

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, RESOURCES AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19TH MARCH 2024; COMMENCING AT 5.30 P.M. AT WHITESTONE INFANT SCHOOL, MAGYAR CRESCENT, NUNEATON, WARWICKSHIRE.

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Present : Mrs. N. Green, Mr. C. Atkins, Mr. M. Hartopp, Mr. P. Johnson, Mr. D. Robinson,  
Mrs. R. Warwick, Mr. P. Stokes, Mrs. K. Ford-Lings, Mr. S. Shaw and Mrs. E. Johnson.

In Attendance : Mrs. L. Knox (School Business Manager) and Miss. G. Matt (Clerk).

In The Chair – Mr. P. Johnson.

1. Welcome and Apologies.

The Chair, Mr. Johnson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from Dr. S. Hill, Mrs. M. Burdett, Mrs. S. Farmer and Miss. J. Ivers (Deputy Head and observer).

2. Minutes and Matters Arising.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were read, agreed and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

3. Declaration of interest.

Mr. Atkins declared an interest in items relating to Chetwynd School and Etone College.

Mr. Johnson declared an interest in items relating to Stockingford Academy, Nursery Hill Primary School, Arley Primary School and a Trustee of Nuneaton Food Bank.

Mrs. Johnson declared an interest in items relating to Central England Academy Trust.

4. Headteacher's Verbal Report.

Mrs. Green gave her verbal report.

Staffing. A staff member has returned after a long term absence. This is positive for the 1:1 pupil to regain some consistency. Mrs. Loughton departs on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 to take up a position with the SaLT team.

There was poor recruitment for the one term vacancy. The 1:1 position will be covered by deployment of current staff. The benefit is that the staff member is experienced, knows the school and expectations. Negative side is that she will be drawn away from her current roles and she will support the pupil on four days. The class TA will support the pupil on day five, therefore taking the TA away from her current duties.

Safeguarding. 1 Child Protection, 1 Child in Need and 3 current Early Help. No Operation Encompass alerts received. 1 MAC referral led to a family assessment. Two lateral checks undertaken.

Two pupil CIC review and PePs plus one child post CLA. In April, CLA monitoring visit will take place with Mr. Johnson attending. LA Attendance visit has taken place with Mrs. Green, Mrs. Knox and

Mr. Johnson. Monthly attendance scrutinised, letters circulated, close monitoring in place and meetings to be held later this week.

There have been no PREVENT, homophobic or racist incidents to report. RADY course undertaken via virtual school. Meeting held with Mr. Johnson (Safeguarding governor) re Annual Safeguarding Audit, submitted and will be discussed at full GB meeting in summer term.

SEND. 9 EHCPs, 2 in Year 2, 3 in Year 1 and 4 in Reception. 3 more EHCPs being processed (2 have been submitted for Y2 pupils, 1 due to be submitted for Y1 pupil before Whitsun).

Mrs. Mathieson is spending a great deal of time supporting a pupil with high level SEMH needs. We are moving forward within another EHCP assessment application for another Y2 pupil. This is due to be processed by Whitsun, therefore making 4 in process.

Unprecedented – impact on staffing costs, training costs and SEND professional costs. Miss. Ivers and Mrs. Green are supporting with EHCP application paperwork and meetings.

**GB thanked Mrs. Green for her verbal report.**

5. The Budget 2023/2024 up date. 6. Finance Officers Report and 7. The Budget 2024/2025.  
The GB agreed to take Items 5, 6 and 7 altogether. Mr. D. Ndukwe and Mr. A. Baker both Finance Officers from the LA joined the meeting via a “zoom link”.

Summary Financial Officers Report to Governors Spring Term 2024 dated 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 had been previously circulated. Copy with original minutes.

2023/2024 current balance shows -£62,736 shortfall. The income is less and we are spending more. The main expenditure is staffing costs, 91% of the budget. DFE states anything spent above 80% of budget on staffing is expensive. Overall balance 2023/2024 £95,868, 2024/2025 £4,945, 2025/2026 £-108.823 (in deficit) and 2026/2027 -£201.924 (in deficit). No PP and SEND money is included in these figures.

**Mr. Atkins stated this is too far to look ahead, the priority is to balance 2024/2025 budget.**

**Mr. Johnson stated that in 2026 we will have an extra Reception class, followed by the proceeding years of extra Year 1 and Year 2 classes as the school expands from a three form to a four form entry.**

Mr. Baker stated that there appears to be overspending in all years and that all GB must be fully aware of the situation. **Mr. Johnson replied that we have time to make a deficit recovery plan.**

Key changes since the Autumn term:

Income -Reduction in funding from central government and reduced Pupil Premium funding.

Expenditure – Figures include TAs overtime for the year, non-teaching Agency costs for the year and 2024/2025 WES fees included at actual prices and inflated 2.5% pa

Mr. Ndukwe reported that from September 2026, we will get £4,000 for every pupil in the new Reception class, funding will increase. But extra cost will be incurred in setting up the new class. Mrs. Knox reported that in 2026/2027 this would be 7/12<sup>th</sup> of the budget. Mr. Baker asked had this has been fully ratified by the LA.

## Governors held a focused discussion regarding the future assumptions.

Risks for Head and Governors to consider -

- Formula funding to be confirmed for 2024/25 based on actual October 2023 census data. Indicative formula funding for 2025/26 and 2026/27 includes 2024/25 TPAG estimated funding values.
- Pay awards are estimated from 2024/25 onwards - to be confirmed.
- 10% increase pa has been included for energy costs but must continue to be reviewed due to current circumstances.
- Other non-staffing expenditure inflation pressures – budgets should continue to be reviewed and forecasts amended if necessary.
- Schools must spend the PE and sport premium funding in full within the academic year it has been allocated for and cannot roll over unused funding into the following academic year.

Mrs. Knox reported that on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 that she had paid the invoices total £73,021.86 to the LA, but the LA disputed this, stating non-payment. Mr. Baker stated that he will take it that the invoices had been paid. Mrs. Green requested that Mr. Ndukwe re-issues this financial report to reflect that these invoices have been paid.

Mr. Baker and Mr. Ndukwe both left the meeting at 6.05 p.m.

Mrs. Knox reported the financial report was received on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024, late afternoon, one week late said Mrs. Green.

**Mr. Atkins asked if governors had any thoughts on what to do.** Mrs. Green replied based on this financial report we cannot set a budget for 2024/2025 to be submitted to the LA in May 2024.

A deficit recovery plan must be produced by the governors and the Head. Ideas were discussed. In teacher recruitment, to replace staff a lower end of scale. Change of staffing hours. Not to replace MDS and TAs. Reduction in TAs hours will impact on teacher wellbeing. Presently there are no vacancies. No replacement of leavers.

TAs with fixed term contracts linked to a pupil; automatically leave when the pupil leaves Whitestone. Recruit a HLTA to cover a class instead of paying for supply teacher cover. Mrs. Green would consider the pros and cons of each money saving solution. Look at 1:2 instead of 1:1, in individual cases. Remove teacher training for less teacher cover.

**Mrs. Ford-Lings asked what would happen if we don't make the cost savings and submit the budget as it is.**

Mrs Green responded that we would be requested to take part in a SAG by the LA. Should the governors be unable to set a balanced budget, Mrs. Green and Mrs. Knox would inform the LA, who may find it necessary to take over the Whitestone's finances and then the decision making would be out of the governors hands.

**Mrs. Warwick enquired what to we receive from WES for the annual payment.** Mrs. Green replied we receive mainly all our running services from WES. **Mr. Johnson reported that the GB is**

responsible for setting the annual budget. Mrs. Green stated that in July 2024 nineteen PP pupils will leave Whitestone and that in Reception 2024, the PP & SEND numbers presently are unknown. GB asked Mrs. Knox to look at benchmarking against other schools, including % of staff, PP extraction and payment of staff to support SEND pupils.

ACTION Governors to write a deficit recovery plan. Mrs. Green, Mrs. Knox, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hartopp and Mr. Robinson will meet on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024; at 1.30 p.m. to discuss options. To be followed by an extraordinary governing body before May half term, date to be confirmed.

#### 8. SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standards).

SFVS had been previously circulated. Copy with original minutes.

The SFVS helps to provide schools with assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management.

The SFVS checklist asks questions of governing bodies in six areas of resource management to provide assurance that the school is managing its resources effectively. This can be used to identify possible areas of change that resources are being used to support high-quality teaching and the best educational outcomes for pupils.

Mrs. Green stated that we need to set a balanced budget. A recovery plan will be in place. The asset register has been updated. The money is spent to meet the best interests of the pupils at Whitestone. This academic year there is an increase in SEND pupils. We cannot meet these pupils' requirements without the finance. CLA pupils have priority.

There was robust conversation about the budget situation from the GB.

The SFVS was dated, signed off by the chair of governors and forwarded to the LA as a legal requirement by the end of the financial year 2024.

#### 9. Policies.

Attendance policy and Support for Pupils with Mental Problems policy had been previously circulated. Copy with original minutes.

ACTION The governors agreed the Attendance policy and Support for Pupils with Mental Problems policy that were both signed off and dated by the chair.

#### 10. Any Other Business.

There was no any other business.

#### 11. Dates of next meetings.

Governing Body – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024; from 5.30 p.m. until 7.30 p.m.

Performance & Standards – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024; from 5.30 pm. until 6.30 p.m.

Pay Committee – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024; from 5.30 p.m. until 6.30 p.m.

FRSC – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024; from 5.30 p.m. until 6.30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Date ..... Signed .....  
(Chair)