



GOVERNING BODY OF HIGHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

FINANCE AND PREMISES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 16 JANUARY 2024

Members: Bevin Betton, (Chair) , Nikesh Tailor, David Wilson (Headteacher) and Tim Guha,

Italics denote absence

Also Attending: Catherine Moens (Business Manager), David Young (Count On) -agenda items 1- 5 only, Stephanie Morton (DHT), Mandy Newell (Minute and Advisory Clerk).

MINUTES – PART 1

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

NOTED that all Governors were in attendance.

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Governors were given the opportunity to declare any prejudicial interest they might have in respect of items on the agenda. No declarations were made.

3. **MINUTES AND ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17 October 2023 were agreed as a correct record

RESOLVED that the minutes be signed on GovernorHub by the Chair.

ACTION: CHAIR

NOTED there were no matters arising.

4. **BUDGET 2023-2024**

(a) Third Quarterly Return

RECEIVED the third quarterly return, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book and available to view on GovernorHub.

REPORTED that

Income

- (i) David Young explained that a miscalculation had occurred around the Mayor of London’s funding for the KS2 meal grant in I18. The information from the Mayor’s office had been vague and any information had taken time to be received. Early on it had been known that there would be a grant but not how much it would be per meal or when the monies would be paid or how many installments there would be. Some funding was finally given to schools once it had been received by the LA in October 2023. It had not been noticed initially that there had been a large difference between what the LA had paid the School on behalf of the Mayor and what had been estimated for the grant;
- (ii) [in response to a query from Nikesh Tailor, it was established that the grant had been estimated by the Headteacher and SBM.](#) The Headteacher explained they had not taken into consideration the fact that the FSM pupils were not getting any additional funding and funding for them was already in place. The calculations were made for a year when it should have been for seven months. David Young explained that the funding was not covering the number of school days from January to April. There was no guarantee when the outstanding monies from the Mayor would be received. It might come before the end of the financial year but this was not confirmed. There was no information available from the Mayor’s office and the LA had no information either. [In response to a query from Nikesh Tailor, it was clarified that there was no one to discuss the issue with.](#) The money would be received by the School when the LA had it but no schools knew what was going on. The figures would look better if the money came in before quarter 4 but the SBM explained they had calculated this quarter without it;
- (iii) [Nikesh Tailor asked about the impact of the miscalculation.](#) The Headteacher said it meant that he was having to decide what to do differently. He said that if he had known about the figures he would have spent less time looking at expanding the nursery as with the budget the way it was now, expansion of the nursery could be a liability to the School. [In response to a further query from Nikesh, the Headteacher assured him that they would be fairly funded for the FSM but they didn’t know when the monies would be received.](#) The timing of the payment was what was affecting the budget. The Headteacher reiterated

that if the money was received before April, the budget would look healthier. It was confirmed that the Mayor had said that FSM for KS2 would be happening next year too. It was explained that since the budget had been set for FSM the majority of it was funding a 90% uptake. Unlike KS1 where estimates were made and money clawed back if necessary there was no claw back for KS2. Following discussion the SBM said that the uptake on average was around the 90% mark so the School was not losing money. [In response to a question from the Chair](#), it was explained that they had looked at the uptake in September to forecast the number of meals likely to be taken in January/February/March. They had found that there was £7.5k too much in the budget so some savings had been found there;

- (iv) [following a question from Tim Guha, the Headteacher said they had to address certain areas in the budget now](#). Staff had been told not to spend anything on curriculum resources in this budget unless the purchases were absolutely necessary. In EYFS, when staff had been off lunchtime supervisors had covered, the School was now trying to reduce their use and utilise staff in School but this in turn had a knock on effect. Due to the higher uptake of school meals, lunchtimes had needed to be extended to allow time to serve the meals but this increased staffing costs. The Headteacher said that they would only be funding essential site works for now to ensure health and safety standards were met. Despite the concerns, the Headteacher stated the School was still in a healthy situation but it was the direction of travel that was a concern in respect of budgets;

- (v) [Nikesh Tailor commented that I01-I07 were relatively fixed budgets over which the School had little control](#). David Young agreed this was the case but he explained that I08, Income from Facilities and Services was an area that allowed the School to generate more income and they had more influence in this area. [Whilst recognizing that the School were trying to reduce outgoings, Nikesh wondered what was being done to try and increase income](#). Governors discussed the lettings and the Headteacher said they planned to use a company to advertise spaces they had as there was some capacity for this, although not a great deal. The SBM explained that the main hall was available on Mondays and Fridays but was used the rest of the week. Governors discussed the clubs that were in place and [following a query from the Chair, it was established that it would be difficult to let the kitchen area](#). [Tim Guha asked about an area of land on site which was not owned by the School](#). The Headteacher explained that the landowner had given the School access to use it but the costs involved to maintain it meant they did not. The LA had spoken to the Headteacher about ways in which it could be used and he had said he would like to have an Additional Resource Provision (ARP) in this area. The LA had seemed keen to help with this but no progress had been made. [The Chair asked about weekend lettings and it was explained that](#) at present the Site Staff worked alternative Saturday mornings when the hall was let but more lettings at weekends would increase the Site Staff's hours and costs and there would also

be additional cleaning costs. Governors discussed the success of Alex's Art Club but she had moved away and the replacement club had not worked out;

- (vi) David Young explained the time that he and the SBM had taken to go through the budget line by line in great detail to try and rectify the problems;
- (vii) I01 – LA Delegated funding and I03 – High Needs Top up funding – there had been two errors found. There was £12,861 of underfunding, still not corrected by the LA. They had not financed the rate costs fully as they had left off the rates for the canteen and they had missed off around £6,000 of high needs funding as the number of high needs at the School exceeded the average. The SBM was chasing the LA and the situation would be escalated on Friday 19th January if the LA had not taken responsibility for this by then. David Young explained the complexities around High Needs top up funding and the fact that there were still outstanding errors in other schools. The LA had said it should be rectified by this month but David said he had been raising the issue with the LA since September on behalf of other schools. [Nikesh Tailor raised the question as to whether the LA actually had the money. It was clarified that the LA did have financial problems and very experienced staff had left the finance team](#) but the Headteacher said he considered the issues were more about staffing than the LA not having the money and mistakes were being made because of the staffing problems;
- (viii) I04 – Funding for minority ethnic pupils – [in response to a query from the Chair, it was explained that](#) some schools used to get money earmarked for this in the formula budget but it was then subsumed. In theory the money was still there but was not reportable anymore;
- (ix) I05 – Pupil Premium – David Young stated that this figure appeared to be correct now and the difference between this and the DfE figure was due to Looked after Children (LAC). The budget now showed £10,120 increase for 4 X LAC pupils
- (x) I08 – Income from facilities and services – there had been a £11,699 increase due to bank interest, a book fair and photo commission;
- (xi) I12 – Income from Contributions/Visits – there was a £1,500 increase for visits and £19k income for the School journey 2024 which would be accrued.

Expenditure

- (i) David Young explained that he and the SBM had reviewed every line in great detail to identify underspends and overspends;
- (ii) E01 – Teaching Staff – there was a £5,647 increase for staffing updates.

- (iii) E03 – Education Support Staff – the budget had increased but it appeared there could be an underspend. The figures in this area were affected by staffing joining and leaving. **The Chair asked if these figures were ringfenced and it was confirmed they were not.** There had been a £54,519 increase for staffing updates;
- (iv) E07 – Other Staff – this area covered staff who ran breakfast/after school club and lunchtime playleaders. There was a £1,080 decrease for staffing updates and assumed £18k per month x 3. It was explained that the pay was linked to one budget but these staff might be doing extra hours covering for other staff. David Young said they would be working on trying to unpick these figures further;
- (v) E04 – Premises Staff – there was a decrease of £9,428 due to the changes in the Site Team provision;
- (vi) E05 – Administrative Staff – there had been a £5,500 decrease due to a receptionist leaving;
- (vii) E08 – Indirect Employee expenses – there had been an £800 decrease;
- (viii) E09 – Staff Development and Training – there was a £3,300 decrease;
- (ix) E12 – Building Maintenance and Improvement – there was an increase of £4,273
- (x) E14 – Cleaning and Caretaking – showed a £2,217 decrease;
- (xi) E16 – Energy – there was an £18,000 increase but payments had only been made up to October so far;
- (xii) E19 – Learning Resources (not ICT) – there was a £9,494 decrease;
- (xiii) E19A School Journeys/Trips/Visits – this showed a £6,108 increase
- (xiv) E20 – ICT Learning Resources – this showed an £800 decrease;
- (xv) E22 – Administrative supplies – there was a £3,815 increase;
- (xvi) E23 – Other Insurance Premiums – the School was waiting for the LA to take payment;
- (xvii) E24 – Special Facilities – this related to breakfast/after school club and charitable collections and showed a £1,565 increase;

- (xviii) E25 – Catering Supplies - £7,485 decrease. This area had been discussed earlier in the meeting;
- (xix) E27 – Bought in professional services – Curriculum – this showed a £3,899 decrease. [In response to a query from Tim Guha it was clarified that E27 included Place 2 Be.](#)

Summary

- (i) The School projected revenue balance was £87,653 – 2.12%. The forecast at quarter 2 had been £105,000;
- (ii) The Capital Funding balance brought forward was £31,332 plus £11,417 from the LA = £42,749. £25,851 was spend ton ICT. The projected carry forward for next year was £16,898.
- (iii) David Young explained that the Capital Funding was ring fenced but it could be used for a wide range of works or purchases. [In response to a query from the Chair, it was clarified that monies could be moved from other budget headings to Capital.](#)
- (iv) It was explained that the budget was a little worse than had been expected and the Headteacher expressed concern that next year costs would increase and they would need an increase in the budget of around 5-6% to maintain this year’s figures. The LA were looking at less than a 1% increase to Schools so significant cuts would have to be made. This would result in difficult decisions but a final figure would be needed before anything was decided. The Headteacher said he had discussed the concerns with the SLT and explained that he had to consider what would be best for the School’s future. [In response to a question from Nikesh Tailor, the Headteacher said he expected a 5% shortfall next year.](#) The income this year was £4.3m so next year the shortfall would be around £200,000;
- (v) it was recognised that staff salaries would be increased plus there would be inflationary costs. Teacher’s pension contributions were going up by around 5% and it had to be hoped this would be funded by central government. [Following a query from Tim Guha, the Headteacher said he did not consider that a change of government would significantly affect anything in the short term;](#)
- (vi) [Nikesh Tailor considered any cuts put in place must limit any detriment to pupil outcomes.](#) The Headteacher said that any cuts would have an impact. Governors discussed the many areas that could be affected and comparisons of costs and salaries across the country;
- (vii) [Nikesh Tailor asked how other schools were balancing their budgets and](#) David Young said that in reality they weren’t. Many schools were now running a

deficit budget. He had spoken to Peter Nathan, Director of Education about it but he had not had any answers to the problems being faced.

NOTED that Governors thanked David Young and the SBM for the enormous amount of work that had done on Quarter 3.

RESOLVED to agree the Third Quarterly Return.

(b) Expenditure:

REPORTED that there were

- no potential purchases over the Headteacher’s Delegated Limit;
- no urgent expenditure previously approved via Chair’s action;
- no Waiver of Contract Procedure Rules (prepared in exceptional circumstances only);
- no proposed virements.

(c) Financial Benchmarking data

NOTED

<https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/>

(d) Financial Scheme of Delegation

NOTED this had been discussed in the Autumn term.

5. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLAs)**

RESOLVED that this item be deferred until the Governing Body meeting.

ACTION: CLERK/SBM

6. **POLICIES REVIEW**

NOTED there were no policies for review.

7. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

NOTED that there were no urgent health and safety issues to consider.

8. **PREMISES WORK PLAN**

RECEIVED the premises report, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book and available to view on GovernorHub

REPORTED the following from the Premises Team;

Health & Safety Work Ongoing

External new building lights replacement of bulbs x20
Installation of Fire Assembly Point signage
Installation of Fire Exit signage

Large Works Booked

None.

Other Works (not emergency)

Clean and prepare external decking in playground
External clean of all drainage
Clean of external air conditioning units in KS1 playground
External gate release button and Year3/4 gate closure installation – waiting on quotation

School Checks Three and One Yearly and Monthly

Asbestos Checks – New monthly check list created – up to date
Monthly water checks (Tritec) – up to date
Security yearly maintenance check (Cohort) – Latest report unavailable
Monthly pest checks main school/kitchen – up to date (Dec 23)
Air Con contract (ADC) – up to date (Sept 23)
Emergency lights maintenance -
Portable Appliance Testing (VisualCom) – up to date (October 23)

Completed works

Cutback and clearing of school frontage
Installation of blinds in year 3
Installation of new locks in new building with master key

- (a) Nikesh Tailor asked about the ongoing fire alarm issues. The Headteacher said he was still working on getting this rectified. He was now working the Management Company who managed the catering and cleaning at the School to look at procurement and obtain some quotes. [Following a query from Nikesh Tailor, the Headteacher assured him that the current fire alarm system was within health and safety guidelines](#) but was not necessarily best practice. A fire drill had taken place successfully last term and all alarms had been set up simultaneously. [In response to a question from Bevin Betton, the Headteacher confirmed that the alarms were linked to the fire station.](#) Nikesh [asked about the cost of the alarm works bearing in mind the conversations held around the budget earlier in the meeting.](#) The Headteacher agreed it could be an issue but hoped the LA might intervene if necessary. He hoped the works would not turn out to be too expensive.

RESOLVED that the Headteacher update Governors further on the fire alarm at the next meeting.

ACTION: HEADTEACHER

- (b) **Tim Guha asked about the windows that had fallen from the loft at the front of the School.** The Headteacher said that the area was still cordoned off and the LA were still saying they would fix them. He hoped this would finally take place in the summer holidays but confirmation was awaited. The Headteacher said he hoped that the temperatures in the Summer would not go too high as the windows at the front of the building could not be opened;
- (c) **Nikesh Tailor asked whether there should be a shield over the fence in the Year 3 and 4 playground as there was in the nursery one.** The Headteacher explained that he did not feel this was necessary as the reason why the nursery area had one was because there had been a small gap in the fence that a child had tried to squeeze out of.

9. **TRAINING**

NOTED that there was an introduction to finance session Part 2 on the 6 Feb 2024
6.30-7.30pm
<https://traded.enfield.gov.uk/thehub/professional-learning-portal/governors>

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

NOTED the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 21 May at 5pm.

11. **ITEMS TO REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL**

RESOLVED that no items be regarded as confidential.