

ST LUKE'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee held
at St Luke's CE Primary School
on Monday 11th February 2019 at 6.30 p.m.**

In attendance

Governors

Fr Tom Pyke (TP), Chair
Ms Rebecca Abrahams (RA), Headteacher
Mr Charles Achaw (CA)
Mr Hylton Bellinger (HB)
Ms Valentine Phillips (VP)

Present

Mr Michael Gleeson (MGI), School Business Manager
Mr Martin Golding (MGo), Angus Consultancy
Mrs Hollie McDonough (HM), Clerk, Clerking and Appeals Associates Ltd

1. WELCOME, OPENING PRAYER AND APOLOGIES

HB opened the meeting with a prayer. All Committee members were present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2018

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2018 were signed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

RA referred to Item 6 and stated that the teacher required for January 2019 had been appointed and that the two teachers required to cover maternity leave would start their part time shared appointment in March 2019.

MGI provided an update to Item 11.2 Buggy Access:

- Steve Wright (SW) from the Diocese had visited the school to observe the use of entrances and exits at the beginning and end of the school day
- SW did not report any major problems but he had made suggestions regarding alternative step-free entrances and exits through the school
- SW advised that it was up to the school to decide whether this should be a financial priority

- SW was aware that the school had plans for a playground redevelopment that might involve the review of playground access.

Governors discussed the suggested alternative routes and whether they posed any further issues.

MGI informed Governors that the Diocese were holding a funding capital of £19,716.91 for the school that had to be allocated by the end of the financial year. He added that this money would contribute toward the development of the playground.

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5. FINANCE

5.1. Budget Monitoring Period 10 2018-19

MGo circulated the Budget Monitoring Report 2018-19 for Period 10 dated 31st January 2019 and the Budget v Actual v Committed breakdown.

MGo highlighted the following information:

- the remaining balance total was £198,312
- there had been a carried forward balance of £79,059
- this remaining balance was higher than in previous years which demonstrated that the school was operating good budgetary control
- the figures were particularly positive in light of the reduced school roll.

MGo noted some adjustments to funding that had been indicated in the Budget Monitoring Report:

- additional high needs funding from 2017-18 of £24,079
- additional high needs funding from 2018-19 of £14,055
- plus some small extra increases
- a new funding total of £48,296.

MGo informed Governors that the total revenue funding was £2,771,907.

MGo referred to Page 2 of the Budget Monitoring Report 2018-19 and highlighted the following details regarding expenditure:

- payroll and supply costs were on target
- Finance and Administration costs were under budget
- there had been a planned overspend on midday supervisors
- teaching staff costs were within budget
- there had been an overspend on service training due to figures not being known at the beginning of the year
- £1,200 more had been spent on maternity costs than planned and occupational health was paid for on a pay as you go basis.

MGo invited questions from Governors. The Chair enquired as to why only £50 of the £500 RE budget had been spent. MGI assured Governors that curriculum leaders had been asked to spend their allocated budgets. RA noted that expenditure was sometimes recorded under the heading of general curriculum resources.

MGI referred to the curriculum ICT budget and informed Governors that when the school received the money owed from Siemens, Governors had agreed to allocate

£40,000 toward updating the school's ICT resources. MGo noted that the Siemens credit was shown under Office photocopying costs. He highlighted an £18,000 difference from the original budgeted ICT expenditure which included a £6,000 consultancy fee for dealing with Siemens.

MGo informed Governors that clerking expenditure was an out of year expense and was therefore detailed in a separate report.

MGo noted the high expenditure on office telephones and suggested reviewing the provider. He also recommended a review of the electricity and gas costs that suggested either increased consumption or a misquote.

RA asked for the total amount of unallocated funds remaining. MGo informed Governors that £198,000 remained which included £79,000 having been carried forward, £48,000 from funding and £25,000 from the ICT budget.

RA enquired as to the remaining Growth in Roll grant payment. MGo stated that this was no longer given as a lump sum but would be calculated into the April budget from the new school roll.

MGI provided further detail regarding the approximate £10,000 overspend in maintenance and premises costs:

- the medical room had required flood repairs
- the EYFS drains had required eight separate call-out charges for blockages which would be investigated further during the February half term
- the school heating had required a number of call-out charges for recurring issues.

HB enquired as to the status of the Aviva Award funding. MGI informed Governors that the funding would be paid into the PTA bank account.

CA asked whether the school perimeter fencing had been allocated any funding due to security concerns. MGI informed Governors that bids had been made to the Diocese for site security improvements and heating maintenance.

MGo noted that the 2nd Year Pay Award for Teaching Assistants had resulted in a pay increase of between 3.6% and 7.6%. He added that the majority of Teaching Assistants fell between a 5-6% increase.

MGo informed Governors that the expected funding from Tower Hamlets for the following year would be £5,900 per pupil for the block grant. He added that the school would be at capacity so would receive funding for all actual places. He noted that the additional High Needs Funding was under review and that although an increased amount of funding would be available, it might not be enough to reflect the greater need and cost of provision.

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5.2. Q3 Budget Monitor 2019

MGo recommended that this item be removed from the agenda. HM made a note of the suggestion.

RESOLVED: that the Quarterly Budget Monitoring item be removed from future agendas.

5.3. School Roll and Budget Implications

MGI noted that this would be a standing item in Finance, Premises and Personnel Committees but there was not a report for the current meeting.

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5.4. High Value Orders and Contracts over £20,000

MGI noted that contracts over £10,000, rather than £20,000, would be brought to Governors' attention. HM made a note of the suggestion.

RESOLVED: that the next agenda would include a review of contracts over £10,000 rather than £20,000.

5.5. Playground Expenditure

MGI informed Governors that the school would receive a return of £160,000 from the Diocese which would be used for playground improvement and updating the school's ICT provision. He noted that the PTA lead had secured a £10,000 donation from Aviva to add to the playground development fund. MGI outlined three potential areas for playground improvements for which the school had received quotes:

- 1) a new surface for the football pitch that would provide drainage and year-round use
- 2) a new raised surface in the playground with designated areas
- 3) a new set of playground equipment.

RA gave detail of the plans for a grassed area that would include a woodland zone, pathways and learning spaces for year-round use. She also noted the plans for the Living Wall that would be paid for by the Mayor's Fund.

HB enquired as to how the ideas for the playground redevelopment were generated. RA informed Governors that the school vision for the playground focused on healthy lives, sports, learning outside the classroom and the visual promotion of the school. She noted that the staff also consulted with the children regarding their wishes for the outside areas.

CA noted a conference that he had attended that described how the London Mayor proposed to support London schools financially to promote Health Lifestyles. He suggested researching further funding for the school playground. RA reminded Governors that the school had already received a £10,000 donation from the Mayor's Fund.

TP noted that year-round learning outside the classroom would require children to protect their clothes with suitable covering and for storage to be considered.

HB asked if the school had considered purchasing a covering for the playground that would enable children to play outside in all weathers. RA noted that the limited funding would not stretch to a playground covering in addition to the proposed plans.

MGI asked Governors to be prepared to approve decisions for the playground improvements and for purchasing electronically so as to avoid organising a Committee meeting each time. Governors agreed.

RESOLVED: that Governors agreed to approve playground development and purchasing electronically.

5.6. ICT Expenditure

RA informed Governors of the breakdown of the Diocese funding mentioned in the previous item:

- £160,000 was being held for the school by the Diocese
- £100,000 would be used toward the playground improvements plus the £10,000 Aviva donation and the Mayor's Fund
- the remaining £60,000 would be used to update ICT provision in the school.

HB suggested that the school should seek match funding from Canary Wharf based businesses.

MGI provided a breakdown of the school's proposed ICT expenditure:

- the purchase of updated equipment including Interactive White Boards, iPads, laptops, desktops
- upgrade systems to Windows 10
- update the audio equipment.

RA noted that they were carefully planning for the ICT upgrade by carrying out an ICT consultant review. This review would produce a comprehensive plan for spending that would put the school in a strong position for years to come and would ensure affordability.

MGI asked Governors to be prepared to approve decisions regarding ICT improvements and purchasing electronically so as to avoid organising a Committee meeting each time. Governors agreed.

RESOLVED: that Governors agreed to approve ICT developments and purchasing electronically.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES

RA informed Governors that there were two staff members with upcoming Maternity leave that had been covered.

RA referred Governors to the previously circulated LDBS Human Resources policies updated in 2018:

- LDBS School Disciplinary Procedures
- LDBS School Grievance Procedures
- LDBS Managing Change Policy and Procedures
- LDBS Managing Sickness and Absence Policy.

RA noted that the LDBS policies were more succinct and easier to navigate than the school's current Human Resources policies. She proposed that the school should adopt the LDBS policies and make the minimal changes required. Governors approved this suggestion.

RESOLVED: that Governors approved the use of the LDBS Human Resources policies for school use.

7. PREMISES AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

MGI reported that the faulty drainage in the Early Years and repairs to the school heating were ongoing.

MGI informed Governors that a Health and Safety audit would be carried out in school at the end of March 2019. The audit would focus on fire safety, the swimming pool and a general site review. He noted that the report would be ready for circulation shortly after the Easter holiday.

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8. POLICIES

Governors reviewed the following policies tabled prior to the meeting:

Health and Safety Policy

No changes had been made from the previous year.

Charging, Remissions and Recoupment Policy

The changes were indicated in red. Governors discussed the new two-tiered arrangement for Breakfast Club. MGI explained the £2.50 fee for the Before School Club and free attendance for children eligible for Free School Meals.

VP enquired as to how the charges for room hire were decided upon. MGI explained that they were set by circumstance and enabled profit sharing to allow for a variety of club provision. VP noted that the room rental charges seemed expensive compared to other schools that she had seen advertised.

RA noted that the school was rented fairly infrequently due to difficulty in providing access at weekends. She explained that for the space to be rented, the school would need to bring in the Site manager to open, close and monitor the site which increased the cost.

Code of Practice for Financial Management

MGI noted that changes to the document were highlighted in red and that the document needed annual review.

MGI directed Governors to Page 2 Item 3 and detailed the alterations made to the statement regarding budget preparation and monitoring.

MGo explained that the school budget was required to be set by the end of March of the preceding year, but this requirement did not allow an opportunity to present a draft budget to Governors. Therefore, the school would require the authority to spend money at the beginning of the year before presenting the draft budget to the Governing Board. Governors discussed the issue and established that this was common practice in most schools due to the time frames given. Governors approved the change.

MGI directed Governors to Page 5. He described the ongoing issues with inventory management and explained that the improved Asset Register would record:

- non-ICT equipment of £1,000 and above

- all moveable inventory over £250
- the serial numbers and details of all ICT equipment over £100.

MGI informed Governors that the school would also provide a list of room inventories with photographs of the contents.

MGI directed Governors to Page 5 Item 6. He detailed the following changes to purchasing:

- up to £5,000 excluding VAT could be agreed by the Senior Leadership Team
- Governors would agree purchasing over £5,000 with two written quotations required
- Governors would agree purchasing over £10,000 with three written quotations required.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Health and Safety Policy was approved by Governors in its current form and signed by the Chair
- 2) that the changes to the Charging, Remissions and Recoupment Policy were approved by Governors and signed by the Chair
- 3) that the changes to the Code of Practice for Financial Management were approved by Governors and signed by the Chair.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th May 2019 at 6.30 p.m.

11. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Playground expenditure update
- ICT expenditure update
- Review of future time spans for completing finance reports
- Review of contracts over £10,000 rather than £20,000 to be added to the agenda

12. ANY URGENT OTHER BUSINESS

None.

13. ANY OTHER CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

None.

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.

COMMITTEE CHAIR'S SIGNATURE:.....

DATE SIGNED:...../...../.....