

ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the Board of Governors' Meeting held at
St. Mary's Primary School on Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 5.00pm

Present	
Mrs N Bown (Chair)	Co-Opted Governor
Mrs M Dunstan - HT	Headteacher
Mrs C Dibble	Co-opted Governor
Mrs C Layton	Staff Governor
Mr D Ballantine	Parent Governor
Mr James Stacey	Co-opted Governor
Mr S Cross	LA Governor
Miss H Read	Parent Governor
Mrs J Baker	Clerk

	Minute	Action
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1	Apologies accepted: Mr S Hellard, Rev S Osmond and Mrs M Clothier Apologies not received: None	
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2	Declaration of Business Interests There were no declaration of interests.	
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3	Minutes of the meeting of 25th January 2023 These were taken as a true copy.	
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4	Actions & Matters arising from the minutes of 25th January 2023			
ST MARY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS Action from the Meeting held on Wednesday 25th January 2023				
	Item	Action	Who	When
	13	Single Central to be signed by Headteacher	JB/MD	
	14	Outstanding Governor Visit reports to be received		
	14	Outstanding Governor visit to take place		

5	Any Matters of urgency not on the agenda See Confidential Minutes	
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6	Finance			
6.1	Budget report circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting			
	2023-24 Proposed Budget			
	It is not yet possible to finalise the 2023-24 budget, Governors need to decide on whether to accept the revised LA Core Offer first.			
		Core Offer – version 1	Core Offer – version 2	
	% Charge for Base Offer	5% @ £92,064.50	5% @ £92,065	
	Finance and Property Support	£4,200 for 60 hours	£5,600 for 80 hours	
	% Increase	63.2%	68%	
	Adjustment for cap at 60%	£1,899.29		

Adjustment for cap at 29%		£22,477
Total Core Offer Cost	£94,365.21	£75,187
Difference of/ Saving	£19,178.21	

The Headteacher has played a big part in negotiating these reductions. On top of the Core Offer cost, there are further costs for Supply Mutual (teacher sickness absence insurance) at £30,166, Somerset Music (ukulele lessons) at £2,380, Educational Psychology Service (3 x 6-hour package) at £1,800, School Library Service at £700, SAPH (Somerset Association of Primary Headteachers) membership at £550, and EYFS Statutory EYFS Profile moderation and assessment at £98. Charges for 2023-24 will be £35,694 =+ £75,187 = £110,881. 2022-23 total charge (including de delegation) was £103,300.

Budget Dashboard

Our 2023-24 Budget Allocation, as per our Budget Statement, is £1,841,290. With anticipated additional funding for Schools Supplementary Grant, Maintained Schools Additional Grant, Pupil Premium, National Tutoring programme, Recovery Premium Grant, PE & Sports Grant, and Universal Infant Free School Meal funding this will increase to £2,081,112.

Per Pupil funding has increased by £177 per pupil, from £3,217 in 2022-23, to £3,394 in 2023-24.

Having anticipated all known income and expenditure, at present, the Budget is showing an in-year deficit of £82,915. There are a few amendments to the staffing budget to be made which will bring this deficit down to £51,915.

It is anticipated that there will be an uncommitted 2022-23 carry forward of £322,748. This will be sufficient to clear the deficit and still leave enough for the school hall addition.

We shall need a further meeting, or email agreement, for this 2023-24 Budget.

Staffing

See confidential minutes

Premises

Information on premises expenditure is extracted on an annual basis, uploaded to a DfE site, and used to support benchmarking against similar schools.

We have been advised by SCC to inflate our energy costs again significantly: gas costs by a further 283% and electricity costs by 57%.

Curriculum

- F321 School Development Plan cost centre created. £3,000 has been allocated to the School Development Plan cost centre. In addition, £1,500 from 2022-23 will be carried forward to support the summer term goals.
- Continued investment in IT equipment is essential; therefore, 16 iPads and cases have been budgeted for..
- Allocation of £5 per pupil per term towards school trips.

Supplies and Services

- As in previous years, Day 1 Teacher Sickness absence cover (SSWMF) will be purchased from the Local Authority. The 2022/23 carry forward from claims made during 2022-23 will support the shortfall between in-year costs and reimbursements claimed.
- We review subscriptions frequently and allocations are made for those still in use and required. Our review this year has saved £1,754.

Income

High Needs Funding

- Included is all the known High Needs Funding income for 2023-24 (£40,527), based on various levels of funding. This estimate does not take account of High Needs Top up Funding for incoming Reception children in September 2023.
- Of those children in receipt of top up funding (12 pupils), four have full time 1:1 support, five receive sensory breaks throughout the day, and three pupils receive additional support as and when needed.
- As mentioned in the staffing notes, our School Action Plan + staffing cost is £97,103.

Grants

Pupil Premium

This funding will be used to support the cost of:

- Teaching and Education Support Staff
- Speech & Language Therapist
- Charterhouse Residential Visit Subsidy
- Free school milk

PE & Sports Grant

This funding will be used to support the cost of:

- SASP & BPSSA memberships, training & events
- Sports festivals
- Sports Day medals
- Sporting equipment

UIFSM & FSM

Allocations for UIFSM and FSM are based on census data and further calculations for UIFSM are available on Worksheet 1. The Government funds UIFSM at £2.34 per meal. We currently pay Taylor Shaw £2.55 per meal.

At present, there are 16 KS1 and 40 KS2 pupil in receipt of FSM.

Recovery and School Led Tutoring

This funding will be used to support the cost of K Harris' 3 mornings of interventions.

DFCG

Any DFCG balance from 2022-23 will be carried forward into 2023-24.

Primary capital works for this grant are Half Class (16) set of iPads & cases.

Little Oaks Nursery

Staffing

Costs include the contribution to Teaching Staff TLR2.1 (TG) costs and a Nursery Apprentice from September. Also included are estimates for additional hours and supply hours based on 2022/23 expenditure.

Nursery Resources

2022/2023 outturn is likely to be £15,000, which includes fencing, sandpit shelter and fire alarm system installation. We are however, carrying forward £15,000 from 2022/23 income to support resource costs during 2023-24.

Nursery Funding/Income:

The Budget Plan anticipates a total of £202,010 income. This is needed in order for the nursery to be self-sufficient.

See confidential minutes

Question from Governors - What percentage is budgeted for the staff pay rise for 2023/24 and onwards?

Teachers are expected to get between 5 and 9% in 2023/24; this depends on

whether they are main scale or upper pay scale. Those on teacher main scale will get the higher %.

Question from - Governors Premises costs fall from £120,893 in 2022/23 to £51,568. Why is this?

There are several reasons for this:

- D101 ETI Lighting checks (4 yearly happens to fall during 2023/24).
- D101 pond area viewing platform and tree removals, boundary fencing, bin storage fencing and tree removals.

Great budgeting to get the deficit down to £52K. It is noted that it will be cleared by the uncommitted CF of £323K. £52,020 has now been included in carry forward, reduced a few cost centres to the total of just under £2,000 and we are now at a balanced budget.

Question from Governors - How much of that will we putting towards the new hall?

The quote received for the school hall is £265,000. This includes a £20,000 contingency.

Question from Governors - Is that still affordable or do we need to reconsider that sum?

This is still achievable.

Question from Governors - 2025/26 shows an estimated deficit of £300,631 against a previous year deficit of £185,213. Should we be concerned at this stage?

The School Business Manager is not concerned. The forward figures shown are if everything stays the same. As already known, there are many changes to income and expenditure throughout one year, let alone two years.

Question from Governors - Do we need to start taking any mitigation action now?

It is considered that the school should continue to carefully monitor the budget in order to be prepared to take decisive action, should it be required for 2024-25 and/or 2025-26.

Question from Governors - Has the boundary issue been resolved and if not would it have any impact on the budget?

The boundary dispute is still ongoing, but once resolved there should be no impact on the budget. The fencing is already paid for, all that is outstanding is labour cost, but this money has already been allocated.

Question from Governors – When is the work on the hall expecting to start?

The school is still waiting on the Asbestos Survey, and once it has been received a planning application will be made. There is currently a drains issue, which could delay the start of the hall. The drains will need to be dug up from the front of the brown gate up to and including the huts. The work will need to be done when the school is closed, as there would be no water or access to toilets. This could also result in Little Oaks closing for this period. The work may have to happen in the Summer holidays as the Easter holidays would not be long enough for the work to be completed. This work is not included in the budget; however, the school would need to pay £1000 for another investigation. If/when this work needs to happen the County Surveyor will put in an application for emergency funding.

Question from Governors – Where are we in terms of the Nursery building?

6.2 We are still awaiting reports from Simon Tighe (LA Surveyor).

Benchmarking

Benchmarking exercises attached

The Self-Assessment Dashboard helps to provide school business professionals with assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management.

The dashboard tool can be used to identify possible areas for investigation and improvement to ensure that resources are being used to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for pupils.

The dashboard shows how a school's data compares to thresholds on a range of statistics that have been identified by the Department for Education as indicators for

good resource management and outcomes.

The dashboard provides red, amber or green (RAG) ratings against a school's data that indicates how its spend and characteristics compare with similar schools or nationally recognised bandings and recommendations:

- A red rating shows the school's data is significantly out of line with schools with similar characteristics or recognised characteristics. It does not mean that there is definitely a problem, but that there may be scope for change,
- an amber rating shows that the school's data is considerably out of line with the majority of similar schools or recognised characteristics,
- a light green rating shows that the school's data is in line with the majority of other schools or recognised standards - it does not necessarily mean that there is no scope for change,
- A dark green rating shows that the school's data is close to the middle of similar schools or better than recognised standards. Not all indicators will generate a dark green rating.

Senior Leadership Team (using 2021-2022 data)

Our full time equivalent of 2 senior leadership roles (HT & DHT) is on a par with 5 other similar schools in the Bridgwater area.

Teaching Staff

Our expenditure for teaching staff using the same data shows that expenditure for teaching staff was below 3 of the 6 schools.

Education Support Staff

Expenditure for our school was the highest of the 6 schools.

Administrative and Clerical Staff

Our expenditure for teaching staff using the same data shows that expenditure for teaching staff was below 3 of the 6 schools.

Our overall staff total shows St Mary's with the 2nd highest staff costs.

Question from Governors - What are the total pupil numbers for the benchmarked schools and us? (It is difficult to compare the costs unless we know the size of the schools).

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|--------------------------|-----|
| • Somerset Bridge | 453 |
| • Eastover | 414 |
| • St John and St Francis | 404 |
| • North Petherton | 414 |
| • Wembdon | 360 |

Whilst the teaching staff costs compare favourably, the support staff costs are much higher than anyone else's is but its good to see that the admin staff costs and other staff costs are lower than others' are. Therefore, the school spends a larger percentage of our total staffing costs on teaching / support staff, which is where the priority should indeed be. The costs seem high as benchmarking is based on permanent contracted staff. In addition, the school helps to subsidise many of the 1:1 members of staff.

6.3

View my Financial Insight (VMFI)

View my financial insights (VMFI) is an online tool (via Gov.uk) which helps schools view and improve their financial performance. It enables academy trusts and local authorities to see all their schools in one place and provides users with an automated assessment of their data based on similar schools. This assessment identifies areas with the greatest variance, providing users with a helpful starting point to investigate, potentially leading to improved resource management.

VMFI is designed for a range of educational professionals:

- finance directors or chief financial officers (CFOs)
- business managers
- governors or trustees

- school leadership teams
- local authorities

Using 2021-22 financial data the School Business Manager was able to generate an overview of costs compared to similar schools, not necessarily in Somerset. The SBM focused on percentage of expenditure for Teaching and Teaching Support Staff, Educational ICT costs and ICT learning resources costs. One thing to note is that we spend considerably less than most of the schools compared against, on ICT.

The percentage of income used for total educational supplies costs is 5.2%. This is the 7th highest of the 31 schools used for comparison (schools are selected by Gov.uk for comparison).

6.4 Schools Financial Value Standard 2022-23

SFVS attached to minutes

The [Schools Financial Value Standard](#) (SFVS) is a requirement for all maintained schools, who must submit it to their local authority (LA) every year.

It helps to provide our governing board with assurance that our school meets the standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management.

It must be agreed by the full governing board and signed by the Chair, and submitted before the end of the financial year (as per section 4.16 of the [statutory guidance](#) on schemes for financing schools). The deadline for the school to submit it to the LA is 31st March 2023.

A small group of governors met to complete the 2022-23 SFVS. The Clerk to GB then joined the meeting to find and enter examples from minutes of where evidence can be found.

Elements of the checklist are, as a matter of course, considered and reviewed as appropriate throughout the year, and as part of agreeing the School Development Plan, the budget setting process and approval of spends, and policies.

Actions for this coming year are:

1. Does the school have a realistic, sustainable and flexible financial strategy in place for at least 3 years, based on realistic assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures?

[We will continue to be aware of proposed changes to the Local Authority funding formula, and will set sustainable 2-year budgets, which are regularly scrutinised and amended as necessary. Pupil numbers and pressures form part of the Headteacher's reports to governors.](#)

2. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced 3-year budget and has this been submitted to the local authority?

[The SBM produces a comprehensive Budget plan, which also shows the following 2 years' funding forecast and expenditure, anticipating income and expenditure remaining on a par with the current year. This is sent to the Local Authority once agreed at FGM.](#)

3. Do you compare your non-staff expenditure against the DfE recommended national deals to ensure you are achieving best value?

[The SBM will continue to ensure that the finance administrator, who deals with day-to-day finance, will refer to this website for relevant procurement needs.](#)

Core Offer

The Core offer is not yet complete; Governors need to make the decision as to whether the school accepts the offer.

The Headteacher and headteachers from other schools have worked hard to reduce the cap, which they have succeeded with. It is only capped for next year, although it may be negotiable in the future. The Offer is still vague and there are currently no service agreements in place.

	The Governors agreed in favour of accepting the new Core Offer. The SBM will update the Budget plan for 2023/24 and the Clerk will email all Governors for final approval.	
7	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>The Headteacher has completed the Safeguarding Audit and the school is 100% compliant.</p> <p>Within school, there are some ongoing safeguarding issues that staff are concerned about, but everyone is managing them well.</p> <p>Staff have been advised that they are to start having some initial conversations with parents when there is a concern.</p>	
8	<p>Policies</p> <p>The following policies are all due for renewal. Policies were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children Missing in Education • Equality Information & Objectives • E-Safety • RSE • Supporting Children with Medical Needs • Uniform <p>The Governors approved all policies.</p>	
9	<p>Young Carers</p> <p>Information regarding Young Carers and a Policy were circulated prior to the meeting</p> <p>The school are aiming to get a Young Carers award; Caroline Layton (DHT) and Tracey Porter (PFSA & ELSA) will lead this. There are a few children already within school who would qualify.</p> <p>Question from Governors – Will these childrens attainment be looked at separately?</p> <p>Yes they will be. They will also receive PFSA support as a family.</p> <p>Question from Governors – Is there a cost implication?</p> <p>There should not be. Many of these children will be FSM and the school could potentially subsidise some costs.</p> <p>Question from Governors – How do we expect to identify these children?</p> <p>The school will look at information received as children start school. There is also a box/jar in each class called 'I wish my teacher knew....' where children can put a note in for the class teacher. This seems to be working well at the moment. A representative from the Young Carers Association will come to an assembly to introduce the award to the children.</p> <p>All Governors agreed for the Young Carers award to go ahead.</p>	
10	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>MD had received an email from the Diocese congratulating the school on the Excellent SIAMS inspection.</p> <p>There was also a letter from Ed Gregory, Director of Education for the Bath and Wells Diocese in regard to the SIAMs result.</p>	
11	<p>Any matters of confidential nature</p> <p>Recorded in confidential minutes.</p>	
12	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 17th May 2023</p>	
	Meeting closed at 6.25pm	

ST MARY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS

St. Mary's Primary School - 062
Full Governing Body Minutes 22/03/2023

Signed:

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Date:

Action from the Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd March 2023

Item	Action	Who	When
6	Core Offer – SBM to accept the Core Offer and update accordingly. Revised budget to be emailed to Governors.	CD	ASAP