

Tuesday 3rd February 2026 at 5.30pm
Remote online meeting via Zoom

Present:

Eleanor Cirillo – Foundation Governor

Gabrielle Williams Hamer – Chair of the Committee/Foundation Governor

In attendance:

Clare Baskott - Clerk to the Governing Body

Margaret Searle - Director of Finance and Resources

Graham Thompson – Principal

Apologies:

No-one

Absent without apologies:

Femi Adedj – Parent Governor

The meeting was quorate throughout.

All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Minutes

Standing opening items – Chair of the Committee

Item 1 - Opening Prayer

The Principal led the meeting in prayer at 5:33pm.

The Chair of the Committee welcomed all present to the meeting.

Item 2 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

Femi Adedj was absent without apologies.

Item 3 Declarations of Interests

None.

Item 4 Committee time with Auditors (if required)

The Committee agreed that this was not required.

Item 5 Minutes of previous meeting, 11th November 2025: for review and agreement

The Minutes of the previous meeting, 11th November 2025, were approved.

It was agreed that the Clerk will arrange Anti-Fraud training. **Action: Clerk.**

The Principal reported that an experienced Health and Safety Compliance Officer had been appointed.

A discussion took place about the college's social media challenges and areas for improvements.

The Principal reported successful open evenings. The admissions team were very proactive in obtaining references for potential students.

The Committee paid tribute to staff for the excellent programme at the recent Quality Morning. The Committee noted they were impressed with all the students they met.

Matters Arising

All items were included on the agenda.

Item 6 Standing item:

Cyber Security

The Principal gave an update. The college has been awarded the Cyber Essentials Accreditation. It was noted that this was an annual re-accreditation

The Principal gave an overview of the college's investment in the IT infrastructure and hardware to ensure robust cyber security.

A discussion took place about the future of the college's server systems if the college joined a multi academy trust.

The principal noted the excellent service provided by the current IT providers for cyber security.

Item 8 Internal Audit – Chair of the Committee

Audit Committee to review and agree plans for internal audit and key priorities for 2026-27

The Director of Finance and Resources gave an overview of the internal audit areas which were mapped against the Risk Register.

A discussion took place about potential areas of internal audit.

A discussion took place about Continuity planning.

The Committee agreed to audit:

- **Funding Assurance and Continuity planning in 2025-26**
- **Funding Assurance and GDPR in 2026-27.**

Item 9 Internal Audit Action Report

The Director of Finance and Resources gave an update and reported that all actions had been completed. An update will be given at the next meeting if any points are raised.

Item 10 FMCE improvement plan: monitoring of progress

The Principal gave an update of the target areas.

Governor Recruitment

It was noted that all three prospective foundation governors had a strong audit and/or financial background.

It was agreed that all three prospective Governors will be invited to attend future Governing Board and committee meetings. **Action: Clerk.**

A discussion took place about Governor recruitment.

Lettings:

The Director of Finance and Resources gave an overview of lettings. Some of the capital works

had impacted on lettings. A new platform was being investigated so that bookings could be made online.

A discussion took place about the importance of succession planning for SFX Corporate Directors.

Item 11 Risk Management

To receive the updated Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework

The Principal gave an update and reported there were no significant changes to the Risk Register.

Finance continued to be the greatest risk, and staff were working hard to optimise student recruitment.

A discussion took place about the low uptake for A Level French, with just two students on roll. The Principal reported that the college will need to consider the cost effectiveness of some courses.

Governor question: Regarding the erosion of the college's reserves, is it a trend which is difficult to reverse. Will it be resolved through increasing student numbers, or will the reserves continue to decrease?

Response: Any capital works e.g. IT infrastructure come out of reserves, and this is one of the reasons for the decline. We have had two years of high costs for capital expenditure and IT infrastructure. Reserves are there to provide a buffer.

A discussion took place about London allowances and how this which will impact the colleges' finances in the future

Governor question: What is the next pay deal looking like?

Respond: It is expected to be 2.5-3%.

A discussion took place about the Department for Education (DfE). Governors asked if they had raised concerns about the college's finances. The principal explained that the DfE were aware and understood the issues and had acknowledged that the college managed their finances well. It was noted that more students had been recruited into Year 1 this academic year.

It was agreed that the Principal will update the Risk Management policy to make it more accessible. **Action: Principal.**

It was agreed that the Clerk will update the Board Assurance Framework. **Action: Clerk.**

The Committee approve the Risk Register and the Board Assurance Framework

Item 12 Auditors Performance Review

To review the performance of

Item 12. 1 Buzzacott (external auditors) and

Item 12.2 Scrutton Bland (internal auditors)

The Committee asked about response to question 14 for Buzzacott.

The Director of Finance and Resources gave an update explained that the college had a new partner and manager as it was best practice to rotate every few years. However, this had led

to issues with lack of continuity of staff. However, this had not impacted in a hugely negative way.

Item 13 Committee review of effectiveness, membership and skills: online questionnaire for completion after the meeting

Action: Clerk.

Item 14 Has the Committee identified any new or heightened risks to be advised to the Audit Committee for the risk register?

No.

Item 15 Any Other Business:

The Principal reported that the Principals, Chairs and Vice Chairs had met with their counterparts at Christ the King College to discuss academisation.

Item 16 Identification of any confidential items

None.

Item 17 Dates of next meeting:

Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 5:30pm

Item 18 Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 6:34pm.