

Shirley Community Nursery and Primary School Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body's Resources Committee held at school on Wednesday 15 March 2017 at 6.00pm

Members of the Committee:

Martin Campbell
Heather Cook
Karl Grenz (Chair of Committee)
Angela Leach (Head)
Mark Lewis
Angela Mason-Bell
Iain Smith (GB Chair)
Clerk: Harriet Owen

Invited attendees (non voting):

Hannah Kidney (Deputy Head)* currently on maternity leave
Suzanne Wernham (Deputy Head)
Gillian Elwood (School Business Manager: SBM)

Present: Heather Cook, Karl Grenz, Angela Leach, Mark Lewis, Angela Mason-Bell, Iain Smith.

Invited attendees: Suzanne Wernham (Deputy Head), Lorna Bingham (School's Finance Officer)

In attendance: Harriet Owen (Clerk)

1. Statutory responsibility

• Apologies

Martin Campbell (work commitment). The Head noted Mrs Elwood is currently on sick leave: Mrs Bingham is instead attending.

• Declaration of interest

None declared.

• Approve minutes of the last meeting (25 January 2017)

Mr Grenz proposed, Mrs Cook seconded the minutes of 25 January 2017 should be accepted. Agreed by all.

• Actions arising

None to report.

2. Finance Monitoring (SBM)

The Head told the meeting that Mrs Bingham is currently acting as the SBM, as Mrs Elwood is on sick leave. A temporary finance assistant has been recruited to assist Mrs Bingham. Ray Byford is also supporting the school's budget building process.

Mrs Bingham discussed the BCR (end of February). The predicted forecast outturn (carry forward) at the end of February 2017 is £41,460. However, capital items will be moved from some revenue ledger codes to capital. Therefore, the predicted carry forward will be increased by £7,584.

Conversely, the carry forward figure is also affected by the aged debtor balance of £11,177. Mrs Bingham explained this asset was on the balance sheet at the last year (2015-16). Mrs Bingham noted that the accounts receivable module in FMS has not been used to match income received from lettings; consequently, the debtor balance has not moved during this financial year. Ray Byford (the school's financial advisor) has advised the debtor balance is written off; consequently, income will decrease by £11,177 and the carry forward will be reduced by this amount.

With these financial variations, the overall outturn for 2016-17 will be £37,866 (plus letting income yet to be received).

Mrs Bingham discussed exceptions with the meeting. The school has processed a considerable amount of outstanding invoices and therefore on most expenditure lines, feel confident that no more expense will be incurred. In answer to a Governor's question, Mrs Bingham explained the FMS module is used to adjust the budget on a monthly basis. One budget line that shows change is additional SEN funding, as two pupils with funding attached, have come onto the SEN register this year. As funding increases i.e. as with SEN, the school looks at where it can be used most effectively to support pupils.

Further exceptions reported to the meeting were noted:

- Currently TA salaries are above budget
- Supply teaching is predicted to be over budget. Mrs Bingham said the school had hoped for a surplus but a considerable number of invoices have been received for this budget area. The Committee Chair asked if the school could accrue supply costs. Mrs Bingham said this would be possible using the school's finance modules.
- Development and Training may be less than predicted (currently £3,300 under profile)
- The costs of support staff, TAs, ASC staff, Midday Supervisors and indirect employee costs are higher than budgeted (predicted to be approximately £2,000 overspent at year-end). Mrs Bingham discussed the areas that were overspent and noted the ASC has a full capacity of staff; the Head said the school would look at the charges to parents.
- Indirect costs include childcare vouchers that are not included in the budget; however, the school also receives income from deductions paid by staff, to set against this cost.
- ASC payments are higher than the budget by £6,770

The Committee Chair asked if changes to the original budget and the resulting revised budget could be shown on future reports.

Mrs Bingham reported Ray Byford is helping the school to draw up a balanced budget for 2017-18, so that the carry forward at the end of 2016-17, should still be intact at the end of 2017-18. Pupil Premium numbers are down, in line with the general funding. The school also has to pay an additional charge for the apprenticeship levy. Mrs Bingham explained over £2,000 is yet to be capitalised for IT items and confirmed that the new staging uses devolved income. In answer to a Governor's question, Mrs Bingham explained what revenue can and cannot be moved as an asset into capital. This depends on the cost classification and revenue may need to be capitalised from a cost centre into general revenue.

The meeting expressed disappointment that Aged Debtors, held over from the previous year, will deduct from the carry forward. Mrs Bingham explained the invoicing system and how the aged debts had arisen. They are not bad debts but aged debts and, as such, now have to be treated as bad debts and removed from the system. This can only be done by writing them off.

The GB Chair asked about other debts i.e. dinner money debts. The Head said the debts have now stabilised but debts that the school cannot recover, have been advised to be written off. The Head said a debt can be transferred to a younger sibling in school, if their older sibling leaves from Year 6. Mrs Bingham said dinner money is not shown in the budget, as it is held within a different financial system. The circumstances of how debts had accrued were discussed. A Governor suggested an annual write off exercise might be planned, so that what is realistic to write off can be addressed. A Governor expressed concern that writing off bad debts would affect the carry forward. Mrs Bingham agreed that parents should use the school's online payment system to pay in advance for school dinners and the school was doing all it could to reiterate this to parents.

The meeting discussed the apprenticeship levy. This has been made an obligatory levy on all Local Authorities by the government. Consequently, it has been rolled out to all maintained schools, irrespective of whether they have an apprentice or not.

Cambridgeshire schools must pay £6,000 a year. The GB Chair asked if the school could offset this payment by having an apprentice. The Head said she had considered this: a possibility to be explored is that assistants in the Nursery may be considered for an apprenticeship. The school will explore this option further.

Mr Grenz, together with other Committee members, recorded his thanks to Mrs Bingham for the clarity of her financial reports and presentation to the Committee.

3. Premises

Mrs Bingham updated the Committee regarding premises works:

- A few taps now remain to be replaced – this work will be completed in the Easter holiday
 - The rotten wooden walls of the outside planters will be removed – this will be finished in the Easter holiday
- Future work includes:
- A light sensor is needed in the outside car park
 - Two panels are being replaced and the nursery porch roof is being repaired – this is to be completed by the end of the Easter holiday
 - Two metal sheds in the Nursery playground are going to be removed and replaced with alternative plastic storage sheds. A skip will be ordered to take the old sheds away. The members of the site staff team will work together to remove the old metal sheds.
 - The school is responsible for carrying out routine kitchen checks and replacing kitchen equipment, when needed e.g. routine cleaning of overhead filters. The school's Property Management Services, PCM, are organising quotes for any work that needs to be done. A chest freezer and fridge will need replacing in the near future.
 - The current fire alarm is to be adapted to produce a different alert siren sound, in the event of a lockdown. Funding will need to support this work.
 - PCM are obtaining quotes to replace or make repairs to the ventilation system. The bearings have worn out in extractor fans in the downstairs staff cloakroom and nursery foyer. They have been shut down due to the noise caused by the worn out bearings.
 - The toilets in the Shirley Centre need refurbishing. Some bookings have had to use the disabled toilet and cloakroom facilities in the children centre.

The Head reported she had met with **Peter McKenny (PCM Services)** today and he **will attend the Summer B meeting of this Committee** to discuss longer-term projects and answer questions from Governors. Governors will then be able to make informed decisions, when deciding if funding should be committed to premises repairs and improvements.

The Chair thanked Mrs Bingham for her Premises report.

4. Budget Update

The Committee Chair asked how next year's budget was building, in the preliminary stages. The Head said Ray Byford has worked on the staffing profile with herself and Mrs Bingham. Next year's budget will be tight. TA costs are above budget; however, funding for SEN is late coming into the budget, so it is expected the overspend on TAs will balance out. An initial draft budget will come to the next Committee meeting, prior to going to the FGB for approval, in May.

5. SFVS 2016-2017

The Committee Chair has examined this year's SFVS in detail and reported only minor changes to last year's submission. The Chair will prepare this year's SFVS and send it to Clerk so it may be submitted for approval to next meeting of the FGB (23 March 2017).

6. Staffing: Headteacher's Report

The Head gave updates to her report that was circulated prior to the meeting. At the start of the summer term, four new children will be admitted to the Nursery. As the additional numbers alter the numbers of the staff/pupil ratio, another member of staff will

need to work in the Nursery.

Following agreement at the FGB, the Head has sent a formal request to the LA seeking approval for the school to change its name and age range, thereby allowing school-run pre-school provision. Once the LA has responded, the school will publish the proposals for a required period of consultation.

Staff changes were noted. Miss Eaton leaves at the end of this term. Plans are being finalized to cover this class until Mrs Carter returns from maternity leave at the end of June. The Head noted the placement of other teachers returning from maternity leave in the summer term. In answer to a Governor's question, the Head said a letter is sent out to parents at summer half term, detailing the changes for September. Interviews are to be held shortly for a full-time KS2 class teacher for September.

Teachers have a planned mid-year appraisal meeting during the Spring term. The focus for these meetings includes: progress on agreed appraisal objectives; discussion of lesson observation, planning and work scrutiny outcomes; discussion on progress outcomes of class or cohort; career plans and aspirations.

An Acting Deputy Head post is to be advertised internally. This is a one-year fixed term post from September 2017.

All teaching assistants on permanent contracts will have a mid-year observation of their practice this term. This helps the SLT identify outstanding practice and use it to develop the practice of other TAs. Changes to the SEND register, with pupils leaving and joining the school were noted, both in terms of impact on the budget and TA deployment.

Admin team appraisals will be undertaken before the end of term. Changes to the finance team were noted. The school's business manager is currently on sick leave and has informed the Head she will not be returning to her post. The school is very grateful to Mrs Bingham for taking on the SBM role in the interim. Additional support has been put in place to support Mrs Bingham.

All midday TAs and midday supervisors have had an appraisal meeting this term.

Extended school's staff have had their appraisals undertaken this term by the Deputy Headteachers.

Mrs Warringder is leaving the school at the end of this term. A special thank you lunch has been arranged for the end of term.

A member of staff slipped on the stairs in February and fractured her ankle. The school's investigations indicated this was an unfortunate accident: there were no defects found and no recommended changes.

Thirteen TAs, midday TAs and midday supervisors attended first aid training, held at school on 6 March. Mrs Cook was thanked for organizing this training.

Mrs Taylor attended the CP DP refresher training on 8 February. Whole school CP refresher training has been organised for the morning of the training day on 18 April.

The audit of the school's Child Protection Record Keeping Audit was carried out on 2 March. It was a positive visit with no recommended changes. The full report will be presented to the next FGB.

A planned fire drill took place on 27 February. Children responded well.

In May, the CB4 cluster group has invited a theatre group to perform an esafety play to Year 4 children from five Primary schools at Chesterton Community College.

Mr Grenz continues to meet with the Head to carry out a Safer Recruitment Audit. Copies of the latest monitoring reports, arising from these visits, are included with the papers for this meeting and will go to the next FGB.

The Head discussed the rates of staff absence with the meeting, comparing the last three autumn terms. Long-term absence (over 10 days) is not included in the figures. If a person has two roles, only the absence for one role is recorded. Days lost (combined sickness and other absences): 2014 = 127.1; Autumn 2015 = 98; Autumn 2016 = 92.75. A Governor suggested that when breaking down the working days and the number of absences, compared to the number of staff, it did not seem considerable. The meeting discussed the reasons for requesting absence for other reasons and, in line with policy, whether these were granted as paid or unpaid. The meeting discussed which staff group has accrued the most absence. The Head said staff are aware how much their absence impacts on children's learning. Staff are aware absence is monitored and if their absence causes concern, they will be asked to meet a member of the SLT, to see how the school can support their attendance. The GB Chair asked if the school could compare its absence rate to that of other schools. Mrs Bingham will ask EPM if a comparison is available.

The Chair thanked the Head for her report.

7. Health and Safety

Mrs Cook discussed her report with the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The fire equipment was checked in December: fire drills took place in December and February
- The first invacuation exercise was held in January. The procedure went well. The sound level of the alerting siren needs to be adjusted.
- PAT testing took place in January. The LA H and S officer confirmed Pat testing can be done bi-annually, providing there are regular visual checks on cables and plugs. The walkie talkies were found to be sub-standard and have been replaced.
- The PE equipment had its annual check on 13 March 2017.
- A group of TAs and MSAs had their first aid training on 6 March. This needs to be renewed every three years.
- Three accidents/incidents have been reported to the LA this term: a pupil fractured her wrist falling off the activity trail; a member of staff slipped on the stairs and fractured her ankle; a member of staff had a superficial injury caused by a pupil. All appropriate follow up actions were carried out.
- The Nursing service visited to carry out flu vaccinations (nasal spray) for Years 1 and 2 children in December. The Head said the Nursing Service had thanked Mrs Cook for organising the procedure so well. The meeting noted the uptake had been low. A Governor said he was pleased to hear Mrs Cook had made strenuous efforts to talk to parents who had not signed their child up for the offered immunisation, noting herd immunity is essential.

- Mrs Cook discussed the outcomes of her regular health and safety half-termly walk around inspection with Mr Crook; the meeting noted actions and outcomes, including the replacement of missing panels in the Nursery canopy.
- The Head reported the Early Years advisory team has recently visited the EY and advised different ways of managing storage. Consequently, two old tins sheds are to be removed and replaced with plastic structures that have more easily accessible storage. The Chair led the thanks of the Committee to Mrs Cook for the very important role she undertakes on behalf of all in school.

8. Strategy

The meeting agreed until the funding for next year is known, future strategies requiring funding, cannot be discussed.

9. Safeguarding

Mr Grenz discussed his two most recent Safeguarding monitoring reports: Analysis of staff files (25/01/2017) and Analysis of new staff files (16/11/2016). Mr Grenz noted following his original visit on 16/11/2016, he made a follow up visit on 7 December 2016 to check completion of new staff files. Analysis of staff files will be carried out periodically for completion on subsequent monitoring visits. Mr Grenz said that in summary, all three staff files selected for scrutiny were largely compliant. Outstanding items were partly reflected by changing requirements to data held in older files. Mr Grenz discussed the suggestions he had made to the Head to support monitoring exercises e.g. the inclusion of a completion sheet in each staff file. Mr Grenz also visited on 31 January focusing on Safer Assessment Recruitment Toolkit: a follow up meeting is to be arranged.

10. Statutory Responsibilities

Mr Grenz will update the Best Value Statement and Statement of Internal Control and will send to the Clerk for inclusion in the summer A Committee meeting, as they need to be approved by the FGB in July. Following discussion about the timeframe of financial audits for Primary schools, Mrs Mason-Bell offered to come in and undertake an audit. The Chair thanked Mrs Mason-Bell for her input. Mrs Mason-Bell will arrange a convenient time with Mrs Bingham.

Mr Byford has sent the school the financial scheme and , maintained schools must have as approved documents. The GB Chair has read these documents and noted there are certain actions for Governors within the documents. Regulations and procedures are within the documents that highlight certain areas that governors should check on every term to ensure the financial regulations (and scheme) are being followed. Mrs Bingham will extrapolate the duties allocated on Governors and put them together in a document for Governors. The GB Chair noted that the role of Governors is to ensure, in this case, financial systems and frameworks are in place. It is the operational responsibility of the school to check the systems are working. The GB Chair said systems should be reviewed to drive the evolution to simpler and more effective systems.

One document that needs to have considerable input from the school before it can be put to Governors for approval is the Internal Financial Regulations, as this contains specific procedures carried out by the school's finance department. Mrs Bingham will prepare this for the Committee.

Mr Smith proposed, Mr Grenz seconded that the following LA documents should be adopted:

1. Cambridgeshire's Scheme for financing schools effective date 1 February 2017
2. Cambridgeshire County Council Financial Regulations for schools 12th edition (February 2017)
3. Cambridgeshire County Council Contract Regulations for schools (9th edition June 2010)

Agreed by all.

A Governor asked if the LA has any financial recommendations that may save time and increase efficiency for the finance team. The Head said one system the school had proposed to introduce last March was the implementation of BACS, thereby avoiding the time taken up by physically making payments e.g. through writing and posting cheques. For various reasons this had not happened. A Governor said that credit card payments reduce duties on financial staff but duties need to be separated out to ensure compliance. In answer to a Governor's question, the Head said online payments e.g. for dinner money and uniform, had been met with a mixed reaction by the parent community. Some had welcomed the opportunity, some parents insist on using cash or cheques. The Head said the school is considering ways to move towards a blanket online payment system for September 2017.

11. Conclusion items

BACS: Following discussion in the previous item, Mr Grenz said he proposed the school should use the BACS system for payments. Mr Smith seconded the proposal. Agreed by all.

12. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 2 May 2017 at 6.00pm (pre-budget). Ray Byford (LA School's Group Accountant and this school's financial advisor) will attend this meeting, to discuss next year's budget.

7.45pm The Chair asked visitors and Governors, who are also staff members, to leave the meeting.

Mrs Cook, Mrs Leach, Mrs Wernham and Mrs Bingham left the meeting.

An item was then discussed which is held as a confidential note.

