



**Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery**  
**Finance Committee Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**Meeting Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Caroline Rowley (CR)	Headteacher
Martin Thompson-Lawrie (MTL)	Deputy Headteacher / Contributor
Paul Smith (PS)	Governor
Rupen Shah (RS)	Governor and Chair
Seema Supeda (SS)	Governor
Peter Tenconi (PT)	Governor

Clerked by Deepti Bal, Clerk to Governors

**Meeting Record:**

Governor Scrutiny/Governor Question (GQ)

Meeting Action

Decision

	Item	Action
1.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> CR welcomed Governors.	
2.	<b>Apologies</b> None.	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> None	
4.	<p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SS to circulate the reserve figure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complete</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>RS asked if the reserve is held in one account. SS confirmed that it is held by Harrow and at the end of the year there would be out-turn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CR took an action to look at interest rates available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rolled over to next meeting</li> </ul> </li> <li>● CR to consider a review of the levels of financial approval. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To look at next term for start of the new financial year.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● MTL and CR took an action to review the impact of CPD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evaluating impact of training, pupil progress is to be reported at this meeting. There are no staff on HR processes. There was also a good level of succession capacity. However, this needs to be developed further.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>RS – asked if staff were asked. CR confirmed they were asked and also informal CPD who share practice.</p>	<p>CR to look at interest rates available. CR to consider a review of the levels of financial approval.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Energy expenditure to be reviewed at the next meeting.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SS to organise an energy review.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● CR to circulate a financial skills audit so that this can be considered.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to carry forward.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Discussion of the Health and Safety Link role is to be tabled at the FGB.</li> </ul>	<p>SS to organise an energy review. CR to circulate a financial skills audit so that this can be considered.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Finance Report</b></p> <p>SS and CR have reviewed the budget. Budget holders have been told that no orders are to be placed after February half term and they have been asked about end balances. There are some codes that look they have money in them but there is a plan for these funds – e.g. capital works. Broadly, the budget is line with expectations. PS felt it was important that money is still spent on valuable items rather than spent at the end of the year for the sake of it.</p> <p>DataPlan continues to prove difficult and accurate salary costs are still not being generated.</p> <p>There may be some underspend for energy costs. An additional £26k has been found for works to improve energy efficiency.</p> <p><u>Expenditure over £5k</u></p> <p>The kitchen is currently very small. In the last two years, daily meal intake has increased substantially rendering some areas of the kitchen unfit for purpose. CR would like to create another servery – specifically, where deserts can be served and food can be prepped. A dry store is also required – this will support early birds and night owls. One quote for all items is £42k and two further quotes will be sought. SS will compare the quotes and then send them to Governors. CR confirmed that this has been in the capital works plan and has been budgeted. RS asked how much was budgeted. CR confirmed £40k had been budgeted and there are sufficient funds in capital works.</p> <p>CR took an action to share kitchen quotations in the coming days.</p>	<p>CR to share quotations in the coming days.</p>

<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Sensory Room Quotes</b></p> <p>The quotes were circulated in advance of the meeting. <b>RS asked if this was budgeted.</b> CC confirmed it was.</p> <p>They are all similar in cost. The preferred quote is from Rhino – a stud wall will be fitted in the therapy room and then the Sensory Room will be kitted out. This will support pupils who would benefit from such a space. CR felt that the therapy room is central to the engagement model. The quote from Rhino is c. £9k. The stud wall will be erected in February. <b>Quote accepted.</b></p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Benchmarking</b></p> <p>Benchmarking on energy was noted – the school spends more than others.</p> <p>SS explained that this is driven by greater heating and air conditioning needs. Most other schools do not have air conditioning in many rooms. The heating is on and air conditioning units are on heat. Doors and windows are kept open, especially in Early Years, and this drives up costs.</p> <p>SS is exploring if the school could be placed on the LA’s rolling plan for window replacement, to improve energy efficiency.</p> <p>CR noted that the lights on timers (BMS system) are very outdated. Replacement is on the capital works plan.</p> <p>The solar panels produce energy for the school but money has not yet been received for energy going back to the grid. This is being looked into.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Catering Contract</b></p> <p>The Coombes contract is coming to an end and the school is currently in an extension period. SS has been asked for a feasibility study to be completed on the implications of bringing catering in house. CC would prefer to outsource for another three years but there is now too much to get in place and the school does not have the administrative infrastructure to do this. More generally, the structure of the administrative team will need to be</p>	

	<p>developed. One of the team is retiring and another retirement is due in the next 12 to 18 months. This will provide the opportunity to restructure, as required.</p> <p>The school will tender to three companies – this will either be done in house or by an external company. Coombes will likely submit a tender response.</p> <p>The chef (Andre) was effectively being line managed by the school, in the absence of effective catering infrastructure. If another supplier was selected, he would TUPE over. PS agreed that there is a clear capacity issue and this would be the sensible option.</p> <p>PT agreed that there is no capacity in-house and added that CR is effectively line managing Andre. CR explained that this was around procurement, dietary requirements, etc, and a different level of expertise.</p>	
9.	<p><b>SFVS</b></p> <p>The skills matrix remains outstanding (q1). SS invited Governors to comment on the various sections. The outturn will need to be completed once the information is available. Completed SFVS will be tabled at the next meeting.</p>	SFVS tabled at the next meeting.
10.	<p><b>Virements</b></p> <p><u>Supply</u> This needs to be more carefully considered when setting the next budget. SS would like a virement of £12k from teaching to teaching supply. Teaching will be underspent.</p> <p>PS asked if this could become a notifying item, particularly where it was moving similar items.</p> <p>SS took an action to consider permissions in relation to virements and review any changes required.</p>	SS to consider permissions in relation to virements and review any changes required.
11.	<p><b>Lettings</b></p>	

	The lettings information was noted.	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Parental Debt</b></p> <p>The administrative team has kept parental debt down.</p> <p>CR noted the culture of paying before use.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Personnel</b></p> <p>Raja Ahmad - an AHT - has resigned her leadership position. She is an Early Years Teacher and has been at Whitchurch for a number of years, but would like to return to a teaching post. CR is advertising for an AHT who will also be a class teacher.</p> <p>PS asked if there are external applicants. CR explained that there have been a number of responses. CR invited Governors to attend the interview panel.</p> <p>The school is carrying a vacancy in Y4 and is in the process of advertising. There have been three applications, to date.</p> <p>The admissions and attendance officer left at Christmas, giving one month's notice. Two applications have been received. At present this work is being picked up by SS and the administrative team. A family liaison officer has been deployed to manage the admissions and roll aspects.</p> <p>The focus for performance management will be administrative, site and SMSA staff.</p> <p>CR explained that the NEU have announced industrial action in February and March. 16 staff are members of the NEU but CR does not know who they are. Staff are allowed to be asked but they do not have to inform the school. There is guidance on covering their roles and getting them to provide lesson plans. CR felt that teachers would work with the school and inform them. The NAHT are not striking so 16 members of staff absent is the maximum. A risk assessment will be completed. CR will be communicating the impact of the strike to parents and staff.</p>	

	<p>RS asked if pupils are expected to remain at home. CR explained that the expectation is that the school would remain open but some classes may not be teaching the national curriculum.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Capital Development Plan</b></p> <p>Capital Development was noted. SS, CR and Andrew have not yet met, however.</p> <p>CR noted work in the outdoor area. The contractor completed a site visit. MTL provided an update on the works which will be undertaken.</p> <p>SS provided an update and suggested that the quote for £635k for the building project be confirmed. SS added that this includes no contingency. SS felt that costs would go up as the year went on and so committing to £635k should be locked in. RS felt that some costs (e.g. the sensor tap for £300) are hard to scrutinise from a governance perspective. He suggested sourcing a Governor with construction expertise so that this could be properly monitored and challenged. CR explained that she has advertised for a parent governor and stated a desirable skill in relation to construction/buildings.</p> <p>PS was in favour of proceeding as where other Governors. CR felt that the basics were necessary – toilets, meeting rooms, changing facilities, etc - and the current requirements of the early years curriculum are not fully met.</p> <p>RS asked if anything was descoped for phase 1. CR confirmed everything had been kept in scope.</p>	
15.	<p><b>Health and Safety</b></p> <p>The health and safety advisor attended to complete their visit, including statutory checks. A health and safety visit by the LA will take place on 1st February. This will again focus on statutory checks.</p> <p>CR confirmed four classes have confirmed cases of Strep A and four classes have confirmed cases of chicken pox. Risk assessments have been completed. The reporting requirements are being closely followed.</p> <p>PS noted the challenge around communications with respect to attendance.</p>	

	<p>PS explained that he visited the Christmas Winter Fair. FOW have £17k in their accounts – making £2,700 in income from the Winter Fair. They are interested in funding playground equipment.</p>	
16.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>The July FGB was moved to Friday 7th July.</p> <p>It was confirmed that PS' term ends on September 2023</p> <p>MN's term ends on 1st February 2023.</p> <p>DB is advertising for governor vacancies.</p>	

**Post Meeting Action Log:**

No	Item
1.	CR to look at interest rates available.
2.	CR to consider a review of the levels of financial approval.
3.	SS to organise an energy review.
4.	CR to circulate a financial skills audit so that this can be considered.
5.	CR to share kitchen quotations in the coming days.
6.	SFVS tabled at the next meeting.
7.	SS to consider permissions in relation to virements and review any changes required.
8.	Governor appointments – DB

Accepted as a true and accurate record by the Chair \_\_\_\_\_