



St Paul's Church of England Primary School

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERSONNEL (F&P) COMMITTEE MEETING held virtually via Zoom at 1.30pm on Friday, 5th March 2021

Governors Present: Suranga Chandratillake– Chair, Hilary Aldred, Tom Auld (Associate Member), Helen Darrell – Headteacher, Beverly Jones, Liam Kelly (Associate Member) Russell Re Manning and Kate Sharkie.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), Simon Jarvis (Governor) and Nick Giesler (Associate Member), Alex Smith (Associate Member), Corina Bernal (School Finance Manager) (for part of the meeting)

(NB: Governor Challenge, Questions and Monitoring are highlighted in bold)

The meeting did not always follow the order of the agenda. Where it is feasible, the change of order has been indicated within the minutes, but a chronological minuting of all items is not viable for the sake of clarity.

1. Apologies for Absence

NOTED: apologies for absence were received indirectly and during the course of the meeting from Michael Beckett as he was unable to attend Friday meetings. The Clerk reminded the meeting that, ideally, apologies should be submitted to her prior to a meeting in order to ensure their timely submission to the meeting. Also Nick Giesler and Alex Smith apologised in advance for their early departure.

AGREED: to accept apologies for absence as tendered.

2. Declarations of Interest

NOTED: there were no declarations of financial or other interests.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 17th November 2021

AGREED: the minutes of 17th November 2021 as a true and correct record. The minutes would accordingly be signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safekeeping at the next opportunity.

NOTED: the following matters arising from the minutes and in particular the action summary prepared by the Chair and the Clerk prior to the meeting and circulated with the agenda:

Minute 11 – the meeting had requested that absence data comparisons should be shown on future reports. **Governors asked why data comparisons had not yet been provided?** The Headteacher advised that staff absence could not be reported on meaningfully during lockdown, but would be reported on once the school was fully re-open. Absence would be reported on as a percentage, but comparison with previous years would be difficult as percentage figures had not previously been recorded. She



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would however review past figures to see if a practical solution could be found without too much additional work.

Action: HD/ Finance Manager

4. Pupil Premium Expenditure (item 7 on the agenda)

NOTED: the document circulated with the agenda. **Nick Giesler, as PP Link Governor, summarised a recent monitoring conversation he had had with Paula Ray. PP funds had been spent on teaching support, Better Reading Partners and Welcome interventions. In response to questions from governors** the timescale for the allocation of PP funds was discussed. Money was allocated against the PP strategy when the funding allocation for the year, April – April, was confirmed. The PP funding and strategy for 2021-22 would be agreed once the budget for 2021-22 was known. **The Link Governor felt that the performance gap between PP pupils and national standards was closing at St. Paul's, which was indicative that PP funding was having a positive impact.**

NOTED: governors queried why the agreed PP Strategy document did not indicate in-year progress and did not provide a comparison with previous years? It was felt that the Strategy document did not make for a useful monitoring tool and would benefit from **crisper metrics for monitoring purposes.** The meeting went on to discuss the curriculum aspects of the strategy.

NOTED: governors asked if the reference to PP funds being used to buy-in additional teachers meant that existing teaching staff were unable to meet PP needs and queried the nature of the needs that required such additional support? In particular, were they desirable or essential?

AGREED: the Headteacher would talk to Paula Ray regarding the detail of the report and would feed back to the next meeting, but she understood that school TAs were delivering interventions, and the programmes being delivered were being bought using PP funds.

Action: HD

NOTED: governors highlighted the useful simplicity of the Kings Hedges PP strategy document.

Nick Giesler left the meeting at this point.

AGREED: smarter metrics would enable the committee to consider value for money. The school was asked to consider how to capture and evidence outcomes and what specifically should be evidenced.

Action: HD/ Paula Ray

5. Sports Premium Expenditure (item 8 on the agenda)

NOTED: the documents circulated with the agenda. **Alex Smith, as SP Link Governor, summarised recent monitoring conversations. He acknowledged that his focus had been on outcomes rather than expenditure. He was uncertain what would happen to SP funding if it could not be fully utilised during lockdown. He was also uncertain whether**



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SP funding could be used in relation to After School Clubs. The school confirmed that it had used SP funding to provide sports activities to those of its pupils attending school during lockdown. It was not appropriate to use SP funding in relation to After School Clubs. SP funding not used during the first lockdown had supported increased activity once the school had re-opened. **Governors noted that pupil involvement in sports had increased over all, but queried why there had been a larger increase for boys rather than girls. The gender gap was a concern, though governors were pleased to note that the metrics in the SP report were clearer than those in the PP document and felt that this was the clearest SP report they had received to date.** The Headteacher commented that the small percentage of girls in some classes meant that just one pupil could have a significant impact on the figures. **Governors asked if numbers and percentages could be clearly shown on future reports?** **Action: HD/ Matt Smart**

NOTED: governors queried the range of sports available and were advised they included football, dance, gymnastics, rugby, hockey, cricket and tag games.

Alex Smith left the meeting at this point.

6. COVID 19 Additional Funding Expenditure (item 9 on the agenda)

NOTED: the report circulated with the agenda. The Headteacher commented that the school would assess children on their return from lockdown in order to identify what support and interventions would be required. **Governors queried why external support was going to be bought-in rather than provided by the school?** The Headteacher advised that the services in question were recommended by central government and had been heavily discounted to enable schools to purchase them. Supply teachers would enable team teaching and pupils to be supported without losing out on on-going learning while catch-up support was provided. **Governors asked how long Catch-Up funding would be provided for?** The school did not know as it depended on central government funding, but current funding had to be spent in-year.

7. Finance Update (item 4 on the agenda)

NOTED: the documents circulated with the agenda, including the budget summary report. Forecast outturn for the financial year was currently better than budget. Lockdown had resulted in a significant loss of income, but also a reduction in expenditure. An in-year deficit of £16k was predicted, resulting in a positive carry forward of £120k. The Finance Manager added that the recent February figures indicated a further financial improvement leading to the school potentially breaking even in 2020-21 with a positive carry forward into 2021-22 of approximately £130k. Over all, 2020-21 was looking sound financially. **Governors found the budget summary report as produced by the Chair and the Finance Manager particularly helpful.**

8. School Budget 2021-2022 (item 5 on the agenda)

NOTED: the document circulated with the agenda. The school had recently received more detailed budget documents from the LA and from this the school had developed



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a detailed scenario comparison for the 21-22 budget, but with insufficient time to circulate it prior to the meeting.

AGREED: the Headteacher would email the scenario comparison document to all committee members after the meeting.

Action: HD

NOTED: the oral summary of the LA budget report by the Headteacher. Income for 2021-22 had been adversely affected by falling pupil numbers and staffing expenditure would need to increase to include planned maternity leave costs and any additional COVID requirements in this regard. **In response to a question from governors, the school explained the funding and payment of maternity pay.**

NOTED: predicted mainstream funding for 2021-22 was £726,272, with £100,000 in other income, leading to a total of £826,272 in income. The school also expected to have access to £60k in charity funding and the carried forward surplus of £130k. Expenditure was predicted as £164,000 with staffing costs of £806,400 if the school maintained its current seven-class structure, leading to a total expenditure of £970,400 and an in-year deficit of £144,128. When the £60k charity funding was factored in, the in-year deficit reduced to £84k. If the school utilised its carried forward surplus, reserves at the end of 2021/22 would fall to £45k – £46k. The LA had indicated that it wanted the school to maintain reserves of £60k. A further £15k of income was therefore needed. **Given the previous fund raising activities of the PTFA and the post COVID re-opening of the After School Club this was deemed feasible, but governors expressed concern that this only addressed 2021-22 and not future years. Even if on-roll numbers increased in future years, the school would have to support small class sizes as they progressed through the school. A sustainable financial model was needed.**

NOTED: the meeting discussed various financial models including the reduction of the school to six classes and a reduction of the in-year deficit to £54k, a reduction to five classes and an in-year deficit of £25k and the merger of the Reception Class with another year group. **Also the opening of a Breakfast Club or a nursery were suggested, but rejected as financially unviable. Governors expressed concern that a reduction in class numbers might drive some pupils and their parents away, thus exacerbating the current position caused by a reduction in overseas families because of COVID and the long term impact of the historic and now out of date OFSTED grading. Fewer classes with larger pupil numbers would also practically limit the school's ability to enrol pupils mid-academic year regardless of the PAN. Governors highlighted that other local schools were also carrying spare pupil capacity, meaning there were alternatives for parents who objected to a reduced number of classes. A diminishment of the pandemic could see a return of overseas families, and an improved OFSTED rating was likely to result in an increased number of pupil enrolments. Governors queried if the school could afford to ride out a bad financial year in 2021-22 so as to be ready to respond to improved opportunities in 2022-23? It was highlighted that all Church of England School in the area had seen a reduction in pupil numbers. Governors queried if CSoC had considered school mergers or joint working? The meeting favoured maintaining the seven-class**



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structure for 2021-22 while considering ways to increase income, work with other CSoC schools, re-shape the school structure and legitimately utilise additional grants such as PP to support small class sizes and the benefits they could provide.

AGREED: Beverly Jones would lead Foundation Governors in approaching CSoC and the Diocese regarding future collaborative possibilities including merger and joint-working.

Action: BJ

AGREED: Tom Auld would talk to the PTFA regarding possible fund raising to help bridge the income gap.

Action: TA

AGREED: the school would talk to the LA regarding their requirement to maintain a £60k surplus.

Action : HD

AGREED: the budget for 2021-22 was especially challenging, but, having considered all the options, the Committee felt that both fiscally and educationally maintaining a seven-class structure for 2021-22, while continuing to develop longer-term strategies, was the best way forward. The school would start to prepare a budget subject to the agreed discussions above and mindful of the need for it to be considered by F&P and approved by FGB before May.

NOTED: Bev Jones thanked the Headteacher and Finance Manager for all the work they had put into budget modeling since recently receiving the LA documentation. This was endorsed by other governors.

9. SFVS (item 6 on the agenda)

NOTED: the documents circulated with the agenda. **Liam Kelly led on this item, highlighting the purpose of the SFVS and the comparisons with previous years and other schools as shown on the school dashboard.** The SFVS had to be approved by governors and submitted to the LA by 21st May, but this year it did not have to be submitted to the DfE. **Areas flagged by the dashboard included decreasing pupil numbers (as discussed under minute 8), changes in staff expenditure levels, the purchase of Curriculum Services and the size of the SLT.** The school explained that prior to the current Headteacher's appointment the school had spent money on Headteacher support and secondments leading to a decrease in staffing costs, but an increase in areas such as Curriculum Services. Similarly, supply staff costs were high and established staffing levels were low. With the appointment of an established Headteacher more money had been spent on established staffing and less on supply and consultancy cover. The cancellation of the After School Club because of COVID had also impacted on staffing levels and costs. **Governors noted the school's teaching costs were now similar to other comparable schools, but queried the size of the SLT and why contact time was below average.** The Headteacher highlighted that the school and governors had previously chosen to focus expenditure on improving teaching and learning and that required input at SLT level. With forthcoming budget limitations this might have to change in the future.



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AGREED: Liam Kelly would follow up the calculation of contact time with the school outside of the meeting.

Action: LK/ HD

NOTED: governor surprise at low levels of expenditure on ICT. The Finance Manager believed that it was as a result of much of the school's ICT expenditure being met from Capital funds.

AGREED: to approve the SFVS document as presented.

The Finance Manager left the meeting at this point

NOTED: Governors queried if the ICT difference indicated that not everything was correctly coded to enable efficient use of the SFVS dashboard? Governors also reiterated the need to look at class contact ratios if pupil numbers remained low. The existence of a DfE curriculum led staffing tool was highlighted. Russell Re Manning highlighted the improvements shown in the dashboard as introduced by the Headteacher.

10. Policies

Discussion of item 10 was interspersed with consideration of other agenda items. A chronological minuting of all items is not viable for the sake of clarity. The minutes therefore reflect the order of items as they appeared on the agenda, not necessarily as discussed.

NOTED: the following policies as circulated with the agenda and the comments made in relation to them:

Data Protection Policy – the document was produced by the LA. **Hilary Aldred had emailed the Headteacher with minor changes such as the correction of typos. She also queried who was responsible for Data Protection within the school and what the school was doing about data sharing with third parties?** The Headteacher was currently responsible for data protection and the school did not currently have a central record of shared data. **Governors felt savings could be made if CSoC had one GDPR lead for all its schools. Alternatively, staff other than the Headteacher should lead on Data Protection.**

AGREED: the Data Protection Policy as circulated subject to the correction of typos and the clarification of the Headteacher as the current Data Protection lead.

Teacher's Pay Policy – the document was an EPM model. Several sections within the document required consideration and input from the Pay Committee prior to the next pay review.

AGREED: the Pay Committee should meet to finalise the Pay Policy for referral back to the F&P Committee. In the meantime the Teacher's Pay Policy was NOT AGREED.



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Action: Pay Progression Committee (SC/HA/Andrew Blake/ Simon Jarvis)

Staff Appraisal and Capability - the document was based on a DfE model. **Governors queried the level of concern before the formal process could be applied?** The school advised that it related to not meeting teaching standards. **Governors commented that it would be helpful for a report on teaching standards to be presented to a future meeting of the committee for governors' information.** The Clerk queried what process existed for support staff and TAs if the document only related to teaching standards? **Governors also queried at what point capability became disciplinary and whether the two documents satisfactorily dovetailed with one another?**

Tom Auld left at this point in the discussion of the Staff Appraisal and Capability Policy

AGREED: the Headteacher and Hilary Aldred would give further consideration to the Staff Appraisal and Capability Policy having regard to its suitability for all staff employed by the school and the overlap with the school's Disciplinary Procedure. In the meantime the Staff Appraisal and Capability Policy was NOT AGREED. **Action: HD/ HA**

Whistle Blowing Policy - the document was an EPM model.

AGREED: the Whistle Blowing Policy as presented.

First Aid Policy – a previous version of this document had been agreed by the FGB in July 2020, but this version had not been considered by the Link Governor for Health and Safety

AGREED: Kate Sharkie as the Health and Safety Link Governor should review the proposed First Aid Policy before bringing it back to the Committee for approval. In the meantime the First Aid Policy was NOT AGREED. **Action: KS/ HD**

Staff Code of Conduct – this consisted of three documents.

AGREED: the Staff Code of Conduct as presented.

11. Staffing Update

NOTED: Hannah was leaving the school and the school was considering a new appointment to the School Office. As noted previously, the school would be supporting staff maternity leave in the next financial year.

12. Health and Safety Report

NOTED: the boiler issue had been resolved. The school was following through on the recent condition survey. Kate Sharkie as the Health and Safety Link Governor would undertake a Health and Safety Review when lockdown regulations permitted or would



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consider Health and Safety matters via a Zoom link. Health and Safety included First Aid provision and the First Aid Policy.

13. Financial Monitoring Working Group

NOTED: the group had met and discussed ways of presenting reports as practiced in relation to minutes 7 and 9. As a new structure for finance documents had been agreed, the group required no further meetings.

14. Report From Governor's Income Group

NOTED: the group had not met since the last meeting of the F&P Committee.

15. AOB

15.1 Headteacher's Performance Review

NOTED: the Headteacher's Performance Management Panel had met that morning for its mid-year review.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

AGREED: as Tuesday, 22nd June 2021 at 9.00am.

NOTED: the Chair thanked everyone for their time. The meeting ended at approximately 4pm.

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts

Clerk To The Governors
6th March 2021

Approved by The Finance And Personnel Committee on:

Date:

Signature (Chair):.....