is always set to match expenditure for budget purposes. End of year always involves accruals for income that aren't finalised yet.

Q: Are there any financial issues with trip income that governors should be aware of?

A: Still struggling to get funds from parents for in-school experiences, we've decided to move that shortfall to curriculum development for next year as that seems more appropriate.

Q: The increase in LA funding and additional other grants awarded in 24/25 appear to have sufficiently covered the annual pay awards and on costs, are there any issues arising with staffing costs re 24/25 that governors should be aware of?

A: Maternity and shared parental pay have affected the budget.

Q: Actual agency supply spend was £20k in Oct 24 and the full year forecast was increased at the mid-year review from £35.3k in the Summer term to £45.3k in the Autumn term. This latest Spring forecast has revised it back to £34.7k. What led to this £10k fluctuation in the forecast?

A: We had worries that the spend would be over budget but it was ok.

Q: There has been a £9.5k reduction in the forecast since the Autumn term and at £45.4k is much lower than the £53.1k spent in 23/24. Why? Has this spend been delayed until 25/26 and, if so, is it included in the 25/26 budget?

A: £3k is ringfenced into 25/26 for a fire panel, £3.5k in 2024/25 was for playground and post holes to c/f to 25/26 and build up. 23/24 included the Eco Grant balance from 23/24 which was ringfenced.

Q: Cleaning costs are forecast to be 22% higher than last year. Why? What are the terms of the contract?

A: Increase of 10% from NCC and new cleaner has increased hours from 30 hours pw to 42.5 pw

Q: The full year forecast is £38k but March YTD actual spend is £29.8k – is this difference £8.2k of accrued invoices? If Jan to March hasn't been invoiced yet, might this be underestimated given the higher gas/elec use over the winter term?

A: January invoices are in, February and March will be accrued unless they arrive before 28th March.

Q: There isn't any trip subsidy in the latest reforecast, has this been missed? At the mid-year reforecast it was forecast to be £3k (£47k/50k)?

A: It's in now.

Q: The latest forecast £44.8k is £13.7k lower than the mid-year reforecast and £10.3k lower than last year (£55.1k 2023/24). How have these underspends happened and has there been any adverse impact on the children/teaching if planned learning resources have not been bought?

A: Everyone in school is aware that we need to be very careful on spending, we all check before committing any spend. We are absolutely sure the children haven't missed out on any learning experiences, as evidenced in the recent HT's report.

Q: The latest forecast is £16.8k, a reduction of £7.8k since the mid-year forecast. Why?

A: All licences and software are reviewed before renewal and if not useful then we don't renew. Alternatives have been found for some.

Q: What is the latest Current Account balance? Are there any cash flow/liquidity issues to be aware of?

A: £175k as of 25th March, no issues.

Q: What is the latest debtor balance? Are any debtor balances greater than 60 days old?

A: None.

Q: What is the latest creditor balance? Are any creditor balances greater than 60 days old? Are there any significant supplier issues to be aware of?

A: £7.3k all as expected.

Q: Are there any other finance issues arising since the last governors meeting? Has curriculum spending been adversely curtailed because of the forecast deficit expected through most of the year? Have there been any decisions/spend held back that with hindsight could have been afforded if the surplus forecast had been identified earlier in the financial year?

A: No none.

Q: The current plan for 25/26 is for an in year deficit of £35, 571. What actions are in place to produce a balanced budget to present to governors between now and June? (answered in meeting).

Q: Please can you update us on the current pupil numbers. What are the assumptions in the 25/26 plan and pupil numbers expected in October 24 census?

A: Current in school 360, 2024/25 budget based on October 2024 census at 356. The number of current first choice applications for September 2025 is 75, we are losing 90 Year 6 so the prediction for October 2025 census has been set at 346 children. We've kept it at 346 for future years.

Q: Now that the Pupil Premium allocations have been announced by the DfE, do you expect this budget to increase for WBSJ (held the same as 24/25 in the current plan)?

A: It's increasing from £340 to £350 per eligible pupil so the budget will be altered before fixing.

Q: This has been held the same as 24/25, at £19.6k. Do you know when this grant will be confirmed and, if WBSJ has lower pupil numbers, is this likely to be the same as 24/25?

A: Figures based on 356

Q: Regarding SEN and high needs, the 25/26 plan shows a £4.1k reduction in budget of £18.6k compared to £22.7k forecast for 24/25. Why?

A: Year 6 eligible pupils will only qualify for summer funding, may be more SEN funding when Year 3 arrive in September.

Q: Great to see the £32k NI grant – is this funding sufficient to cover the increased cost?

A: No, it's short.

Q: Why is the catering income budget lower than 24/25? What is the current price charged to parents for a meal? Does this need reviewing, given the likely staff cost increases passed on the WBSJ? What are the catering contract terms?

A: We've set catering income at £76,000 and matched it to meals expenditure. Current charges from September 2024 are £2.70 for a paid meal and £2.57 for FSM. We haven't been told of any cost increases yet, we're not with Notts County Council so aren't (hopefully) facing their 10% increase.

Q: Why has the other income budget decreased so much? In 23/24 £59.9k and 24/25 forecast at £56k but the 25/26 budget is only £34.2k. Given the draft in year budgeted deficit, can this income stream be reviewed?

A: Not sure which figures this relates to? The income was increased by Inspire Music going through our budget but they now collect direct from parents.

Q: What are the assumptions re pay awards built in to the budget? Why has the premises staff budget reduced to £39.5k compared to £43k 24/25 and £43k 23/24?

A: Estimates already in the budget are 3% for 2025 and 2% for 2026 onwards.

Q: Why is agency supply staff budgeted to increase so much at £42.3k (£7.6k higher than 24/25 and £5.1k higher than 23/24)?

A: Estimated 33 days mat leave cover and 10 days PP boosters for summer term 2025. Agency increase in charges of 6.5% with both agencies.

Q: Building and grounds - what is driving the increase from £45.4k in 24/25 to £52.9k budgeted for 25/26?

A: We are building up a pot of £3k each year for playground improvements and £450 for pot holes at Cottages, so £3,450 is ringfenced from 2024/25

Q: Cleaning - what is driving the increase from £27.8k 23/24 to £33.9k 24/25 to £46.2k in 25/26? £12.3k additional budget/cost year on year?

A: We previously employed our own cleaner for Cottages but as she has left we now passed the hours onto NCC

Q: Other premises cost - what is driving the increase from £6.9k 23/24 to £8.6k 24/25 to £11.3k in 25/26?

A: We've needed to replace a lot of Fire and H&S equipment on a rolling programme.

Q: Learning Resources (Non ICT) - Is any of this budgeted spend from financial year 24/25 being carried over to Summer term and falling into 25/26? If so, does this happen every year within the Academic year? If not, why is it budgeted to increase by £7.3k versus 24/25?

A: Only commitments for photocopier leases are carried over, I don't see an increase of £7.3k?

Q: ICT Costs (Non Capital) - what is driving the increase from £7k in 23/24 to £16.8k in 24/25 to £26.9k budgeted in 25/26? Given the draft budgeted in-year deficit, should this planned spend be reviewed?

A: Coding changes, ICT professional services now in E20 not E27 as last year.

Q: Supplies and Services - why is this spend budgeted to reduce by £26.3k? In 23/24 £86.5k was spent and in 24/25 £88.4k but the budget for 25/26 is only £62k?

A: See previous answer.

Q: Is 25/26 capital spend expected to be in line with the capital income?

A: Yes

GB/26/25 Sustainability action plan, governor link and broader role.

The chair stated that Ms Boxall was the sustainability link governor.

Mrs Eadie stated that she and a member of staff were working on the sustainability action plan, giving an overview of this, including attendance at a conference, pupil visit to a recycling centre and work with a climate ambassador from NTU. Further feedback to be given at the summer term finance FGB meeting.

Mrs Eadie left the meeting at 8.05pm.

GB/27/25 Receipt of minutes from Joint Collaboration Committee and review of actions

Governors noted the minutes from the JCC meeting held on 6 March 2025, which had been uploaded to Governor Hub. Dr Gibbon gave a summary of the minutes.

Dr Gibbon stated that both governing bodies should begin to consider the federation process as soon as possible, as it can be lengthy. Chair to circulate the *Federation Handbook* to all governors, for discussion at the summer term strategy FGB meeting.

Agenda

The executive headteacher gave a summary of proposed changes to SENCO provision across both schools.

GB/28/25 Traffic safety round the school – updates and possible further measures

The executive headteacher stated that all lines had been repainted outside the school. Governors noted that loading and unloading on double yellow lines was permitted. Governors to email executive headteacher with any suggestions on how to improve traffic safety around the school.

All

Q: Have the repainted lines made any difference to parking behaviour?

A: Not significantly. We have asked parents not to drive all the way to school and are challenging stopping on the yellow markings. We keep reinforcing the message in newsletters.

GB/29/25 Single Central Record

As noted at item *GB/22/25* above, Dr Gibbon to arrange a spring term SCR check.

GB/30/25 Confirm arrangements to review child protection and safeguarding recording and reporting systems (CP confidential file audit)

Dr Gibbon confirmed that the CP confidential file audit had taken place on 27 March 2025.

GB/31/25 Corporate Director's reports

There were no new reports to note.

GB/32/25 Communication received and updates

From chair

None.

From headteacher

None.

From clerk - Governor Newsletter

Governors noted the second spring term edition of the governor newsletter, available on Governor Hub.

GB/33/25 Report from training co-ordinator

All governors to complete skills audit circulated by Mr Hanspal.

All

Mr Hanspal to clarify governor training available from the National College.

JH

GB/34/25 General Data Protection Regulations

The DPO was confirmed as Nigel Frost.

The SIRO was confirmed as the executive headteacher.

GB/35/25 Review of all recent governor monitoring visit reports

Governors noted the CP confidential file audit.

The chair stated that Walk Day would be held in June 2025.

GB/36/25 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account

Governors noted the following:

- Questions and challenge in meetings.
- Approval of policies.
- Budget scrutiny.
- Approval of SFVS.
- Approval of inventory.
- CP confidential file audit.

GB/37/25 Confirmation of dates for 2025

The governing body

noted the following meeting dates:

Summer Strategy – Thursday 15 May 2025 at 6.15pm

Summer Finance - Thursday 26 June 2025 at 6.15pm

GB/38/25 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

that no items be deemed confidential and that all papers and reports be made available as necessary.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Signed



(chair)

Date 26 June 2025

School Display