St. Joseph's Camberwell Catholic Schools' Federation Resources Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Resources Committee Held via Zoom on Wednesday, 21st of May 2025 at 5:30 pm

Present
Katie Brooks
Delia Jameson, Executive Headteacher
Sam Mburu.
Nicholas Sim
Patsy Winters Chair

In attendance
Theresa Mokogwu, Head of School
Kevin Gibb, School Business Manager
Odunola Ajibola Clerk

The meeting started at 6.45 pm and was quorate.

PART I

1. Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. Declarations of Interest in the Agenda

Nick Sim declared is a governor at Sacred Heart School.

3. Minutes of the Last Resources Committee Meeting

3.1 Approval of the Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the last meeting as a record of the discussions.

3.2 Matters Arising (not appearing elsewhere on the agenda)

Item	Action	By whom	When	Outcome
5	Complete PE link visit	NS	Ongoing	Ongoing
5	Circulate benchmarking data	SBM	ASAP	Complete

6	**The Chair of Governors will review the draft before it is sent**	**The Chair and Chair of Governors**	**ASAP**	**Complete**
7	**Submit SFVS comments to SBM**	**All governors**	**Complete**	**Complete**
9	**Arrange H & S link visit with Brona**	**EHT**		**Ongoing**

4. Financial Reporting

a. Sign off on School Journey accounts.
The school does not have a school journey account.

5. Budget Monitoring

The Chair provided feedback from the meeting held with the School's Finance and the Executive Headteacher (EHT) based on the previous version of the budget, which projected a deficit. He shared that the budget has since been reviewed carefully to ensure better accuracy, and the Federation is no longer projecting a deficit budget. The following were highlighted:

The school is no longer operating a deficit budget and is no longer projecting a deficit. The budget forecast for the next three years is a balanced budget.

b. <u>Review the Year 2024-25 Budget</u>

Governors received the End of Finance Year 2024-25 Qtr 4 report.

- At the end of the 2024-25 financial year, both schools finished with a positive bank balance and had not gone overdrawn at any point throughout the year.
- With all the capital works in 2024-25 (roofing), all the junior capital balances were used by the end of the financial year, so there is no capital balance to carry forward for the Juniors. The Infant school will be carrying forward £13,619.91 in capital balances. Both schools will be carrying forward uncommitted revenue balances.
- Due to a tight financial year because of SEN needs, Comber Grove and starting a nursery, the Infant School will only be carrying forward £18,617.03 (2% BCM) into the next year, and the Junior School £109,411.41 (6% BCM), both of these figures are below the local authorities' balance control mechanism BCM of 11%.
- The Supply Teacher and Supply TA budgets were much higher than

originally budgeted due to the school using supply teachers in Nursery and some supply SEN staff to support our higher needs throughout the school.
- The cost of electricity and gas was unknown at the start of the year due to the troubles in Eastern Europe. Whereas gas cost had come down, and ~~the~~ electricity cost seemed to spike. We are informed that the electricity should balance out, if not start reducing for the coming year.
- Catering costs have increased and are expected to increase from April due to the National Insurance change this year.
- Both Infant and Junior schools finished the year with positive bank balances and were never overdrawn.

c. Budget Setting 25/26 and Review the Three-Year Budget Forecast

Governors received the AEP (Summary) for Budget Setting 2025-2028 (May 2025) report prior to the meeting. The following were highlighted:

School funding for 2025-26 has been calculated and allocated by the local authority to both schools. This is based on the school roll and other information gathered in October.

The 2024 School Census, from which two future years' (2026-27 and 2027-28) budgets are then based upon predictions made by the school.

Staff Costs (E01–E07)

Support Staff: Budget includes a £1,575 pay rise per scale for 2025/26, similar to last year, with the same assumption for 2026–28, though final figures will be subject to union/government approval.

Teaching Staff: A 2.8% pay increase is built in for 2025/26 and future years.

Staff Development (E09)

Budget remains the same as last year, covering essential training like First Aid and fire marshal training; future development at the local authority level is included.

Premises & Maintenance

Buildings/Grounds (E12 & E13): Normal maintenance plus additional funds for hall/class/stairway decoration and KS1 entrance resurfacing.
Cleaning & Caretaking (E14): Increased budget for consumables due to rising costs.
Water & Sewage (E15): Expected 7% increase.
Energy Costs (E16): Budget aligns with last year’s consumption; potential reductions forecasted by KCC Laser Group in 2024–25, to be reviewed mid-year.

Operational Costs

Other Occupation Costs (E18): Includes contracts like PAT testing, alarms, pest control; 4% increase applied where suppliers increased costs.

Learning Resources (E19): Curriculum budgets largely unchanged.

ICT Learning Resources (E20): Software and IT support budgets broken into subgroups; most increased by 4%.

Admin Supplies (E22): Subscription costs are mostly up 4% or stable.

Insurance (E23): Decreased for Infants, slightly increased for Juniors based on pupil numbers.

Special Facilities (E24): Breakfast/After School Clubs maintained at last year's budget; may increase with income.

Catering Supplies (E25): Increased for food and staffing; pupil numbers affect the total cost.

Agency Supply Teachers (E26): Budget for long-term supply; in-house cover preferred to reduce costs.

Brought-in Professional Services (Curriculum & Non-Curriculum) (E27–E28): Slight increases due to NI contributions and supplier updates.

Future Budgets & Pupil Numbers (2026–28)
Pupil Numbers: Predictions are challenging; past trends show increases in Year 3 intakes but a downward trend in junior years is emerging.
Financial Impact: Pupil number fluctuations remain a high-risk factor affecting several areas of the budget.

The AEP focuses on maintaining staff salaries, training, and core operational services, while planning for modest inflationary increases across maintenance, supplies, and contracted services. Energy savings may offer mid-year flexibility. Pupil number variability is a key budgetary risk, especially for the Junior School.

The Chair of Governors expressed satisfaction with the level of scrutiny applied to the budget position in both schools and were relieved that the financial outlook is now more favourable.
The Committee Chair emphasised the importance of maintaining rigorous scrutiny and suggested that the School Business Manager (SBM) may benefit from additional training to further strengthen effective financial management. He also observed that his recent meeting with the school finance team had not been a wholly positive experience.

d. Ensure that the Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) Framework is Completed and Submitted

It was noted that the CFR has been submitted to the LA.

The Chair emphasised that the main detail is in ensuring that the Federation maintains careful financial monitoring.

Q**:** It is good news that the budget is looking healthy. Why has there been a significant change in the budget position?
A: The EHT explained that savings have been made year-on-year as a result of staff who have left, but the conversation about replacing them or not had not been had, and thus they were still accounted for. There are also staff who will be leaving through resignation and retirement, which had not been accounted for.

Overall, staffing cost for the Infant School is about 71% of the budget, but adding the cost of agency staff takes it to 90%. The school has a lot of children with SEND who require support. The initial cost of support for these children is borne by the school, but EHCP applications are in the pipeline for some of the children. The budget also assumes the lowest funding band, and if the LA offers more, there will be scope within the budget to do more.

Support staff who are leaving will not be replaced, and the school is looking into creative ways to cover. Savings have also been found because a certain proportion of staff on maternity leave or long-term sick have dropped down to statutory pay. These adjustments were made to make the budget more accurate.
Infants:
Y1 – Saving £105k
Y2 – Saving £126k
Y3 – Saving £136k
Juniors:
Y1 – Saving £161k
Y2 – Saving £171k
Y3 – Saving £31,507

The Federation has top-of-scale teachers, and when they leave, they will be replaced with teachers on a lower scale. The plan is to continue with the nurture room, and discussions are ongoing on how this can be continued and funded.

The Chair highlighted that the savings that have been secured are good, but this was not reflected in the previous version of the budget that was presented to governors. There needs to be a more consistent approach in budget monitoring and planning.

The Chair noted that the Federation is getting good outcomes for the children, and there needs to be greater care in budget monitoring to ensure that the budget is accurate, and that the information presented to governors and the LA for scrutiny is correct. He noted that being summoned by the LA to discuss a potential budget deficit does not put the school in a good position, and the

reputation of the school is important and should be protected.

Q: Are you sure that the cost savings will not lead to operational problems or risks to the outcomes for the children under what has been proposed in the three-year budget?

A: The EHT confirmed that the cost savings will not have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

The SBM explained that the schools were using agency staff to support the children with SEND to help close gaps, but the use of supply staff has to be creative until the additional funding for the children with SEND is secured, at which point an additional support staff member could be employed if needed. Although funds were earmarked to start the nursery, the school used more than anticipated.

Q: We had the start-up cost for the nursery outside of the budgetary cost. Are you saying that there were costs attributed to the nursery start-up that were one-offs?
A: The Federation had a large carry forward last year, which was earmarked for the nursery as one of the projects. Perhaps the funding set aside was not enough.

The SBM highlighted that there have been other changes to the budget since the last meeting, such as staff leaving. There will no longer be a nursery teacher, as one of the existing staff will be moved to teach in the nursery from September 2025. This generates a saving of about £65k. There was additional nursery income that was unknown at the time of the last meeting, which has now been confirmed.

Q: Are you saying that the nursery teacher cost and the additional income were secured but not reported?
A: The SBM confirmed that additional funding has now been secured.

Q: Who is teaching the nursery if we are no longer reliant on a supply teacher?
A: The plan is to move one of the reception teachers into the nursery, depending on the numbers in reception.

Q: Reception numbers for this year are similar to last year, and there will be intakes from the nursery. Is this correct?
A: There are about 27 families who have picked the school as their first choice, and there are late applications coming through. It is expected that the reception class will be about 34 children

Governors discussed the budget situation and agreed to take away the explanations regarding the future changes in the budget and to discuss this further at a later date.

The Chair mentioned that there were matters that the budget scrutiny and the meeting with the LA had highlighted.

Falling rolls continue to impact the school, and there must be clear and targeted marketing strategies. There also needs to be clarity on how the LA is strategically managing falling rolls, ensuring that the future of the best-performing schools is secure.

The number of PPG children is dropping year on year. The housing situation and policies in the Borough continue to impact school rolls.

Q: Do councils have to prioritise higher-performing schools regarding pupil numbers?
A: No, councils set the priorities for place planning.

The Chair noted that it would be beneficial for governing boards to be part of the LA's strategic plans in dealing with falling rolls and school placements. After discussion, it was agreed that the EHT and SBM have revised the budget to ensure that it is balanced and have sought savings that will not impact the quality of teaching and learning. The SBM and EHT will present an explanation to the board on how and why the budget has changed from the previous position.

The EHT reassured governors regarding the integrity of the budget presented for approval and noted that it had been agreed that the Chair would review the budget before the committee meeting. Plans are also in place to secure external support for effective budget preparation and monitoring, which will not incur any additional cost.

The Chair suggested presenting a financial management proposal ahead of the next FGB, outlining how the Federation plans to improve financial reporting. This proposal will include proposed training for staff who manage the budget. It was agreed that the financial management proposal would be presented to the GB by the EHT.
ACTION
The Executive Headteacher

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the 2025/2026 budget and the three-year plan and recommend it to FGB for ratification.

The Clerk suggested to the committee that whole-GB training on finance could be arranged through Governor Services. The committee could also consider appointing associate governors who have experience in school finance.
A governor noted that the changing landscape in school finance, falling rolls, and budgetary pressures is concerning, and emphasised the need to be proactive and stay positive.

Governors also discussed external funding opportunities, long-term strategies to secure the school's future, increasing the school's profile, and marketing strategies. The Chair noted that the LA raised a proposal for the Federation to reduce its PAN at the meeting, and this will be discussed with the Diocese. The Chair of Governors suggested that, as part of the marketing strategy,

testimonials from parents of children who joined the school from Comber Grove, highlighting their children's progress, would be impactful, raising the school's profile.

6. Review of SIP Progress in Relation to the Committee

Governors will continue to monitor the budget and PPG to ensure that resources are deployed effectively.

7. Premises and Health and Safety

e. Premises Update

Governors received updates, and the following were noted:

- The lift requires updating because of frequent breakdowns. It is out for use to staff.
- SBM mentioned that the Diocese had updated the school's floor plan to help manage fire risks.
- Fire compartmentalisation risk assessment had been carried out, waiting for the report.

8. Staffing Update

Two staff members are currently on maternity leave, and their roles will be covered internally.

One member of staff will be leaving at the end of the term. The committee thanked the staff for their contributions.

One staff member is on long-term sick leave. School leaders are reviewing staffing arrangements and are seeking guidance from the school's HR to manage the situation effectively.

9. Any Other Business

There were none.

Signed……..Date……

Matters Arising from the meeting

Item	Action	By whom	When	Outcome
5	**Complete PE link visit**	**NS**	**Ongoing**	**Ongoing**
9	**Arrange H & S link visit with Brona**	**EHT**		**Ongoing**
Item	**Action**	**By whom**	**When**	**Outcome**
5	**To present a financial management proposal to the next FGB, including improved reporting and staff training.**	**EHT**	**Next FGB**	