



**Governing Board of the Winchcombe School
Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting
Monday 27th January 2025 at 5.00pm**

Present: Richard Blofeld (RB) (Chair of Governors) co-opted governor; Liam Anderson (LA) (Vice Chair) (Chair of FC) co-opted governor; Kathryn Bowers (KB) parent governor: Matt Percy (MP) (Head teacher)
Apologies: None
Absent:
In attendance: Lynda Jones (LJ) School Business Manager (SBM); Harriet Skinner (HS), Clerk E Scarlett (ES) Deputy head teacher

Key: Strategic direction/Challenge or Question/Answer/Action/Extract
1.Apologies None <i>The meeting was quorate</i>
2.Declaration of any other business (i) Catering contract (LJ) (ii) HR provider (HS)
3. Declaration of interests (i) None
4. Minutes of the meeting of 14.10.24 It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting and were signed by LA. Clerk to upload minutes to the school website: ASAP
5.Matters arising (i) Happy Kids rent review Completed. No further action. (ii) Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)/ Looked after Children (LAC) query MP contacted (WBC) head of virtual school and confirmed that the funding was correct, however support has been provided: whole school attachment training at INSET day, free of charge.
6. Budget monitoring report to governors P9 HS advised that P9 budget monitoring reports had been prepared by LJ and HS, and sent to WBC Schools Accountancy for checking. RB noted total teaching staff expenditure just below expected 75% at Period 9, although total expenditure overspent, forecast at year end just under 100%. RB pointed out that educational support staff was the biggest risk factor, currently overspent by 4%. LA asked if more teaching assistants (TAs) were needed for 2025/26

academic year. MP advised that to meet need of those pupils currently in Acorns (nursery class) as they move to foundation stage, a minimum of 3 was required – an external advisor from WBC recently spent a morning in Acorns class and recommended 2 extra staff just to manage the current cohort.

LA wanted clarity on the strategic direction for the burgeoning number of SEN pupils and various scenarios were discussed. KB asserted that safety of all pupils should be prioritised over financial constraints. RB concurred that the SEN funding is a nationwide issue and school leaders are seeing that pupils of average ability are suffering educationally as a result. MP notified the committee that seeking alternative SEN models was high on SLT's agenda and MP/ES will report back to governors at the next meeting (FGB 3.3.25).

The discussion moved onto supply insurance and HS was frustrated that current provider have declined claims. RB suggested that LJ meet with representative from the insurer to discuss options – RB to arrange and LJ to inform RB of supply insurance premium for 24/25 FY. KB raised a concern about number of lunchtime controllers (LTCs) and HS/LJ explained that recruitment was an ongoing challenge.

HS informed the committee that since the P9 BMF reports were circulated, SA have checked the reports and had a number of queries, LJ and HS have updated Fund 01 and reported a carry forward of est. £21k. However, in the week since the meeting pack was issued a number of premises issues have arisen (fire doors, window mechanism) so expected spend may be higher than the £4k estimated to year end, but HS/LJ learnt from WBC that an additional £16k SEN top up funding is expected.

The committee noted that Funds 08, 13,50, 55, 76 and 99 forecasts showed carry forward at year end. It was noted that Fund 99 (The Phoenix Club before and after school club) income was higher than budgeted due to increase in fees and tighter credit control. KB asked if the club was adequately staffed. MP advised that there is a cap on numbers and LJ pointed out that a new playworker has just been appointed. MP went onto say that longer term, the provision will be enhanced which in turn would lead to higher income and therefore more staff.

HS and LJ advised that following P10, BMF reports would be prepared and circulated to the committee for monitoring. Lastly MP thanked LJ and HS for their work.

7. Benchmarking report 2023-24

LA presented his report, no variances to the previous year's report. LA drew attention to higher than comparators IT costs, which would come into line from 2024/25 charts due to the change to the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Teacher costs are high because of the number of teachers on the upper pay range but governors concurred that the experienced staff profile was an asset to the school and had an impact on quality of education.

There was a discussion about staff absence and cover and MP asserted that there were robust measures in place for managing absence but conceded that SLT did spend a lot of time covering classes/lunch times.

Lastly, HS reminded governors that the benchmarking report card link was available and below.

Benchmarking report to be circulated to FGB for information (clerk 3.3.25)

<p>8. School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) SFVS was considered and approved, duly signed by LA (chair of finance committee). Clerk to submit SFVS to WBC internal audit. Clerk to circulate FGB for information by next FGB meeting 3.3.25</p>
<p>9. School Fund Accounts 2023-24 HS advised that school fund account had been independently audited. No queries, Approved by FC. Clerk to circulate FGB for information by next FGB meeting 3.3.25</p>
<p>10. AOB (i) Catering Contract LJ reported that following the appointment of Dolce on 1st November 2024 (after an in-house procurement exercise), The Winchcombe School joined a group of 14 schools in a tendering process for the procurement of catering services. On further examination of the tender documents, our contract with Dolce and after consulting WBC legal services, LJ learnt that the school was at risk of incurring 3 months of charges for 2 suppliers and possibly a higher cost than our current contract. In addition, the process was time sensitive as a decision had to be made by 29.01.25. Under the contract with Dolce the school cannot give notice until 01.01.26, furthermore, we are happy with the service from Dolce so far, and SLT felt that it was not in the school's best interests to change supplier at this time. Therefore, the Winchcombe School will not be part of the tendering process. The FC supported this decision.</p> <p>(ii) HR provider HS advised that the school approached WBC HR services for a quotation to buy back into WBC HR. The cost of the SLA is £ 7, 350 (plus additional fee for ad hoc services such as TUPE advice, HR recruitment) compared to current provider (juniper HR) £ 2426 all inclusive for 2024/25 current FY. The committee agreed that the cost of buying back into WBC services was prohibitive and the school should remain with current provider.</p>
<p>11. Date & time of next meeting FBG: Monday 3rd March 25th November at 5.00pm Finance Committee: Monday 31st March 2025 at 5.00pm <i>The meeting closed at 6.17pm</i></p>

	Supporting documents	Agenda item
1.	Agenda for this meeting	1.
2.	Minutes of the meeting of 14.10.25	4, 5.
3.	Budget monitoring report to governors January 2025 Fund 01 BMF Budget P9 & Commentary Fund 08 BMF Budget P9 & Commentary Fund 13 BMF Budget P9 & Commentary Fund 50 BMF Budget P9 & Commentary Fund 55 BMF Budget P9 & Commentary Fund 76 BMF Budget P9 & Commentary Fund 99 BMF Budget P9 & Commentary	6.
4.	Benchmarking report 2023-24 link to report card and charts: Schools Financial Benchmarking - GOV.UK	7.
5.	Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)Capability (performance) Procedure	8.
6.	School Fund Accounts 2023-24	9.