

Burlington Junior School

Minutes of the Resource Committee held on Friday 10 March 2023

Present: Mr S Bown (Chair)
Mr S Arbuthnot
Mr N Barras
Mrs R Campbell
Mr S Gilmore
Mrs P Hall
Mr N Shah
Mrs P Utting

In attendance: Mr M Blow, Deputy Headteacher
Mrs J Kerr, School Business Manager
Ms K Bridgman, Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Hakim, Mr Kewley and Mr West.

2. Declaration of Business Interests

Governors were asked if they had any business interest to declare. No business interests were declared.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2023 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

Pay Policy

The Headteacher reported that it was decided that staff could continue to apply for UPS1 but the school would not be accepting any more applications for UPS2 as it does not currently require any more staff at this level. The school does not offer UPS3. The amended Pay Policy has been sent to staff and they have until the end of the spring term to respond.

School Meals

The School Business Manager reported that unfortunately the Chair of the Resource Committee was unable to attend the meeting with possible school meals providers. The manager of the after school provision had attended the meeting with her. Governors ratified the decision that the school meals contract was given to Nourish due to the school following the strict catering procurement process.

The School Business Manager reported that there are no concerns about the new provider and there has been an increase in the number of children having school meals. A fixed rate has been agreed for the next three years. Following the announcement that all London primary school children will be receiving free school meals for one year from September, there is likely to be some changes. It has been difficult to budget for this as it is not known what price per meal will be agreed. There are a lot of families at the school who will benefit from this.

Governors queried whether there was a risk that the funding received will not cover the cost of the meal. The School Business Manager felt that there was a risk that the funding received will not cover the cost of the meals provided but it is hoped that there will be an increase in the amount given to schools. The school currently charges £2.35 for a school meal and receives £2.41 for the free school meals provided.

The Headteacher that the school received £4800 in voluntary contributions from parents and decided not to send another reminder out about this for this academic year. It is planned that when the free school meals are introduced, the school could ask parents for a £40 voluntary donation as they are no longer paying for meals. This will then be used to offset against any shortfall in the funding.

5. 2022-2023 Budget

The School Business Manager reported that governors had approved the budget having a deficit of £91K which would be met from the reserve fund. The deficit is currently £83K which is slightly less than the amount agreed. The deficit was due to the teachers' and support staff pay increases not being funded, additional expenditure on supply staff instead of employing a teacher for one year and more staff training in preparation for Ofsted.

The Headteacher reported that the school purchases the AfC package and receives 25 credits. The school has overspent on its credits due to having a leadership day with the SIP which focussed on Ofsted, the two training sessions for governors, the child protection review and using School Based Advisers to work with subject leaders. It was important that the school prepares for Ofsted and the staff have received some excellent training.

The School Business Manager reported that the school has received funding for teacher led tutoring. She explained that the school has to pay 40% of the cost of the tutoring and this will increase to 75% next year. The Deputy Headteacher explained that previously all the teachers committed to providing tutoring but now do not have the time to do this. Teachers are given conferencing time to meet with their PPG children to ensure they are meeting their targets whilst Mrs Cleaver teaches music. Booster groups are also being run in Year 6.

The School Business Manager reported that the school has always had a reserve fund and two separate bank accounts, even though the reserve fund is included in the budget. AfC had contacted the school expressing concern about the small amount of money in the current bank account due to the back pay that needed to be paid to staff. Governors did give agreement for £30K to be moved from the reserve fund into the current account but the school actually did not need to do this.

Governors queried whether the school had a Scheme of Delegation. The School Business Manager felt that this needed to be added to the school's Finance Policy. **It was agreed that a copy of the Finance Policy would be circulated with the minutes. It was also agreed to review the Finance Policy at the next meeting on 26 May 2023.**

Governors queried whether the school accrued interest on the money in the reserve fund. The School Business Manager explained that the account does not accrue much interest and the bank have contacted her about changing to accounts with higher interest but it cannot risk not having instant access to the funds if they were needed. The Headteacher reported that schools were once at risk of having money clawed back if they have over 15% of their budget in the reserve account but this is now no longer an issue for the school. It was noted that the school can submit a deficit budget as the local authority is aware of the reserve fund.

6. 2023-2024 Budget

The Chair noted that the budget was over £3,000,000 for the first time. The School Business Manager gave details of the income received which included an additional £78K from the government. The pupil unit figure has also increased.

The School Business Manager addressed the 2023-2024 budget in detail. She explained that the budget has a deficit of £50K which will be met from the reserve fund. The budget includes a 5% pay increase for teachers, a pay increase for support staff and employment of two additional teaching assistants due to the increase in SEN funding. It is difficult to budget for staff due to new pupils joining the school in September 2023. The current Year 6 cohort have a lot of need and receive additional support but it is not known whether the current Year 2 children in the infant school need a lot of support.

Governors asked about the possible increase in the energy charges. The School Business Manager explained that the school has a fixed rate until September 2023. The Infant School will be dealing with the brokering of the new energy contract.

There was a discussion on the supply staff budget. The School Business Manager reported that the school has now employed a full time teacher so that a supply teacher will not be used from September 2023. The expectation is that the school will not need to employ as many supply staff.

Governors queried whether the rateable value of the school will increase due to the new build. The School Business Manager reported that the rates are paid by the local authority but the school has to show this expenditure in the budget. It is likely to increase but there will be no cost to the school.

Governors queried whether consideration needed to be given to undertake fund raising for solar panels to be installed into the new build. The Headteacher explained that sustainability is included in the build. The Deputy Headteacher felt that solar panels may already be included. The school is not involved in a lot of the detail at this stage of the project and often this is just presented to them. The current priority is the amount of playground space that is needed.

There was a discussion on the new building. The Headteacher explained that this project has been deferred again and the council have still not approved the increased budget. Cllr Archer visited the school and is aware of the need for this build to happen. **The Headteacher agreed to send the invite to the next meeting on the new build on Tuesday 21 March 2023 to all governors.**

Governors expressed concern that the current funding levels were not sustainable and the local authority needed to be aware of this. The focus for the school leaders should be on education and not on having to deal with balancing budgets. The Headteacher explained that the local authority are aware of the financial difficulties schools are facing. The local MP, Sir Edward Davey, meets regularly with Headteachers and Cllr Stephanie Archer, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, has visited the school. **The Headteacher agreed to invite Ms Sarah Ireland, Interim Chief Executive, and Mr Andreas Kirsch, Leader of the Council, to the next Headteacher's pre meeting on 14 June 2023.**

It was agreed that the draft budget would be presented to governors for approval at the Governing Body Meeting on 22 March 2023

7. Personnel Items

The Headteacher reported that Mrs Yendole, Assistant Headteacher, will be going on maternity leave at the end of the Summer Term. She explained that due to the increase number of children needing SEN support, the school is advertising for a SENCO to work at the school for two days a week to support Mrs Case, Assistant Headteacher.

The Headteacher reported that Ms Krivickiene, Family Liaison Officer, is leaving to work closer to home due to the new Ulez scheme being implemented and to save on fuel costs. The school has appointed a new Family Liaison Officer and has increased the hours to make this a full time post.

Upper Pay Threshold Application

The Headteacher gave details of an application that had been received for Upper Pay Level 1. She gave details of the additional work the staff was doing to achieve this. Governors approved the application.

8. Disciplinary Policy

There was a discussion on the Disciplinary Policy. The Headteacher explained that this policy was provided by the school's HR provider and has been shared with staff so that they can discuss this with their unions. Staff have until the end of the Spring Term to comment on the policy.

Governors approved the Disciplinary Policy. **The Headteacher agreed to provide feedback on the staff's comments on the Disciplinary Policy at the next meeting on 26 May 2023.**

9. Staff Absence and Attendance Policy

The Headteacher addressed the Staff Absence and Attendance Policy in detail. She explained that staff were previously given ten days dependency leave and this has now reduced to five days.

Governors asked about staff summoned for jury service or to give witness statements. The Headteacher explained that it is difficult as staff can ask to defer any summons for jury service in the summer holidays and there is nothing the school can do about this. The school also cannot ask staff to do jury service during the holidays.

Governors approved the Staff Absence and Attendance Policy. **The Headteacher agreed to provide feedback on the staff's comments on the Staff Absence and Attendance Policy at the next meeting on 26 May 2023.**

10. Premises Issues

The Deputy Headteacher reported that Caroline Woodliffe, Kingston's Health and Safety Consultant, completed a health and safety tour of the school which was successful. A Health and Safety Executive also visited to look at how the school monitors the asbestos in the buildings and was very impressed with the strategies in place. This was a very positive visit. He did recommend that the floor tiles in cupboards should be sealed. There continues to be air testing every six months and there are no worries at the current time.

11. Any Other Business

Governors agreed that the school's Service Level Agreements will be reviewed at the governing board meeting on Wednesday 22 March 2023.

The Chair gave details of a school in Hinchley Wood where the Bursar and Headteacher were dismissed for financial wrongdoing and this also resulted in criminal proceedings. Governors need to be reassured that there are procedures in place that would ensure this could not happen at the school. The School Business Manager explained that £490,000 was taken from this school over nine years. She has spoken to SMS who have confirmed that the school's procedures would stop this from happening. The Headteacher reported that this was an unusual event and would not happen at the school as we have financial safeguarding checks in place.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 19 June 2023 at 8.00 am

Agenda: 2023-2024 Budget
Finance Policy