

VICTORIA COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL
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BOARD of GOVERNORS

FEBRUARY 2024

Together we aim for the stars

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors for Victoria School on
Tuesday 20th February

Members Present

Miss Christine O'Callaghan, Chairperson
Mr David Adams
Mr Marc Cahill
Mrs Sam Daniels
Mr Peter Hall
Mrs Laura Halliwell

Mrs Beth Hales
Mrs Judith Jones
Mrs Cerys McDonald
Mrs Helen Moreton
Mr Mark Petherick
Ms Julie Plumb

Apologies

Cllr. Rhiannon Birch
Mrs Rebecca Connor
Mr Alistair Davey
Mr Simon Husband
Miss Jeanette Minns
Dr Rhiannon Slade
Cllr. Mark Wilson

Apologies were given and accepted by Governors.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 28th November 2023

The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on Tuesday 28th November were approved by the Governors; proposed by **MC** seconded by **JJ** and signed by the Chairperson.

Matters arising

SD informed governors that she was meeting with C Tyley from Big Fresh Catering on 22nd February to discuss the current provision of meals. Although children and parents were grateful for the provision of a free school meal it was clear that it could not continue in the same vein. Apart from the logistics of serving 400+ meals per day the amount of waste generated was unacceptable, this has already impacted the school with increased refuse costs. Once the new workplace recycling laws are introduced in April we are anticipating further costs. **JP** indicated that she was available to attend the meeting to raise governor concerns.

CM, **BH** and **PH** had attended the Governors Briefing session in December. **CM** had circulated her report to governors, part of which is reproduced below:

This was a really gloomy session. The Vale of Glamorgan Financial Director set out what had happened in 23/24 in terms of education Budget settlement. VoG had increased Education spending by 10.5% (over and above the 8.9% increase received from Welsh Govt) but absolutely recognised this was insufficient to meet the pressures Schools were under. 22 schools in the Vale are in deficit with 19 of those unable to agree a recovery plan. There were still questions on how pay awards were also being funded adding further strain. Education not only area struggling with funding - Social Services and Highways also under acute pressure.

The picture going into 24-25 is far from an improving one. Whilst inflation pressures are falling, VoG were expecting a settlement of c. 3% increase in the Welsh Budget (which was about right – the Welsh Budget gave LA's a 3.1% uplift) and again questions around funding for pay/pensions increases remain uncertain. The current assumption in the VoG is that additional savings will be required by the VoG to live within its settlement but that schools and social services will be protected as much as possible [meaning other services take a greater hit]. The VoG will need to have some serious discussions around funding (i.e. council tax rises) or drawing on their reserves) to be able to navigate the next few years.

I did probe the FD on whether he recognised that there was a structural underfunding issue and where he thought we (as Governors) needed to look for further savings. He agreed re structural underfunding and acknowledged there were no obvious answers on where further savings could be made in schools. They said at the moment, there is not an expectation that schools would be asked for further savings over and above what has already been agreed. But clearly a lot can still change.

CO'C thanked **CM** for her update. **MC** asked if there was any indication that the VOGC had sufficient reserves to cover shortfalls in the budget. **CM** advised that it was not made clear. **MC** then asked, 'what if anything can we do'? **CO'C** said we were still waiting for an update from the funding discussion that was held in the Senedd in December. **SD** stated that the 2024/25 budget would be released in the next few weeks and suggested that we wait until that is received before we consider any next steps.

ESTYN – the report had been circulated to all governors, who expressed their thanks to Mrs Daniels and the staff. The governors felt that it was a very positive report. **SD** stated that it had recognised the quality of teaching and learning, it acknowledged the pastoral care for the children and it also verified the areas that needed to be addressed.

Feedback from Governor Visits

BH & **MC** had met with Mrs David and Mrs Glover to look at maths and numeracy. They were provided with an excellent overview and recognised the use of maths across the curriculum, including the after-school clubs. **JP** reported that she had met with Ms Jones to discuss IT and had been provided with a comprehensive overview. **CO'C** suggested that all governors should meet with their respective AOLE leads before the end of the summer term.

Safeguarding

JJ advised that 'My Concerns' continues to be used effectively; both Jayne Hall and **SD** are due to attend further training on it. By logging concerns, it enables staff to monitor patterns of behaviour through chronology of events.

Risk assessments for individual pupils have recently been reviewed and updated. These are in place where a risk has been identified either through behaviour or illness.

Mrs Hall is due to attend level 2 safeguarding training in March. All LSA's attended a wellbeing training session on the last INSET day. The training was delivered by the Engagement Service and was well received. The team and Mrs Hall will now deliver the training to teaching staff at an INSET in March. During the next academic year, it will be incorporated into the children's work on self-awareness and wellbeing.

Finance & Personnel Committee

MP advised that the committee had met in December. The budget remained challenging. A £3K grant from the Arts Council had been received.

Several staff have been unwell but to date classes have mainly been covered by partner teachers, allowing for consistency. A new teacher has been appointed for maternity cover in YR6.

Policies

The following policies had been updated and were accepted and adopted by the GB:

Recruitment & Selection

Schools Dignity at Work

Social Networks

Whistleblowing

Transgender Inclusion Toolkit & Guidance

This had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. **CO'C** asked if there were any questions or comments. **CMC** acknowledged that this was a sensitive issue and would be challenging for any member of staff. **SD** advised that during the pupil progress meetings, pupil wellbeing was discussed and during those conversations, advice from **SD** and the ALNCO, Jayne Hall could be offered.

Equality & Diversity Champion

PH offered to be our E&D Champion.

Correspondence

HM reminded governors of the various training opportunities available this term.

AOB

SD advised that on 15th March we are hosting an Anti-Racism workshop for other schools, governors were invited to attend from 9.00AM.

SD shared a 'Diversity and Inclusion' pledge written by the children:

'We share a commitment to fight racism, prejudice and discrimination, of all types, within our school and the community we serve. We pledge to use our collective voices and actions to help create a world that is inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible for all. We will not ignore our differences, but rather embrace and celebrate the strength and power that our diversity brings.'

CO'C asked governors if they would like to meet with staff informally in the summer term prior to a GB meeting, it was agreed that this was an excellent idea. **CO'C** will arrange for Tuesday 9th July.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 19th March 5.30PM

Finance & Personnel Committee 22nd March @ 8.30AM

Matters Confidential – See Attached