

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCE COMMITTEE OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY,  
HELD AT SCHOOL ON Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 AT 6.15 P.M.**

**Present:** Kevin Blencowe (Chair), Lucy Walker, Zoe Thorn, Debora Lucarelli, Ricardo Herbane, Tony Davies (Head teacher)

Clerk: Lis Silver

**1. Apologies for absence:**

All members of the committee were present. It was noted that there was a vacancy on the Committee for a Staff governor. The head advised that there had been two nominations from the staff, one of whom will become the elected staff governor and the other will become the Co-opted staff governor. He was pleased that one of the nominations is from a member of the support staff.

**2. Declarations of direct or indirect pecuniary interests relevant to any of the Agenda items**

There were no declarations of interest related to agenda items

**3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

KB reminded the meeting that he is willing to step down from the role of Chair and would be keen to train up a successor. RH agreed that he would be willing to be trained to take on the role. There were no other nominations for the posts.

**Kevin Blencowe proposed as Chair by Zoe Thorn, seconded by Debora Lucarelli and unanimously approved by the Committee**

**Ricardo Herbane proposed as Vice Chair by Debora Lucarelli, seconded by Zoe Thorn and unanimously approved by the Committee**

**4. Agree Terms of Reference for the Resources Committee**

The Terms of Reference for the Resource Committee were reviewed and one change was agreed. The meeting were advised of a number of punctuation omissions that need to be corrected; a typo in 5.2 (duplication of 'a') and it was agreed that the following statement should be added:

4.2 The Vice Chair of the committee shall be elected annually at the first meeting of the Autumn term.

It was noted that the Terms of Reference for the two different Committees (Resources and Teaching, Learning and Outcomes) are formatted differently and it was agreed that these should be reviewed to ensure that they include the same information.

**Action: Terms of Reference to be updated as agreed by the Committee and compared with TLOC to ensure all relevant information clearly recorded - TD**

**5. Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Resources Committee were agreed as an accurate record.

**6. Matters arising and agreed actions update**

From March 2018 meeting: **Governors to set up working party on pollution** – Action still to be completed.

It was noted that one of the governors had offered to be involved with this initiative but now sits on TLOC so was not present at the meeting. The Head agreed he would check to see if she was still able to be involved. RH advised the meeting that the PTA have been approached by local residents who wish to discuss pollution on Norfolk Street but it is unclear what action they would want to take. Governors were advised that a school in Islington had arranged a "no car day". It was noted that the local Council have also considered a No Car day in the city although it is likely that this would be a Sunday and not impact the school in a meaningful way. The reason for doing it on a Sunday is that it would allow roads to be shut so that street events could take place. Other things that a working party might consider would

be taking action such as arranging walking buses – but all these things need someone to champion them. The Head advised that there are staff in the school who would be very happy to do a themed day around Pollution.

**Action: RH to liaise with PTA to get additional understanding as to what residents are looking for and whether a working party would be a sensible approach**

A question was asked regarding how the budget for French lessons had been spent. The meeting was advised that a teacher had been employed since half term for 2 afternoons and the lessons for Year 4 and 5 seemed to be going well. **In Year 6 Greek and Latin is taught by a Parkside teacher.** It was agreed that these initial lessons are more about developing an enjoyment and awareness of learning new languages and that language teaching restarts when the children move to secondary school so the progress made is not as critical. It was also noted that at St Matthews over half the children are bilingual. The Head noted that if there was more money available he would be keen to introduce languages for all children in KS2.

#### **7. Raise governor awareness of School Contract Regulations, Financial Regulations for Schools and Cambridgeshire's Scheme for Financing Schools**

The meeting reviewed the latest versions of the following documents and the summary of changes to Financial regulations and Scheme for Financing Schools:

School Contract changes – no significant changes to previous version

Financial Regulations for Schools - no significant changes

Cambridgeshire's Scheme for Financing Schools – no significant changes that have not already been discussed at earlier meetings

It was noted by the meeting that these documents are brought to the meeting to ensure all governors are aware of their requirements but that we cannot challenge the information. In answer to a question as to how governors identify the changes the Head advised that changes are highlighted in the summary documents and that he would make the meeting aware of major changes as and when they arose.

In answer to a question about what the Contract regulations relate to the Head advised that this refers to contracts such as Cleaning or provision of school meals and governors have a responsibility to ensure that such contracts are done appropriately. One of the Governor roles is for a Link Governor for Financial checks to carry out a spot check of contracts and payments. RM has previously come into the school to do this but LW has now taken on the role. This governor chooses a small number of invoices/payments at random and ensures there is an appropriate paper trail from order to payment to receipt.

**Action: LW to contact School Business Manager Adrian Strowger to visit in January to carry out financial checks audit**

**Action TD to see if there is any guidance on procedure for audit spot checks and provide to LW**

#### **8. Review latest budget monitoring report**

TD advised the meeting that the school is currently on track financially and is £6k up on a £2.5m budget. Governors asked a number of questions regarding the following areas:

- Supply teaching & agency – used to cover sickness absence (short and longer term), training and maternity leave. The figure is up on last year because of increased maternity cover. In answer to a question he advised that it is difficult to benchmark levels of sickness but it appears to be in line with the size of the school and has not significantly increased as the school has grown. Short term sickness is often covered by HLTAs to keep down costs. It is difficult to compare figures between schools from the figures because an increase in supply costs may be reflected by a reduction in staffing costs if the cover is for maternity leave.
- Learning Resources – governors noted a significant variance at this stage in the year. TD advised that this is due to timing issues with parental contributions being received at a different time to when payments are made for educational visits and curriculum leaders choosing to spend their budget in larger chunks rather than spread evenly over the year.
- Future years predictions – governors asked about how the budget for future years was established. TD advised that the school introduced a new software system last year, Arova, which automatically includes inflationary increases for staffing costs but not to other costs and does not inflate funding. Staffing costs form

approximately 85% of the school budget. The school believe this software produces information that is easier to understand than the previous BCR system but are still in the process of understanding all aspects and it is possible to make manual changes in areas where this is thought to be valuable. He noted that there is always uncertainty in the budget predictions in terms of income beyond a year out and these will be adjusted once there is more definite information available. However the predicted deficit of £31.5k in the third year does indicate that the school has a sustainable budgeting model since only small changes on the £2.5m budget would be required to bring in a balanced budget.

- Boilers – in answer to a question TD advised that the school is budgeting for the proposed decommissioning work
- Capital funding – the meeting noted that Capital funding has reduced significantly over the years and is now only £15,400 whereas in 2010 it was £48k. This change is a result of austerity and the sum is inadequate to cover all capital costs.
- FTE staff – Governors asked why the FTE was lower in upcoming years than the current year. The meeting were advised that this figure has been inflated since the software counts both a member of staff on maternity leave and the cover teacher separately. The reduction in the future is a reflection of these staff returning from maternity leave and not an indication of a reduction in FTEs in the school.
- Staff sickness – in line with expected levels for the sector although difficult to benchmark however other measures of staff well being (such as staff retention) are good.
- Investment of capital – TD advised that this capital does earn a small amount of interest however the bigger challenge for the school is managing cash flow to ensure that the school does not spend money before the next tranche of money is received. With an end of year prediction of a surplus of £13k on a large budget there is very little money held for long periods of time. The School Business Manager monitors the bank balances regularly to ensure the school stays in credit. In addition it is a requirement that the school submits all accounts monthly to the local authority for further checks. The LA will contact the school immediately if they have any concerns such as an overdrawn account and this did happen in the Autumn term when the school was very briefly overdrawn because of timing issues.
- Pupil numbers – TD advised that the school received notification today from the DfE that the school can keep the small amount of additional funding (£3k) that was received as a result of the DfE assigning an inflated pupil number.

## **9. Update re School Funding in Cambridgeshire**

### **National Funding Formula Briefing Note**

#### **Impact of National Funding Formula on Schools (spread sheet published by DfE)**

Governors noted that there is a predicted 4.1% increase in funding on the circulated spreadsheet – however TD advised that there is a cap in place that may limit how much funding can rise between years. In addition the local authority have not yet determined how much money they will be deducting from the funding for each school for the central services that they provide (including broadband) and for growth funding so the final figure is only an estimate and may change. The final figure should be released in January, although may be delayed by the DfE. In answer to a question TD advised that the LA holds back a small amount of money from all schools to go to schools that are growing in size. In the past we have benefitted from this additional funding as the school has added an extra class each year but has now reached its maximum size.

There is a Comprehensive Spending Review planned for next year. It is hoped that this will halt the recent real-terms reductions in year on year funding which cannot be sustained long term. The schools 3-year prediction indicates that using the current model the school has successfully negotiated a very difficult period and that if funding does increase the school will be in a position to rebuild their reserves safety net of and replace expenditure that has needed to be cut from the budget.

## **10. Review of Teacher Appraisal Process 2018**

The meeting reviewed the Teacher Appraisal process (without the recommendations appendix). ZT is the Performance Management Link Governor and has visited the school to look at anonymised data and ensure the process is being

fairly operated. The Assistant Heads do the staff appraisals for class teachers and the Head does the Appraisals for the Senior Leadership Team. ZT advised the meeting that she had looked at the anonymised appraisals for a sample of staff; 1 on the main pay range and 2 on the upper pay range (1 eligible to progress and 1 not eligible since progression is only every other year on this pay range) and also for members of the SLT. As part of the review evidence is looked at including targets, book scrutiny and overall contribution to school life. There is a check on the quality of work produced by the children and also how that work is being reviewed by the teacher plus a review of any specific area that the teacher is responsible for. For the Assistant Heads the appraisal review looks at the area of the school that they are responsible for, including progress against the SDP. Part of the process involves setting agreed targets for the following year.

Governors noted that Maths Mastery was a very common target and TD explained that this is because it is new and part of the SDP. Targets for individual teachers are set so that they support the work required to achieve the SDP. He advised that the key question within the appraisal is ensuring that teachers are continually improving their practice. Governors noted that achievement in the appraisal is binary – either achieved or not achieved with nothing like “working towards” or “exceeding targets”. TD explained that by keeping the assessment of targets binary it is clear what progress is being made and there is scope within the comments for more detailed feedback to be documented. TD noted that performance against targets is only one aspect of what is being assessed within the appraisal. He noted that this year everyone that was eligible for progression had progressed (just four members of staff). Governors asked whether Exit interviews are carried out when staff leave and were advised that this was not currently being done. The number of staff leaving is very low and most staff leave on good terms because they are moving out of the area. Governors noted that Exit interviews are a good way of capturing feedback and indicated that they would like future leavers (who have worked at the school for more than 6 months) to do an Exit interview.

**Action: ZT/RH to investigate and identify suitable questions for an Exit interview and feedback information to the next Resources meeting.**

#### **11. Personnel Policies (based on EPM Models)**

The Head advised that EPM update most of their policies as required during the summer term and these are brought to the meeting so that governors are aware of the latest versions. Many of these policies e.g. adoption would not be needed regularly but it is important that an up to date version is always available for consultation. The following policies with only minor changes were reviewed at the meeting:

- St Matthew’s Adoption Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedures Relating to Misconduct for All Employees
- Data Retention Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Policy for Discretionary Leave of Absence
- Policy for Management of Sickness Absence

Governors confirmed that they were happy with all these policies

#### **12. AOB**

**Health & Safety – School Premises visit** – 2 link governors and the School Business Manager carried out the annual Health and Safety check in April and the report was reviewed by the meeting. The following additional information was supplied:

- The requirement for 3 supervisors in the playground is in the Risk Assessments rather than a policy and has been set to ensure there is adequate cover if one of the supervisors needs to leave the area with an injured, sick or distressed child.
- The Caretaker has been employed for additional hours but this is to do specific jobs not to provide cover during the day. He is on duty from 7.30-10.30 and 15.00 to the end of the lettings period each day (this varies but is approximately 21.00). When the caretaker is not here cleaning up e.g. blocked toilet or sick child is dealt with by whichever member of staff sees the incident. It would be better if cover could be provided during the day but current funding levels do not cover additional hours.
- Fire drill is carried out termly
- Playground soak away has been dealt with

- Cladding on the new building has been investigated and is not flammable but conduits still to be researched. However since no one sleeps in the building and the school policy is to evacuate immediately there is not considered to be a significant risk.

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**Playground development** – the Head advised the governors that there is a meeting next week on playground development to see what has possible following the PTA’s unsuccessful bid for funding. Ricardo said that he would attend the meeting as Link Governor for Playground Development.

**Catering** – The Head reported that there had been a recent incident where chicken had been undercooked. This had been noted very quickly and the food withdrawn and the incident will be fully investigated.

**Dates of future meetings and agreed agenda items**

Dates for future meetings will be agreed at the next FGB meeting in December