

Federation of Westminster Special Schools Charity Fund



Charity No: 1173810

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 22

Fourth Year – Covid Restrictions gone....but

Several of our Trustees prior to the Charity being established have enjoyed a long association with the Federation of Westminster Special Schools and know the schools well. We have seen the tremendous work and dedication of Federation staff helping children and young people to learn and develop in order to fulfil their educational and developmental potential. Both staff and students have provided the inspiration for the Charity Fund to be established and registered with the Charity Commission.

The Charity's aim is to raise funds for a range of projects to improve the facilities at the two special schools. We support both schools to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people by ensuring that the best possible educational opportunities are provided.

This is our fourth Annual Report and although Covid restrictions have been lifted it is clear that many of the fund giving groups are experiencing considerable delays in replenishing their own reserves to give out in response to funding bids. This has meant that the bids we have made for the provision of new minibuses for both schools have been extremely protracted and decisions are still awaited.

The approach we used in our first year contacting many businesses with local connections or specialist donating bodies has not proved to be an effective way of raising the amount of funds needed. Having said that we have developed some good community links who continue to raise funds for us and the Trustees value these.

We will be looking to recruit two independent trustees in the coming year – one with a knowledge of fundraising strategies and the other with financial expertise. This to help move the charity forward in future years. Fundraising is, of course, a priority and I would like to thank Trustees and volunteers for their continued efforts and to add a particular word of thanks to Yvonne our clerk.

We agreed last year to rotate the chairing of the Trustee meetings. This has worked well but we are still looking to appoint a permanent chair once more trustees are appointed.

David Dyer
Trustee

November 2022

Trustees' Report

Objectives and Activities

The Charity exists to raise funds that can be used to enhance the learning of children and young people by improving the facilities at the Federation of Westminster Special Schools ("FWSS").

The FWSS is made up of two schools: College Park and the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School ("QEII"). College Park caters for 120 children and young people with autism, while QEII caters for 80 children and young people with severe, profound and multiple needs.

The money raised by the Fund is intended to:

- Help towards increasing or improving the range of activities on offer at the FWSS.
- Help provide or improve facilities, such as IT or play equipment, improving play facilities and replacing minibuses.
- Help pupils take part in the extended opportunities by giving them the support they need.
- Support parents to engage with the work of the schools and support their child's education.

The Charity does not (and does not intend to) finance any statutory or core activities undertaken by the schools. Trustees have regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Achievements and Performance

This has been the Charity's fourth fully active year and we have built on the work undertaken initially where the Trustees dedicated time to establish administrative and financial structures. In addition to producing operating documents, policies, procedures, the Charity had focused on: identifying and budgeting for a suitable project, establishing a fundraising programme and creating publicity material.

Funding Projects

The Charity Fund facilitated a request from the FWSS for a bid to the London Community Response Fund. This was to fund the purchase of a range of additional resources to support students with special educational needs to work from home during the Covid-19 lockdown to enable them to access learning opportunities from

the schools. This request was successful and the resources were well used by both schools.

The FWSS has highlighted the need for replacement minibuses at both schools and we have adopted this as our most recent projects. The specifications for the vehicles are different for each school. Two applications are being prepared initially.

Fundraising Programme

Trustees had established a fundraising plan to identify, log and approach potential donors. Organisations approached for funding include charity trusts, charity foundations, grant-making bodies, local shops, businesses and parents. During the first year some 200 funding appeal letters were sent and donations were received from local shops and parents. In our second year we targeted a smaller number of more specific and specialist funding organisations and followed up others which expressed an interest in our first year. In our third year we are monitoring a far smaller group of organisations and looking for relevant opportunities.

Although the response to fundraising approaches has been disappointing, Trustees are conscious that it may take several months to receive a reply from potential donors and competition from other charities has also made it difficult in a climate of reduced available funding. Many organisations prefer to fund national charities making it even more difficult for local charities. We have signed up with Amazon Smile an online scheme where registered Amazon customers who shop on line enable the company to make a donation to the charity. This is bringing in a regular small amount each month.

Publicity & Marketing

The Trustees have created a dedicated webpage on the FWSS website, as well as a Facebook page. The Charity has also established a newsletter to raise its profile via the web, social media and through the FWSS newsletter in order to reach out to staff, parents and the wider public.

Financial Review & Reserves

This first full year of the Charity had been used to establish income streams. We have successfully fundraised to enable our first project to be completed – the play spaces at QEII. Currently possible funding streams are being identified for replacement minibuses at both schools.

The Charity has established policies to evaluate projects, ensuring value for money and has sufficient funds to continue its current activities for the forthcoming year. The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the Charity's reserve levels in the light of its planned activities. The reserves provision for revenue costs has been set at a level to cover the Charity's ordinary operating costs for a period of six months. In addition to this requirement, there should be further reserves available to cover actual capital commitments and to cover funds that have been donated for specific projects.

The Charity's principal source of funding comes from donations and grants. The Charity applies for grants from various bodies and companies who wish to support the aims of the Charity. It also receives donations from parents with children attending the FWSS, from friends of the Federation, and from the general public. The principal risk affecting the Charity would be the inability to raise sufficient funds to fulfil its charitable duties and to fund the projects that it wishes to complete. To mitigate this, fundraising continues on a professional basis, and applications for grants are made whenever practicable.

Structure, Governance and Management

The FWSS Charity Fund is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered on 13 July 2017. The Fund is governed by the terms of its Constitution, which established its objects and powers. Although linked to the Federation of Westminster Special Schools, the Charity is an independent organisation with its own Board of Trustees who are the only voting members.

Trustees are recruited with reference to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration and management of the Charity. Trustees who are members of the FWSS Governing Board must at all times keep FWSS and Charity business separate. There are three independent trustees who provide scrutiny and oversight. No FWSS parent or member of staff may become a Trustee.

The full Board of Trustees met three times from April 2021 to March 2022 inclusive. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the Fund. Any expenses reclaimed from the Fund are set out in appropriate notes to the accounts.

The Board of Trustees has adopted policies and procedures relating to:

- Finance and Reserves
- Charity Governance (code for small charities)
- Operating Procedures
- Conflict of Interest

- Policy statements covering the following linked to FWSS Policies
 - Equal Opportunities Policy. (Known as the 'Single Equalities Plan and Policy')
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding
 - Health and Safety
 - Whistleblowing

The Trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the Fund each year. This report looks at what the Charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work for the 12 months in the year ending 31st March 2021.

Administrative Details

The FWSS Charity Fund is a registered charity (No 1173810). The correspondence address is: College Park School, Garway Road. London W2 4PH. The Charity webpage can be found at: <http://www.qe2cp.westminster.sch.uk/>

Trustees serving at the date this report was approved were:

Michal Chudy

Richard Costella (retired Summer 2022)

David Dyer

Aslam Merchant

Yvonne Jarman served as Clerk to the Board of Trustees.

Carole Melson and June Simson have acted as “associate” members offering a wealth of advice.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity Trustees:

Trustee

Date: 17 November 2022

