



CALDECOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Personnel, Premises & Finance Committee

Thursday 5th May at 5pm

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the meeting was held virtually using Zoom.

Governors Present:	Pippa Smith (Chair) (PS) Karen Stanton (Co-Head) (KS) Rebecca Snelling (Co-Head) (RS) Mary-Ann Claridge (MAC) Emma Hall (EH) Jay Surti (JS)
In Attendance:	Lesley Whitehead (School Business Manager, Associate Member)
Clerk:	Katie Tween (KT)
Apologies:	Vicky Miles (VM)

Note: the minutes reflect the actual order that items were taken during the meeting, but the numbering has been left as consistent with the agenda for ease of reference.

Item	Notes	Action
1	Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received and were accepted from VM. The meeting was quorate.	
2	Declaration of Interests No declarations of interest were made to any items on the agenda.	
3	Action Points, Minutes of Last PPF Meeting (26.01.22) and Matters Arising. The draft minutes had been circulated in advance and were approved as a true record. Action: Clerk to send the Chair a PDF copy of the minutes to sign.	KT/PS

	<p>The Chair listed the open actions:</p> <p><i>PS to arrange a Health and Safety Visit.</i> PS confirmed that she had visited on 03.02.22 and had reported on this to the last FGB including a discussion on the management of the site. She had also visited again on 04.05.22.</p> <p><i>Policies to be reviewed before next meeting, as agreed.</i> The policies had been reviewed and would be listed for ratification at the next meeting.</p> <p><i>PS to circulate details of Safer Recruitment training. All to consider doing the training.</i> PS confirmed that JT had completed the training.</p> <p>All other actions were either complete or listed elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	
6	<p>Budget 2022/23</p> <p>The draft budget documents had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. KS presented an overview of the main elements of the budget:</p> <p><u>Income</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA funding had gone up by £16,200 because the school had benefited from a change in the way funds had been allocated. However, some things that used to be covered by the funding such as Broadband was no longer covered, so it was a mixed picture. • Based on demographic forecasting, it was likely that there would be another drop in pupil numbers in 2024/25. However, this year's numbers were higher than expected, so this was not a significant concern at this stage. • SEN funding was down, mainly due to a particular child transferring to special school. • Pupil Premium (PP) was up by £2600 but the numbers of PP children had gone from 13 to 22 and this would not make a difference until the census in October. • Care Club income was up. • The covid recovery grant was £1522 and the school led tutoring grant was £845, so there was not a big financial impact from these. • Sports Premium was £17,700. This would be used for the Sports Partnership, transport to events and sports coaching. £10,000 would also go towards replacing the old astroturf which was now becoming a hazard. 	

Governor Questions, Support and Challenge.

Q./ Will the Olympic legacy funding continue?

A./ This was not yet known; the School's Financial Adviser had given no steer on that. The advice is to use it so it will be budgeted to be spent.

Expenditure

- The teaching staff costs were lower by £7400, due to the amalgamation of Reception and Year 1 in the autumn term and the impact of the co-headship.
- Supply teaching costs were planned to stay the same; now that covid had stabilised then the intention will be to use in-house cover as normal.
- Support staff costs were forecast to be lower by £17700 because Teaching Assistants had now returned to their original contracts; many had worked additional hours but that had now settled down.
- Admin staff costs had increased by £3000 mainly due to staff progressing up pay scales.
- Premises staff costs were higher by £7000 because a different role for site management had been costed in, as discussed at FGB.
- Other employee costs were slightly higher, which reflected the increased hours of staff in Care Clubs. This would be off-set by the additional income from Care Clubs.
- Premises costs were higher by £11,400 due to the general costs of resources and factoring in a utilities increase of 70% as advised by the School Financial Adviser.
- Learning resources spending was lower because there had been significant spends this year, for example the purchase of Little Wandle. No big spends were anticipated for the next year.
- Suppliers and Services was lower by £2200 and it was hoped that more savings could be made here.

Overall, the forecast was to spend £3400 less than the income. This was the first time in a long time that the budget had been set like this but KS explained that they felt that this was prudent in a financially unstable time when some rising costs were beyond the school's control.

Governor Questions, Support and Challenge.

Q./ The budget indicates that for teaching staff the forecast is that the costs will continue to reduce over the next three years?

A./ This depends on pupil numbers. Additionally, as staff leave, the intention would be to try to recruit less expensive replacements. However, the ECT salary will be enhanced so that also needed to

	<p>be factored in. It was uncertain at the moment, but there was no plan to increase headcount.</p> <p><i>Q./ There were a number of areas where no inflation was factored in over the next three years, e.g. Premises costs were budgeted to go down and others to stay the same. What was the explanation for this?</i></p> <p>A./ The 2022/23 budget was the one produced by the school and the other columns (the future years) were what the LA predicted. That was the reason for a prudent budget this year, because higher inflation costs were quite likely. Orovia, the LA budgeting software, was quite a blunt tool.</p> <p><i>Q./ The benchmarking data includes an indication of pupil:teacher ratios; do you know what the ideal ratio should be?</i></p> <p>A./ For this purpose, teacher included any adult. When the benchmarking was carried out, Caldecote was always in the upper percentile because it was one of the few schools that still had Teaching Assistants in classes. It also got skewed because Care Clubs staff were included. In the classrooms it was usually a ratio of 1:17.</p> <p><i>Q./ Could you give us an update on the amalgamation of Reception and Year 1?</i></p> <p>A./ This had been stopped in January. As soon as the pupil numbers got to 16/17 then that class could be viably sustained. There were now 19 pupils in Reception, with 23 confirmed for September.</p> <p>PS commented that the DfE benchmarking showed that the school was comfortably in the middle of most measures; there were no comparisons that flagged as particularly high or low.</p> <p><u>General Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS, RS and LW were really pleased to be in this financial position. • The impact of covid on staffing, including two long term sickness absences, had needed really prudent monitoring to get to this point. • All national staff pay increases had been agreed. • Care Clubs and holiday clubs were thriving again and had contributed to the overall positive picture. For the rest of this term, the after school club offer was not going to be increased as that directly impacted on Care Clubs. There were currently three clubs running and normally would have more, but this will be reviewed in September to allow Care Clubs to fully re-establish. • The budget for building maintenance was up to £35,000 including budget for a new boiler (£15,000) and to replace 	
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	<p>the drainage gutters, as these had been highlighted on a recent inspection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil numbers were currently 197, up from 178 at the beginning of the year, but the school was only funded for 183. • At the moment, 34 pupils would leave Year 6 and 23 would start Reception, but more children were joining throughout the year. • The school continued to have seven classes, each with Teaching Assistant hours. • A temporary full-time teacher will be employed to cover maternity leave. The teacher will be appointed for a whole year to ensure class stability. • The Co-Headship would continue, which equated to 100% Head and 40% Deputy Head. Some capacity had been lost but now things had settled the hope was that this would be more manageable. KS was also paid by Ofsted which offset some of the Head Teacher costs. • If a teacher resigned then the best person overall would be appointed, but ideally the school would be looking to recruit an ECT or a teacher on the Main Pay Scale (MPS): the staff was currently very experienced and newer teacher brought different things to balance that experience. <p>Governor Questions, Support and Challenge.</p> <p>A governor commented that it seemed unfair that if pupil numbers go up midway through the year, no additional funding was received. KS agreed, noting that this was especially challenging if the pupil had other needs, as without funding it may not be possible to provide the level of support that the pupil had at their previous school.</p> <p><i>Q./ Are you comfortable with the staffing structure and in particular the co-headship? We need to ensure that there is sufficient support available for you and for all of the staff.</i></p> <p>A./ The first year of the co-headship had been challenging particularly when the school was really hit by covid; there was no opportunity to be strategic or to focus on leadership. This had been the same for all staff who had had to take on additional tasks and give up their time; it was a really “can-do” collegiate team. However, this was now settling and they were looking to move into a period of stability with the staff that they had not had this year. There was some flexibility in the budget to be able to support staff in different ways if needed.</p> <p><i>Q./ Are you comfortable with the carry forward reserves?</i></p> <p>Yes. They had a duty to use the money for the children who are in the school now, but also to be prudent about that. They had always</p>	
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	<p>worked on the idea that £30,000 was a good buffer to retain. They were not frivolous or wasteful as it was public money and always tried to ensure value for money, but the most important people were the children and they needed a good education with quality resources in a quality environment. The School Financial Adviser was very comfortable with the level of reserve. Nationally, there were discussions that big reserves should not be retained and it was not possible to ask for more funding if the current funds were not being spent.</p> <p><i>Q./ What was the current staff profile in terms of experience?</i> <i>A./</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Number of staff</th><th>Pay Grade</th><th>Indicative level of experience</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td><td>RQT</td><td>Starting third year of teaching</td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>UPS 1</td><td>6-8 years</td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>UPS 2</td><td>10-12 years</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>UPS 3</td><td>Highly experienced, 15+ years</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Q./ So it was heavily weighted towards experience?</i> <i>A./</i> Yes. The problem was that quite a few of the experienced staff were part-time which meant it was a challenge for them to take on a whole-school role. The preference for any vacancies would be for a less experienced full-time teacher so that they could develop and take on a whole-school role.</p> <p>Governors thanked the Co-Heads and LW for all of their work putting together the budget and for ensuring good value. They noted that it was reassuring to hear all the considerations that were made and agreed that it was clear that the finances were well-managed. Governors agreed that it was a prudent budget, which included a reasonable staff structure and took into account future increases in costs. They therefore agreed that they were happy to recommend ratification to the FGB.</p>	Number of staff	Pay Grade	Indicative level of experience	1	RQT	Starting third year of teaching	4	UPS 1	6-8 years	1	UPS 2	10-12 years	3	UPS 3	Highly experienced, 15+ years	
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5	<p>BMR and Finance Update</p> <p>The BMR had been circulated in advance. LW updated governors on the key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The carry forward was £29,759; they had done very well during the year to be able to finish with such a good carry forward. • There had been two long term teacher sickness absences and a long term support staff absence. Covid absences in general had meant that high agency staff costs, but the insurance had off-set a lot of these. • Several significant capital purchases had been made including new play equipment and new artificial grass. These had been successful and were very popular with the children. 																

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two new laptop trolleys with a total of 32 laptops had been purchased for £18,500 as well as 13 new classroom PCs at a cost of £13,500. A new CCTV system had been installed at a cost of £2500. Savings of £10,000 had been made on building maintenance. The revenue money had been used to pay capital expenses. There had been an overspend on the general curriculum budget, mainly due to the purchase of the Little Wandle scheme which was proving worthwhile. The energy price increases were yet to affect the school because of the current contract deal, but these had been factored in for next year. <p>Governors thanked LW and all of the SLT for their careful management in a difficult year. Governors were very happy that it was being managed effectively.</p>	
7	<p>Other Matters Appropriate to the School and Governing Body</p> <p>There were no other matters and the meeting closed at 6pm. The next meeting of the PPF committee will be held on 29th June 2022 at 6pm.</p>	

Item	Action	Responsible
3	Clerk to send a PDF of the approved minutes to the Chair to sign and return to school.	KT/PS
3	Policies reviewed after previous meeting to be listed for ratification at next meeting.	KT