

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, RESOURCES AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28TH MARCH 2023; 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, Mrs. P. Jones,
Mr. P. Stokes, Mr. S. Shaw, Mrs. E. Johnson and Mrs. M. Burdett.

In Attendance : Miss. J. Ivers (Deputy Head, observer), 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 Mrs. R. Warwick, Mr. D. Robinson, Mrs. F. Chadaway and Dr. S. Hill.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 6th December 2022 were read, agreed and signed by the Chair.

ACTION After a discussion, the governors agreed that the new markings be undertaken on the school's playgrounds. Action completed.

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 and a Trustee of Nuneaton Food Bank.

Mrs. Burdett declared an interest in items relating to Holy Spirit MAT.

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

4. Headteacher's Verbal Report.

Mrs. Green presented her verbal report.

Mrs. Green reported that forty six letters had been sent out to parents regarding attendance. Parents that refused to attend a meeting regarding their child's poor attendance school record are monitored, receiving chase up telephone calls and letters. In May 2023, letters would again be sent out to the persistent non-attenders. To encourage good attendance pupils receive an attendance certificate. There was a high percentage of absenteeism prior to Christmas with the usual seasonal bugs and infections.

Whitestone's attendance is above the national targets and WCC targets. School attendance nationwide is now lower than before Covid.

Pupils that are taken out of school for holidays in term time also have an impact on school attendance. Mrs. Green reported that recently there were cases of pupils being taken out of school and going to India; due to a family death in that country.

There is one single assessment being undertaken by Social Services.

One staff member is on long term sick and Mrs. Carr leaves on 31st March 2023.

Mrs. Green and Mr. Johnson had undertaken the Annual Safeguarding Audit which has been submitted to the LA.

5. The Budget 2022/2023 – Up date.

The Budget 2022/2023 – Up date had been previously circulated. Copy with original minutes.

Governors monitored and agreed the Budget 2022/2023 up date.

Mrs. Knox is to meet with “Stepping Stones” regarding the lease contract held between them and Whitestone.

Lettings Income and Recharge for accurate invoices is needed, presently this only seen by the LA, the landlord. Whitestone should also have access to this in order to keep accurate financial transactions.

6. Finance Officer Report.

WES Financial Report to Governors, Spring Term 2023 dated 13th March 2023 had been previously circulated. Copy with original minutes.

During the budget setting meeting the option of being supported by the SAG (sustainability action group) process was discussed. Governors did not feel there was any benefit in undertaking a SAG, as we have a strategic plan to ensure financial sustainability.

Proposed budget submission for 2023/2024. Current Annual Balance -£53,913. Forecast Carry Forward £150,653. Overall Balance £96,740.

Changes made to reduce the debit:-

- Removed TA sickness cover in future years as school plans to cover in house.
- Reduced teaching cover by £10k in future years as absence will be covered by leadership staff.
- Removed additional admin hours from April 2023.
- Energy under spend in current year, but future years increased based on most recent bills. This will continue to be reviewed each term due to current circumstances.
- Staff turnover in September 2023 replaced by full time M3 vacancy.
- No more job shares. The cost is £11,000 extra than employing one full time teacher.

The main expenditure cost is staffing. If any member of staff leaves and is not replaced we must look at the impact, challenges and pressure put on the remaining staff members.

Governors enquired with an increase in pupils that were receiving 1:1 support what was the impact on the rest of the school and were all pupils entitled to Pupil Premium signed up to receive this.

Mrs. Knox replied that we approach families in different ways to inform them of the availability of Pupil Premium. We consider that all families entitled to Pupil Premium have signed up. It is a sensitive area to discuss with parents.

Mrs. Green stated that when staff members leave, the situation would be reviewed regarding an automatic replacement. The proposed school expansion in 2026 would bring in more finance. Pupil Premium capital has increased this academic year. We have looked at bench marking and Whitestone is in-line with peer group on staffing.

Governors enquired regarding lettings. Mrs. Green replied that with the present school letting we are breaking even. The drawback is that most groups that hire schools e.g. sport groups, Scouts etc. require storage space for their equipment and unfortunately, Whitestone cannot offer this facility.

Staff pay awards would hit all school budgets and these must be fully funded.

Risks for Head and Governors to consider:-

- Funding Formula figures for 2024/25 and 2025/26 reflect estimated increased funding in the region of 2.5% each year, which are best placed assumptions currently.
- Financial Plans need to reflect inflationary rises across all budgets to ensure future year expenditure is comparable to increased projected income.
- Teachers pay is still being challenged by unions and are advising members to strike to request higher pay awards than the recent increases approved by the Secretary of State.
- Support Staff pay award pay for 2023/24 is likely to increase above the 4% built into the financial budget plan following the recent proposal from the LGA (Local Government Association) of a further increase of £1,925 per annum. This change will be reflected in the summer term governors' report.
- Other non-staffing expenditure inflation pressures – budgets should continue to be reviewed and forecasts amended if necessary
- Teacher vacancy assumed to be filled from 1/9/2023 at scale point M3.

ACTION The governors agreed the capital allocation.

7. The Budget 2023/2024.

Budget Forecast by CFR Level dated 28th March 2023 and Whitestone Infant TN065 were both circulated. Copy with original minutes.

Governors need to set the Budget 2023/2024 and have a plan to get the school “back into the black”. There would be a clearer idea of the financial situation in the Summer term 2023.

Mrs. Green stated that at the last meeting it was agreed to continue with the present WES package until 31st March 2023.

Governors held a focused discussion, regarding buying into the Gateway Alliance governor training sessions. These are cheaper than WES training, which governors considered had reduced in quality. Only three governors can attend a GA meeting, but would report back at a governors meeting. These GA training sessions are recorded and governors would be able to watch later on at their convenience. Mrs. Knox would circulate the six GA training topics to governors next term.

ACTION Governors agreed to buy into the Gateway Alliance six governor training sessions for one year.

Governors held a focused discussion regarding the Budget 2023/2024. It was agreed that Mrs. Knox looks at the TN065 figures again taking out the following item:-

- To look at the figures for the person retiring in July 2023 and not fill this post, but there would be implications on the school.

When the Budget 2023/2024 figures have been revised an Extraordinary FRSC meeting will be held over “Teams”. The date to be confirmed so that the Budget 2023/2024 can be dated, signed off and forwarded to the LA.

8. SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard).

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, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Knox had met and completed the SFVS.

ACTION Governors agreed the SFVS that was then dated and signed off by Mr. Johnson and forwarded to the LA by 31st March 2023.

All governors have now completed their skills audit; overall there is an excellent range of knowledge.

The Asset Register would be updated in the Summer term 2023.

Mrs. Knox monitors every bill that is received on a daily basis.

9. Policies.

There were no policies to review.

10. Any Other Business.

There was no any other business.

11. Dates of next meetings.

Governing Body – Tuesday 16th May 2023; from 5.30 p.m. until 7.30 p.m.

Performance and Standards – Tuesday 27th June 2023; from 5.30 p.m. until 6.30 p.m.

Pay Committee – Tuesday 4th July 2023; from 5.30 p.m. until 6.30 p.m.

FRSC – Tuesday 11th July 2023; from 5.30 p.m. until 6.30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.

Date Signed
(Chair)

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(Chair)