



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governing Body, held on Thursday 25 April 2019 in the Jane Evans Room at main site

- Present:** Wendy Batchelor (LA governor and Chair), Katherine Wilkes (co-opted governor), Alison Eade (parent governor), Jon Hewitt (Headteacher), Roses Parfitt (staff governor), Joan Sargent (parent governor), Marcos Butterwick (co-opted governor), Charlie Kowalski (co-opted governor), Carol Turner (co-opted governor) and Jayne Tomlinson, Clerk to Governors.
- In attendance:** Atul Attra, School Business Manager; Caroline Whitlock (Deputy Headteacher), Joanne Westbrooke, School Finance Officer
- Apologies:** Ursula Codrington (co-opted governor) Tracy Warwick (parent governor)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from UC and TW

2. Any other business (AOB) items for the agenda (WB)

There were no other business items for the agenda.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. Discussion and agreement of the 2019-22 budget (AA)

The full budget pack had been sent to governors for review in advance of this meeting. The full budget had been discussed by the finance committee (4 April).

AA explained the process of how the budget plan is developed, the plan takes into account staffing, pay levels, NI, inflation, supply cover, unforeseen charges and services. The forecast is predicted for 3 years and 85-90% of the budget is for staffing (as more support staff are needed in an SEN school)

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AA presented a summary of the budget to governors and invited questions on the report.

Main school budget

AA noted that the 18/19 budget originally predicted an outcome of £203k surplus. The revised outcome during the year was £340k, with the actual outcome at year end being 335K. This is mainly due to savings, staffing costs lower £125k, non-staffing costs lower £40k, plus additional funding of £91k, but lower out of county receipts of £124k.

AA noted that budget assumptions for future years had been based on 167 pupils, support staff salary bands will increase from between 2% & 11.45% in April 19. From 2020/21 and thereafter the salary increase has been assumed as 2%. It was noted that around 82% of the predicted 2019/20 budget relates to staffing costs, 1% of the new budget has been allocated for training.

AA noted that premises costs will increase from 4% to 4.6% to cover additional costs for utilities and breakdowns. Supplies and Services will drop from 4.8% to 4.3% as the school continues to reduce the cost year on year. Buy backs (services we buy from the local authority such as HR, accountancy, payroll etc,) will reduce from 2% to 1.7%. The total costs will increase from 91.8 % in 2018/19 to 94.8% in 2019/20.

Governors discussed the carry forward amount, AA noted that amounts continued to be within the allowed amount of 10%. It was discussed that if the school committed to an extra class in 19/20 then this would put the budget into deficit at the end of the next financial year. AA has said that JH will need to have a conversation with the Local Authority in 19/20 about funding places in full going forward. Governors discussed the implications of the deficit and JH added that unions were working hard on the issue of lack of funding in schools. JH added that the school needs to pay good salaries otherwise the school would lose staff.

AA reported on other funds as follows:

Pupil Premium Grant

AA noted that income was £69k (PPG, LAC & Year 7 catch up), Expenditure was £66k with staffing costing £59k.

Primary Sports Premium

AA reported that income was £17k, and Expenditure was £11k (resources, specialist staff, including rebound therapy and training). Governors discussed the possibility of holiday clubs and utilising the equipment but AA explained that the school had tried to do holiday clubs in the past but equipment had been broken, supervision was poor and so it was decided not to look for alternative providers when the provision came to an end.

Capital Fund

AA reported that income of £73k was received (including transfer of £20k from the Main Fund) Expenditure was £78k mainly spent on fencing at Post 16, air-conditioning at main site, Sensory / Musical Path and upgrading IT.

Finally, AA reminded governors of their responsibilities with regard to budget namely to:

- Keep reviewing total staff costs / funding percentage
- Ensure increased pupil numbers are fully funded and not just at pro rata rate
- Review budget forecasting from P6 (Sept 2019) onwards
- Continue to lobby MPs and Parliament about high needs funding

Governors had a full discussion about moving into a deficit position in future years. AA noted that the ongoing review will continue, and prioritisation of spend. All agreed that the position moving forward will again become less tenable, and resulting impact on outcomes for young people will have to be closely monitored. JH thanked AA and JW for their hard work in producing an impressive healthy budget.

AA asked for governors' agreement to the presented budget. All governors agreed to the circulated budget and WB/JH signed the budget documents. **ACTION: AA will return signed budget to West Berks by 1st May 19 to meet the required deadline.**

5. AOB items

- *Premises Fencing*

AE asked if the fencing had been put up in Post 16 over Easter and if so she would like to organise a visit to see it.

ACTION: AE to organise a visit to Post 16 to look at the fencing.

- *Projects in Progress (AA)*

AA updated governors on the Woodland Area project which will be the next project to be developed. The school had received some of the funding from Tesco and the cost of the total project was 5.5k which would allow a path to be built around the wood area shortly. Other projects include CCTV, new gate & fencing at the main site and to replace the quad bike that was stolen.

ACTION: Update at the next FGB.

Date of the next meeting

The next FGB will be held from 5pm at main site on Thursday 20 June.