

Minutes of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on 8 October 2014 at 8.00 am

Present:	Stuart Daniel (SD)	-	Governor/Committee Chair
	Chris Euden (CE)	-	Governor
	Simon Harris (SH)	-	Interim Headteacher
	Anna Yuen (AY)	-	School Business Manager

ACTION

1 Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest

- Apologies for absence were received from Rosie Williamson & Jenny Young.
- CE declared an interest: he had a family tie with the Chair of Friends of West Wimbledon (FOWW).
- SH declared an interest: he had a family tie with an employee in the print bureau that was designing the new school website but doing so free of charge.

2 Notification of any AOB items

None.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July

These were agreed by the Committee.

4 First 30 Days – strengths & weaknesses of the finance & personnel functions

This item was subsumed within the discussions under items 5 & 6.

5 Budget

The forecast outturn, which had originally been shown as a deficit of £68k when the budget was first set, was now predicting a reduced deficit of around £15k. Factors contributing to this improvement included:

- Increased income resulting from a higher number of children in the Autistic base – 27 now on roll compared with the original forecast of 23. However, offset against this was a reduction in the per pupil funding. The school had originally assumed that as it had received £20k from LBM for one child, this amount would apply to apply equally to all children in the base. However, it was now understood that LA funding was £10k fixed costs and only £12k for each additional child. After allowing for the fact that new arrivals would only be funded for 7 months of the financial year (September to March) they would only be attracting £7k each.
- Pupil Premium funding: the original budget showed expected income of £90k. However, the figure given to the school was £119k. This had now been scaled down to £110,500 in line with the January 2014 pupil count. It was noted that although there was a drive to increase the number of pupils taking free school meals and therefore eligible for the Pupil Premium, the impact of any increase would not be felt during the current year as there was a built in time-lag to the calculations.

Expenditure

Autistic Base. One new teacher had been recruited for the additional class. The Committee agreed that the pupil numbers needed to be monitored: although additional children brought in additional money it was a potential risk as it could have a disruptive effect on the provision.

The budget also included provision for 11 new members of staff, as well as an across the board 1% **pay increase** for all staff.

AY explained that she was going through all existing **contracts** with a fine tooth comb and would be examining the scope to reduce costs, for example in photocopying and PHS. CE said that he would be very happy to suggest alternative companies that the school could invite to tender for services. AY added that she wished to set up a new contract for grounds maintenance and caretaking to enable the building and site to be opened up for use out of school hours by the local community. This could involve paying a local security company. It was also possible that the school could come to some arrangement with Raynes Park High School which was already used out of hours. The Committee encouraged both SH and AY to come up with ideas for making best use of the school.

The school was looking into the possibility of installing Wi-Fi, using the budget allocated for **ICT development**, and replacing the phone system with VoIP technology. It was suggested that FOWW might be interested in supporting the introduction of Wi-Fi, as there would be a visible impact with the introduction of tablets or i-pads. It was also noted that any investment in these areas would need to be properly future proofed so it didn't date too quickly.

SH/AY

The **agency supply** budget for teaching staff, originally set at £18,000, was already overspent. The Committee felt that it had been right to rein in these costs. However, it was also recognised that the school had to fulfil its statutory duties, for example in ensuring teachers had received their PPA entitlements. The school was doing what it could to use informal contacts to source supply cover – for example it already had a pool of 4 part-time workers who it could call on when required. Similar arrangements applied to sourcing cover for teaching support staff. It was noted that the school could save money by putting these cover staff directly onto its payroll, thereby by-passing the need to pay an agency. It was also suggested that the school should tap into AJ's knowledge and expertise in this area before she retired; and that there might be scope to share pooling arrangements with other schools who might be under similar pressures to keep costs in this area under control.

AY confirmed that she was happy with the support that had been provided to her through the **service level agreements** with the local authority. SH said that he thought the HR SLA was very good, the Finance SLA was improving and the School Improvement SLA was also good. CE added that he had spoken to Jan Martin, Head of Education at the local authority who had confirmed that she and her colleagues stood ready to provide what support they could to the school.

The budget also included a £10k **contingency**. Without this the deficit would fall to an almost negligible £5k. However, even at that level there would be a de facto deficit, so the Committee agreed that the contingency should be retained.

School meals. Although the quality of the meals was good, the school was experiencing problems with the provider, ISS. AY stated that catering was an area she wished to scrutinise, for example the issues of payments and debts. As a first step she wanted to invite ISS to visit the school, but the Committee also pointed out that the school was under no obligation to use ISS and therefore could shop around for alternative providers.

Repairs and maintenance. SH reported that decoration of the school was a priority,

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		ACTION
	<p>though progress was contingent on availability of resource. As a first step a mural was being painted on the staircase near the school entrance. SD also commented on the state of some of the toilets. SH undertook to draw up a list of items that needed attention in due course. SD pointed out that some projects could attract matching funding from the local authority.</p> <p>Finally SH reported that there was potential scope for the school to benefit from the government's policy to provide free early years education to some 2 year olds. The local authority had calculated that there was a need for some 500 new places in this part of the borough and, whilst there would be set up costs, these would be covered by the local authority and there would be longer term gains as the extra children would attract additional funding. He explained that the existing wrap-around provision at WWPS was un-used in the mornings and under-used in the afternoons. There would therefore be no need for any extra building work. As the offer to parents would be either a morning or an afternoon session, additional staff would probably be required for any new morning provision. The offer could potentially attract parents who might not otherwise have chosen WWPs for their children; and further benefits could accrue as the children progressed further on in the school, already familiar with the WWPS ethos. A model already existed at Garden Primary School, which offered a mix of free and privately funded places.</p> <p>SH explained that he had arranged to meet representatives from LBM the next day to explore the matter in more detail. Governors urged caution as they were conscious of space restrictions in the school. It was also noted that any decisions would need to be taken by the full Governing Body.</p>	<p>AY</p> <p>SH</p> <p>SH</p>
6	<p>Personnel Confidential item – recorded separately.</p>	
7	<p>Update in School Business Processes SD commented that it seemed that given the improved support and resources the school now had a better understanding of the school's finances and were therefore able to keep the budget under tighter control. He urged both SH and AY to ensure that they maintained a sensible approach to work/life balance. He also asked about the support that had previously been provided by Raynes Park High School. AY explained that the SBM there was under a great deal of pressure as she was undertaking teacher training, but she confirmed that she had made contact with a couple of other team members at RPHS who could provide support if needed. It was also noted that WWPs should bear in mind the possibility of reciprocating if the opportunity arose.</p>	
8	<p>Matters Arising Not covered in the meeting.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business It was briefly noted that the school was due an Ofsted inspection, and that the framework had changed substantially since the last one. It would therefore be realistic to prepare for a "Good" grading rather than an "Outstanding", so there might be a need to manage stakeholder expectations. SH confirmed that the local authority's School Improvement Team was providing appropriate support.</p>	
10	<p>Date of the next meeting Tuesday 9 December at 4.30pm</p>	

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ACTION

Please note that this is a change from the previously agreed date of Wednesday 10 December at 8.00am.

The meeting closed at 9.20am