

2019.20

**Blackwood Comprehensive School
Ysgol Gyfun Y Coed Duon**



Governing

Body's Annual

Report to

Parents 2019.20



Blackwood Comprehensive School



All governing bodies of maintained schools are required by the Welsh Government to produce an Annual Report to Parents. Our report contains the required statutory content along with additional information and guidance we think is helpful for parents.

Governors' Annual Report to Parents 2019/20

Dear Parent/Guardian

Please find attached the Annual Governors' Report to Parents for the school year 2019.20

We, the Governors, take great pleasure in using this opportunity to outline a summary of the responsibilities of the Governing Body in the discharge of their duties. I, as Chairman, wish to thank my colleagues for their support and commitment throughout this past, often challenging, year. The Governing Body at Blackwood comprises of well-respected members of the community, including representatives from the Local Authority, parents and members of staff. They meet formally twice a term, and also make contributions to school life in so many other ways, particularly through their work on a variety of committees.

The report also gives me the public forum to thank the Head teacher, the Senior Leadership Team, and the whole school staff for their dedication and commitment to the education of our pupils, particularly during a year which saw the impact of Covid-19 on the school community and beyond. I also want to thank the PTA and other friends of the school for their efforts in supporting the school.

Most sincerely, I want to thank you, our parents and carers in a year where you have had to develop new skills as a teacher, ICT guru and wellbeing expert during our time of remote learning. Your co-operation in all that the school asks of you in supporting your children is very gratifying. It is a partnership we will never take for granted as it is our mutual support that will enable our pupils and children to thrive.

We will do our best to encourage every pupil to achieve their full potential for their own future and for the future of our community, no matter where learning is taking place. Working together, as staff, parents, carers, governors and pupils – we can all face with enthusiasm the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead.

If you have any queries regarding any issue arising from this Report or on any other matter regarding school life, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Farina-Childs

Chair of Governors



Blackwood Comprehensive School



INTRODUCTION FROM THE HEADTEACHER, MRS J WILKIE

It gives me great pleasure to write my report to parents and carers, which includes a record of some of the school's achievements during the academic year 2019/20, particularly during our lockdown from March 2020. While it has been a challenging time and we have had to develop many new skills, our staff and Governing Body have remained committed to ensuring that pupils continue to develop their learning, no matter what the setting. Now more than ever, we are focussed on enabling our learners to develop as young people who are ambitious, who have high aspirations and self-esteem, to allow them to achieve their potential. The broad curriculum and the opportunities that we offer, even during remote learning, support our pupils in developing the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens, ready to play an active role in society when they leave us. Additionally, the increased strategies we have implemented to improve pupils' wellbeing, via our Llwyddo and Llwyddo Hwb provisions, has helped support our most vulnerable learners more effectively. After the first year of the provision the Governing Body, Local Education Authority and the Education Achievement Service are very pleased with the impact it has had.

In the content of this report there is a summary of our GCSE and BTEC Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs), however, schools did not report on End of Key Stage 3 outcomes due to the impact of Covid-19. We are very proud of our 2020 Year 11 cohort and of the maturity and positivity that they continued to show despite the difficult circumstances in which they left us. They achieved an excellent set of results, which is evidence of the hard work and conscientious attitude that they showed. These pupils and our departments are to be congratulated.

The Governing Body and I would like to thank the voluntary groups, parents, carers and community groups who have supported the school and its activities throughout the year, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration and making links with new groups in the future.



Annual Governors' Report to Parents 2019.20

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INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body is required to produce a report to parents on the work of the school in the previous academic year.

Parents and carers are major stakeholders in the school community and have a clear and strong interest their child's education. It is therefore important that the governing body actively engages with parents and carers, and remain accountable, by providing them with information and opportunities to discuss and have an input into school.

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 now enables parents of registered pupils at the school to request up to three meetings per year with the governing body via a petition.

A brief summary is provided below.

The governing body must hold a meeting within 25 school days of receiving the petition, providing that:

1. The petition contains the signatures of the required minimum number of parents of registered pupils at the school, which is the lower of the following:
 - a. the parents of 10% of registered pupils, or
 - b. the parents of 30 registered pupils.
2. The meeting requested by parents must be to discuss a matter relating to the school.
3. There will be no more than three meetings held during the year in which the first petition is received.
4. There are sufficient school days left in the school year for the meeting to be held.

The Governing Body of Blackwood welcomes the opportunity to make a formal report to all parents of pupils attending the school. Many members of the current Governing Body are long serving respected members of the Blackwood community. Governors, through their good offices, lend support and supervision, and appraise initiatives embarked upon by the school to improve the quality of educational experience available to young people in the community served by the School.

There was no meeting requested by parents during the academic year 2019.20.



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1. GOVERNING BODY 2019-2020 (as current in December 1 2020)

		COMMENCEMENT	END
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew Farina-Childs	30/11/17	29/11/21
Vice Chair of Governors	Mr John Richards	07/10/19	06/10/23
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Wilkie	01/09/18	
Community Representatives appointed by the GB	Mrs Deborah Gronow	23/05/18	22/05/22
	Mr Nick Jones	07/10/16	06/10/20
	Mr Guy Lacey	25/03/17	24/03/21
	Mrs Linda Price	08/10/16	07/10/20
	Ms Jayne Matthews	21/05/19	20/05/23
LA Representatives appointed by the LA	Mr Christopher Hawker	16/05/19	15/05/23
	CB Cllr Tom Williams	03/09/16	02/09/20
	Mrs Claire Barley	23/01/17	22/01/21
Parent-Elected Representatives	Mr Tim Bennett	15/05/17	14/05/21
	Mrs Emma Chalk	26/10/17	25/10/21
	Mr Richard Gibbs	07/11/18	06/11/22
	Mr Gerwyn James	09/02/18	08/02/22
	Mr Mark Watkins	07/11/18	06/11/22
Staff-Elected Representative	Mr Nathan Bracegirdle	27/11/19	26/11/23
Staff-Elected Representative	Mrs Natalie Griffiths	01/09/17	31/08/21
Teacher-Elected Representatives	Ms E Plumley	02/03/18	01/03/22

All the above may be contacted via Blackwood Comprehensive School. Elections for Parent Governor appointments take place whenever vacancies arise.

Governors with Specific Responsibilities

Safeguarding	Mr Gerwyn James	Health and Safety	Mr Andrew Farina-Childs
Additional Learning Needs	Mr Gerwyn James	Self-evaluation	Mr Andrew Farina-Childs
Looked After Children	Mr Gerwyn James	Governor Training	Mr John Richards
Closing the Gap	Mr Guy Lacey		



Election of Parent Governors

When a vacancy arises on the governing body for a parent representative, the school will inform all parents of the vacancy and will make the necessary arrangements for the subsequent election. Every parent of a registered pupil at the school will be entitled to stand as a candidate, to vote at the election and will be provided with the opportunity to do so.

Chair of the Governing Body:- Mr Andrew Farina-Childs c/o Blackwood Comprehensive School Ty-Isha Terrace Blackwood NP12 Tel: 01495 225566	Clerk to the Governing Body:- Ms M Garrett- EAS for SE Wales Governor Support Assistant The Gateway, Tredomen Park, Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach CF82 7EH Tel: 01443 863221
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2. GOVERNORS FUNCTIONS

The Governing Body meets regularly to consider issues underpinning the effective running of the school. Half-termly meetings are supplemented by regular meetings of sub committees covering issues such as:

- i. Finance and buildings*
- ii. Standards and Curriculum*
- iii. Staffing*
- iv. Appointments*
- v. Pay Review*
- vi. Performance Management*

The Headteacher distributes a written report prior to each meeting for discussion and minutes of all meetings are available from the school.

Governors frequently participate in training and other seminars and courses and in the many functions organised by the school. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and committed group of Governors who take an active interest in all aspects of the life and work of the school. Attendance at meetings is excellent. Governors have not received travel or subsistence from the school's budget share.

The most recent Estyn report states that the governing body provides effective oversight of the school's work. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. They have secure knowledge of performance data and they use this appropriately to challenge the school to help bring about improvements. The governing body plays a suitable role in setting the strategic direction of the school and, through its useful range of sub-committees, monitors progress towards strategic priorities



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effectively. Our last categorisation report (November 2019) states that Governors are supportive of the school and provide appropriate challenge through a range of sub-committees.

A Financial Report for 2019.20 can be found in section 9 of this report. Governors have a key responsibility to ensure that this school makes the most effective use of the resources it is allocated. This will prove to be particularly challenging in the difficult economic times facing all public services in the next few years.

The school prospectus was issued to prospective parents in September 2020 and there have been minor adjustments since its publication.

3. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

i) The School Development Plan (SDP)

This is the key document which identifies the strategic aims and priorities for the school in the coming year. It is produced following widespread consultation involving governors, staff, parents and pupils, as well as taking account of LEA and Welsh Government priorities.

The most recent SDP for 2020 to 2023 is a very comprehensive document, setting out in detail the school's priorities for development; a copy of the SDP is available from the school. The following priorities have been agreed by the Governing Body and Local Education Authority.

Year 1: 2020/2021	Priority
1	Improve pupils' progress in developing their literacy & numeracy skills, particularly boys, eFSM & ALN pupils, so that they achieve at least good outcomes at EOKS3 and 4.
2	Continue to improve pupils' attendance, behaviour and engagement.
To develop, monitor and evaluate the whole school distance/blended learning strategy to:	
3	Improve the standard of teaching and learning through development of assessment for learning, differentiation, questioning.
4	Continue to improve pupils' social and emotional wellbeing so that they develop the resilience to engage positively with school and our new blended learning curriculum as necessary.
5	Continue to strengthen leadership at all levels to enable continued improvements in standards of achievement and wellbeing.

Detailed actions in relation to these priorities have been agreed by the Governing Body in consultation with the school, and these are included in the School Development Plan.

ii) Curriculum

This is the means by which the aims and objectives of the school are delivered. A copy of the school's curriculum policy, which is updated on an annual basis is available to parents. An outline of the curriculum is produced in the school prospectus which is published in July, and this is extended in our options booklet and options website for Year 9 parents and carers in January 2020.

In Years 7 – 9 pupils followed the National Curriculum studying English, Maths, Science, Welsh, RE, PE, PSHE, Art, drama, Design and Technology, French, Geography, History, ICT and Music.

In Years 10 – 11 all pupils followed English, Maths, Science, Welsh, RE, WBQ and PE courses. In addition they can select from a wide range of options, details of which are available in the Year 9 booklet or on the school's website. In 2019/20, while Year 11 pupils had completed most of their examination course by the time we went into lockdown, Year 10 pupils missed a significant part of their courses. Consequently, the examination specification for each subject has been amended as we start the academic year 2020/21.

At GCSE, pupils are able to take modular exams in certain subjects throughout Years 10 and 11 with controlled tasks, undertaken under the supervision of the teacher. In some GCSE subjects, exams and all assessments are completed at the end of the course. In subjects other than GCSE, other assessment arrangements are in place.

We try to ensure that our courses and the combination of courses studied by our pupils enable them to make progress into further education. We do not construct our curriculum in order to improve the school's profile and we are very pleased that nearly all pupils progressed to further education or work in 2020.

We feel we offer our pupils a wide and varied curriculum at KS3 and KS4, but we are, as always, looking for ways of developing. Our aim is to ensure that all our pupils are provided with learning pathways which are suited to their interests and career aspirations. However, we realise that a traditional academic curriculum based on GCSEs is not necessarily suitable for all pupils, and have amended aspects of our own curriculum to ensure it broad and balanced enough to meet all pupils' needs.

Literacy, numeracy and digital competence initiatives have continued this year. Welsh Government priorities are:

- Improving standards in literacy;
- Improving standards in numeracy;
- Reducing the impact of disadvantage on pupils' attainment;
- Improving pupils' digital competence skills.
- Improving pupils' incidental Welsh

These key priorities are fully embedded in our School Development Plan.

Three Cross-curricular Skills

At Blackwood Comprehensive School, we recognise the importance of the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence for pupils. These skills are vital for a child to



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flourish in today's society and fundamental to them developing ambitious, capable and confident learners.

Through our range of appropriate interventions we endeavour to give all pupils every opportunity to improve basic skills in literacy and numeracy in order to achieve their full potential across all curriculum areas.

In addition to the support of specialist teaching assistants for literacy and numeracy we also provide clubs such as 'Befrienders' where peer tutors are used to help improve the literacy or numeracy skills of the pupils involved.

iii) The Welsh Language

At the school, Welsh and Cwricwlwm Cymraeg is promoted in the following ways:

- Welsh is taught to all pupils in Years 7 – 11.
- Every year we hold our Eisteddfod and pupils in years 7 and 8 are encouraged to participate and be exposed to Welsh cultural tradition. However, this did not go ahead in 2020 due to Covid-19.
- Welsh extra-curricular activities are organised and include a residential visit to Llangranog. However, this did not go ahead in 2020 due to Covid-19.
- Pupils are encouraged to use their incidental Welsh skills both inside and outside the classroom.

Transition cluster arrangements are good with regular meetings taking place to ensure consistency in approach and in teacher assessment.

iv) Buildings and Premises

The boys' and girls' toilets in the Main Block have been fully renovated in recent years. Toilets are cleaned on a daily basis as part of the school's service level agreement with Caerphilly CBC. Other toilets are available to pupils in other blocks; these are also maintained via the service level agreements.

Our Business and Site Managers worked to repair and refresh the exteriors of many buildings; this work has brightened the school considerably. Our grounds maintenance contractors have worked well to ensure the school grounds are attractive and well maintained.

Work was finished on our new canteen facility at the start of September 2018 and this provides a variety of nutritious and healthy eating options at break and lunchtime. Refurbishment of 3 laboratories in main block and new windows and roof in the gym was also completed in the autumn term of 2018. Our new all-weather 3G pitch was completed in the summer term of 2019 and this has provided a fantastic opportunity for pupils and members of the local community to play sport throughout the year.



5. PUPIL INFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE

i) Attendance (See Appendix 1)

The current school role is 973. Our standard admissions number for each year group has been set by the LA at 205 for September 2021.

Schools are not required to set an attendance target for the Academic Year 2020-2021 due to the current situation. Additionally, schools did not report on attendance to Welsh Government in 2020 for the same reason.

Term Time absence

In order to ensure consistency, and to follow what is increasingly common practice across Wales, holidays during term time are strongly discouraged and will be authorised by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis, in exceptional circumstances only.

In order for your child to achieve success and to reach their potential, it is vital they have excellent school attendance and arrive at school each day on time.

To maximise your child's attendance we strongly suggest the following.

- If your child needs to attend a dental or medical appointment in the AM session, please ensure your child arrives in school at 8.30am to receive their mark. They can then go to their appointment signing out at reception by the normal procedure.
- For appointments during the PM session, please ensure your child returns to school to be registered at 2.00pm and then signs out at reception to attend their appointment again using the normal procedure.

The Welsh Government has introduced important amendments to legislation surrounding school attendance. The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to *"fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school"*.

If a child is unable to attend school, we request that parents contact the school by 9.00am. The school has a message recording system (01495 225566) where parents can leave a message. The school works hard to reduce unauthorised absences. If a child is absent without explanation, parents will be contacted automatically by our 'Truancy Call' system and asked to provide a reason for the child's absence. Parents are requested to provide a note for their child's form tutor when they return to school, so any absence can be authorised.

ii) Standards

KS3 Results 2020: Schools did not report on End of Key Stage 3 Teacher Assessments in 2020.



KS4 Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) 2020

A summary of pupil performance in their CAGs is in the table below. APS stands for Average Points Score

EOKS4 A*-C	2020 CAGs (APS)
Literacy Measure	70.1% (40.7)
Numeracy Measure	57.2% (37.1)
Science Measure	58.8% (36.6)
Level 2+ (Eng lang/lit+ maths/numeracy)	54.6%
Level 2+ (Eng lang+ maths/numeracy)	53.1%
Skills Challenge Certificate	78.4% (38.9)
5A*/A	22.7%
Capped 9	352.8
Level 1	94.9%

- There has been an upward trend in four out of the nine Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) since 2018: numeracy measure; science measure; skills challenge certificate (SCC); 5A*/A. There has been a variable but upward trend in the remaining five KPIs.
- Following changes to the schemes of learning, there was a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving a level 2 qualification in English language, with 67% of pupils achieving this qualification in 2020.
- There has been an upward trend in the APS for both boys and girls in the literacy, numeracy and science measures since 2018.
- The number of pupils achieving at least 5 A*/A has shown a pleasing three year trend of improvement, with two pupils eligible for free school meals achieving this KPI in 2020.

iii) Progress On Sporting Aims And Achievements

The sporting aims of Blackwood are:

To encourage and support every pupil to participate in and enjoy sport and to encourage skill and prowess at all levels.

Of the pupils attending school on any particular day, in excess of 95% participate in PE. Pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject. The standard of both boys and girls kit is



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very good, and all pupils appearance is neat. All pupils sustain effort and enthusiasm throughout lessons. All pupils receive 2 lessons of PE every week as part of the taught curriculum. Pupils opting for GCSE PE or BTEC Sport receive an additional 5 lessons.

The school has an extensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities delivered by the teaching team. Full details can be obtained from the school.

Blackwood continues to excel at sporting and cultural activities, both locally and nationally, full details of the successes and achievements of pupils are given in school newsletters. We are proud that many of our children actively participate in a wide range of sporting and other enhanced learning activities.

iv) School Targets

Schools were not set targets for the academic year 2020/21

v) **Destinations of School Leavers 2020** – This information is under embargo by Careers Wales until 21/4/21. The report will be updated after this date.

	Totals	%
Continuing in full-time education – School		
Continuing in full-time education – College		
Apprenticeship		
Foundation apprenticeships		
Engagement Training		
Job with training		
Job without training		
Voluntary work		
Part-time work		
Unemployed and registered with Careers Wales		
Unable or not ready to enter Emp, Ed or WBYP (e.g. due to illness, custodial sentence)		
Known to have left the area		
Not responding to follow up and therefore unknown		
Total number of 2016 statutory school leavers	194	



6. LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

a) Parents and carers

It is pleasing to note the number of parents and carers who normally attend our Parents' Evenings and Tutor days throughout the school year, although some of these did not go ahead in 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19. We have arranged a full calendar of events which can be viewed in our school calendar; this is available from the school and published on the school website.

We have tried to improve our communications with parents through increased use of Twitter, email, text and the school website.

The Governors believe that all parents and carers have a part to play in the PTA and wish the Association every success in 2020/21. The Governors would wish to congratulate the PTA on their fundraising efforts up to now.

Links with parents and carers are well developed. They are well informed and supported in helping their children prepare for a range of situations, including learning a new foreign language and preparing for external examinations.

b) Charity

Pupils in the school are to be commended for their efforts in raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves. There are very many fundraising events raising money for local and national charities. We are always grateful for the generosity of our whole school community in supporting charity events.

c) Transition

With the help of the Campus Director at Coleg Gwent, Cross Keys, an induction programme is organised for all prospective entrants to the college from Year 11. Links have also been established with Ystrad Mynach College. The careers adviser oversees many aspects of post 16 advice to parents and pupils. Many such events take place to ensure our pupils get the best possible careers advice.

In close cooperation with heads of the primary schools a full transition programme is organised for all new entrants to the school, although this was inhibited by the impact of Covid-19 in 2020. We are fortunate also to have excellent partnership with our cluster primary schools, and believe that our transition programme from primary to secondary is an outstanding feature of the school's work.

d) Other External Links

The school has developed constructive links with local businesses and organisations. The school links well with a range of strategic partners. Pupils benefit from targeted support



and guidance provided by a range of multi-disciplinary and voluntary organisations such as Business Class, Careers Wales, local businesses and charity organisations.

7. ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Inclusion of pupils, irrespective of race, gender or disability is a key facet of our work. Pupils with additional learning needs are well catered for; this includes looked after children. The school has a financial allocation to support the provision for pupils with additional educational needs and it has been the policy of the Governing Body to increase this sum to enable pupils to have access to smaller groups and specialist support. The school believes in equality of access for disabled pupils and has ensured that all areas of the school are accessible for wheelchair users.

A number of learning support assistants are funded by the local authority and are attached to individual pupils. The school funds additional classroom assistants for literacy and numeracy through grant funding.

ALN pupils September 2020

No of Pupils Recorded	Pupils on School Action	Pupils on School Action Plus	No of pupils with Statement of SEN
205	112	74	19

Number of pupils on roll: 973

Percentage of pupils on ALN register: 20.9%

8. TERM DATES, HOLIDAYS AND SCHOOL INFORMATION 2020-21

Autumn Term 2020	INSET DAYS
3 September – 21 December 2020 (Half Term: 26– 30 October 2020)	Monday 3 September 2020 Friday 23 October 2020
Spring Term 2021	Friday 22 February 2021
4 January 2021 – 26 March 2021 (Half Term: 15 – 19 February 2021)	Monday 12 April 2021 Monday 19 July 2021
Summer Term 2019	Tuesday 20 July 2021
12 April 2021 – 20 July 2021 (Half Term: 31 May – 4 June 2021)	



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School Day

Following the impact of Covid-19, there has been a change to the running of the school day, with staggered start and finish times and two twenty minute breaks; first break is at 10:45am and second break is at 12:55pm. The timings of the day are as follows:

Year Group	Start Time (am)	Finish Time (pm)
Year 7	8:15	2:00
Year 8	8:20	2:03
Year 9	8:25	2:06
Year 10	8:30	2:09
Year 11	8:35	2:12

Contacting the School

Due to the current circumstances, we are not allowing parents and carers onto school site for meetings. However, we always try our best work with parents and carers to sort out any difficulties, so if you would like to speak to someone please contact us to arrange for a telephone appointment. Appointments can be made by ringing the school on 01495 225566/223326 or emailing on BLKCA@caerphilly.gov.uk

School Data

Parents should be aware that personal information in respect of members of staff and pupils is held on the administration network of the school. Such information is subject to regulations under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act. Parents are welcome to request examination of the school's registration document. The Governors have a responsibility to adhere to the principles of the Act. Much of the data relating to pupils is about classes, choices of subject, marks/grades and school reports. We also hold essential personal information such as telephone numbers, addresses, names of parents and any medical conditions.

The school takes every care to ensure that the information held is treated as confidential. This information is mainly for educational purposes and disclosed to such bodies as Careers Wales, Local Health Board and Caerphilly County Council.

School Policies

The school has in place all policies required by national legislation. A full list of policies and copies of documentation are available on request. Policies are reviewed regularly.

The Governing Body supports the Complaints Procedure outlined by Caerphilly County Council in relation to curriculum matters.



9. FINANCE

<u>BLACKWOOD COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL</u>		
<u>OUTTURN BUDGET 2019-2020</u>		
<u>EMPLOYEES</u>		
Total Staffing Costs		£3 679 455
<u>PREMISES RELATED</u>		
Total Premises Related		£411 441.00
<u>SUPPLIES & SERVICES</u>		
Total Supplies and Services		£274 507.00
<u>SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS</u>		
Total Service Level Agreements		£119 302.00
<u>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANS</u>		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£4 521 168.00
<u>INCOME</u>		
TOTAL INCOME		£61 874.00
NET EXPENDITURE		£4 459 294.00
TOTAL SURPLUS/CONTINGENCY		
TOTAL		£4 344 294.00

Mr A Farina-Childs - Chair of Governors