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CARE - THINK - INSPIRE - ACHIEVE

Headteacher: Clare Bladen BA (Hons) PGCE, NPQH

**Minutes of the second Human & Physical Resources meeting of 2015/16 (HPR 2)
held at WOCPS on Wednesday 2nd March 2016 at 6pm**

Present: Joey Potgieter (chair and co opted governor) **JP**, Rachel Goode (vice chair and co opted governor) **RG**, Andrew Roland (parent governor) **AR**, Clare Bladen (Head teacher) **CB**, Colin Cook (co opted governor) **CC**, Ben Selby (parent governor) **BS**

In attendance: Ursula Irvine (clerk) **UI** Sue Bright (bursar) until 6.45 **SB**, Kelly Faye (parent governor) from 6.40pm

Summary of Actions to be carried out by HPR3 unless otherwise stated

SECTION 3

- (a) **SB and CB** to provide the draft budget to HPR by 13 April.
- (b) **CB** to provide confirmation to JP that the SFVS for the current year has been completed.
- (c) **CB and Matt Bird (MB)** to prepare and present to **JP and BS** for approval, prioritised and costed maintenance spending list including CC's H&S improvement recommendations, and to ensure that any capital spend necessary to avoid a clawback this financial year is agreed and actioned as a matter of urgency.

SECTION 4

- (d) **CB** to provide up to date parent pay figures to JP immediately following HPR2
- (e) **CB and JP** to liaise to ensure that dates are fixed for critical incident drills to be undertaken by the end of the academic year.
- (f) **CB and MB** to work on proposal for improving the playground surface to feed into 3c above.
- (g) **CB and MB** to address the outstanding issues from last year's fire risk assessment (again, this feeds into 3c above).

SECTION 5

- (h) **CB** to propose date for RG to attend an SLT meeting. (**RG** also to attend CB's half yearly review and a CB/AR 1:1 meeting)

SECTION 6

- (i) **JP and RG** to raise list of concerns about recruitment process with CB and share the outcome with all governors.
- (j) **CB** to ensure that significant news, for example concerning teaching staff, is communicated by email to parents before hard copy letters are issued via their children.
- (k) **AR** to monitor follow up actions following exit interview with departing reception teacher.

Signed

Date.....

HPR2 minutes, page 1 of 9

- (l) **CB** to report to FGB3 with proposal for creation of a business manager role. **AR** to continue to liaise with her on this going forward.

SECTION 7

(m) **JP** to prepare staff well being survey and arrange date with **CB** for a workshop on this at a staff meeting shortly following the Easter holidays with a view to a new well being survey then being conducted.

SECTION 8

- (n) **CB** to report progress on new fire door ramp at HPR3
- (o) **JP** to lobby OCC to get stair well windows replaced

SECTION 9

(p) **CB** to arrange a further safeguarding and security visit from the OCC safeguarding officer. **KF** to attend if she is able. **CB** then to prepare a proposed security plan of action detailing steps to be taken which will be presented to HPR3 and the parent forum for feedback.

SECTION 10

(q) **JP and CB** to complete draft accessibility plan and equality policy for circulation to governors for any comments and presentation to the parent forum for consultation.

SECTION 11

- (r) **RG** to work on next governor newsletter and to continue to chase governors for photographs.
- (s) **CB** to arrange for governors to attend a staff meeting in the summer term, and also to arrange a staff/governor meeting in the Autumn term to discuss the new SDIP. **CB** will continue to work with **AR** on other opportunities for governors to meet with teachers.

1.0 Administration

- I. In attendance: no committee members were absent.
- II. The meeting was quorate.
- III. No urgent business not already on the agenda was raised.
- IV. There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda.

2.0 Finance: Budget Monitoring

- I Update on changes to financial administration system
SB summarized the difficulties resulting from adoption of the Hampshire finance system. School office staff had born the brunt of the problems. They had been required to take on responsibility for pay roll, and to deal, without support or training, with a system that was not working properly. The situation was only just, now, beginning to improve. There are some ongoing and time consuming problems with the payroll system but she confirmed that at WOCPS all staff had continued to be paid their wages on time. The aspects of the finance system which SB uses have also been problematic. Improvements had recently been made, though, and she is now able to generate budget monitoring reports again and to do so within one working day.
- II Budget monitoring reports up to and including period 10 (January 2016)
SB confirmed that as the meeting fell at the very beginning of March she had not been able to produce budget monitoring reports to the end of February.

BS who was attending his first HPR meeting and will have particular responsibility to oversee the budget raised a number of queries arising from the reports which SB addressed:

- delegated ELA funding: SB confirmed that funding for reception to year 6 is based on the October census. In early years, however, there is a termly census with additional funding, or as in this case, a claw back, where the numbers change.
- Catering variance: the actual income and expenditure figures did not match the predicted figures. (SB's view was that generally, seeking to predict budget figures was of limited value.) It was agreed that next year it may be helpful to take a closer look at the kitchen budget. She confirmed that with regard to free school meals for KS1, the school receives a provisional sum which is amended in the light of actual take up.
- Spending: SB confirmed that "learning resources" includes trips and visits and is offset by income and donations for trips and visits, there is nevertheless an overspend of approximately £15,000. [CB was asked to explain the day to day control on spending.](#) She explained that the curriculum co-ordinators control their own budgets overseen by her. They have to explain what they need and why, and are subject to annual audits. Priorities, need and value for money are all taken into account. The new curriculum had required more and different resources. Spending decisions are made with the budget in mind to some extent, but some needs are overriding. SB noted that the usual process of budget monitoring which had been interrupted this year, would have highlighted the overspend earlier for it to be discussed/addressed.
- Agency costs: [these were noted to be very high](#) ~ £38,000 over budget, roughly 8% of the staff budget, 3% of the overall budget. CB said that this had been a unique year. She was asked if there are cheaper ways of getting cover. She noted that cover is needed both for planned one off and regular absences, and for unexpected ones. There will always be a need to use agencies to some extent. However, one plan for next year is that the SENCO will undertake more support teaching to balance with a predicted reduction in her SENCO hours.
- Staff training: [the figure allocated for staff training was challenged as being too low.](#) CB answered that a lot of training occurs in house, in staff meetings and on inset days. She said that training is seen as a priority and is assessed according to need, the school's priorities and an individual's development plan. She also said the absence of teachers from the classroom, even to attend training, can be unpopular with parents. It was agreed that the training budget would be considered further in building next year's budget.

III Budget Surplus and any further spending for 2015/16

SB confirmed there should be no risk of a claw back on unspent income this year. She confirmed that the risk arises where at least 8% of the budget is neither spent or definitely allocated for spending. It was queried whether there could be a clawback risk with regard to capital spend. The school needs to avoid accruing more than 3 years' worth of capital funding (£24,000). Capital is subject to a minimum spend of £2,000 and can be spent on IT. It was acknowledged that there is no shortage of maintenance and other projects in need of expenditure. Any capital funds at risk of claw back must be allocated before the end of the financial year (although the ICT spend referred to below may take care of this.) Further capital spend will be decided within the process of assessing spending priorities for the next financial year. (see 3 III below). SB confirmed that there is not a "normal" level at which capital is retained. It depends on the size of projects to be undertaken from one year to another.

3.0 Finance: Building the Budget for 2016/17

I. The process

SB explained that the budget planner provides a running scenario with regard to employee salary costs, reflecting changes as they occur. She and CB can experiment with different scenarios in terms of the level of qualification of staff who are or may be recruited. 80% of the budget is spent on salaries. With regard to other expenditure, they will use the previous year's spending as a starting point, taking into account whether there are any exceptional or additional expenses in respect of that year or the coming year, and also the SDIP and how that has been developing (although this runs with the academic rather than financial year). It is necessary to present a 3 year balanced budget. If when everything is first pulled together this is not achieved, adjustments are made as necessary. This is an ongoing process, also involving Lisa Penton.

2nd May is the budget submission date. Adjustments are then made in September to reflect any further changes in staffing after that date. When asked, SB said that the scope for building in contingencies for staffing are limited. SB said that the funding for reception to year 6 has been downloaded by OCC already, but pupil premium and early years' figures are still awaited. In fact, the timeframe means that SB will have just two visits to the school to work on the budget. HPR is meeting on 20 April to discuss and hopefully approve the budget. It will then be recommended for approval to the FGB by email. It was queried whether BS would be involved in the process of building the budget prior to the 20th April meeting. CB and SB's advice was that this was unnecessary, unless problems arose in getting the budget to balance in which case AR and JP would be alerted. CB and SB undertook to provide the draft budget for review by HPR by 13th April at the latest. **Action CB and SB**

(KF arrives)
(SB leaves)

II. Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

CB reported that LP undertakes this each year as a matter of course and she understood that it had already been done for the current year. [She was asked to provide definite confirmation of this to JP.](#) **Action CB**

III. Maintenance list

CB touched on the contents of the lengthy maintenance list prepared by Matt Bird (MB). It was agreed that CB and MB will work on putting these, combined with CC's H&S recommendations, into an accurately costed list of priorities to be presented to and agreed with JP and BS on behalf of HPR. To the extent (if any) that there is a need to make a capital spend before the end of the financial year to avoid the risk of a clawback, this will be actioned as a matter of urgency. **Action CB, MB, JP and BS**

IV. ICT spend from 2014/15

CB explained that there had been a recent change in the school's technician and an ICT order has now been placed. A £21,000 spend of income had originally been planned. Effectively, given the delay in actioning the spending, this money had been spent on other things and the order is now coming out of capital. The total spend is, however, much lower as the £10,000 new server has come off the list and a decision has been made to choose Chrome books which are also rather

cheaper to purchase.

4.0 Minutes of 4 June 2015

- I. Matters arising from actions save as covered elsewhere in the meeting
 - (i) Parent pay debts: CB did not have up to date parent pay figures to present to HPR and was asked to provide these to JP following the meeting. **Action: CB**
 - (ii) Critical incident drill: this remains outstanding. CB confirmed that a plan to follow has been devised but no drills have been carried out. Strictly two should be undertaken ~ one involving a lock down and one an evacuation. JP will liaise with CB with the aim of fixing dates for the drills to take place before the end of the academic year. **Action CB/JP**
 - (iii) Playground surface: It has been confirmed that the trees in the playground whose roots are in part to blame for the uneven surface cannot be chopped down. It was noted that the need to improve the surface remains outstanding. In the first instance this will be considered in the context of the budget maintenance priorities. **Action CB/MB**
 - (iv) Annual Fire assessment: it was agreed that the priority should be to address the points arising from the last assessment in the summer of 2015 before arranging the next assessment which in any event has not yet fallen due. **Action CB/Matt Bird**

II approval of minutes

The minutes were approved and signed off by JP as an accurate record of the meeting.

5.0 HPR Governors

School visits

RG and BS had both undertaken general visits. It was agreed that RG will undertake her leadership and management focused visits by way of attendance of CB's half year and annual appraisal reviews, she will also attend one of AR and CB 1:1 meetings (to be arranged at the forthcoming half yearly review) and an SLT meeting, CB to propose a date for this. **Action CB and RG** JP and CC had both undertaken their SDIP linked visits. All HPR governor visits were therefore up to date.

6.0 Staff Update

I. Recent changes, issues and developments

CB reported that a TA who had been working with a specific child who has now left the school, is herself leaving to join a different school.

CB also confirmed that a member of the teaching staff has resigned and is currently on sick leave. It was acknowledged that very many people feel concerned about this situation. However, a formal exit interview process is ongoing and as such it was not appropriate for details to be discussed within the current meeting. Two related matters were however touched on:

- (i) CB said that a replacement, 5 year qualified teacher has been appointed to join the school after the Easter holidays. She was positive about the appointment and said she was focused on building the best teaching team possible going forward. The new teacher is keen to take on responsibility for a core subject. In response to a number of challenges about the recruitment, CB confirmed that the vacancy had been advertised

in the Times Educational Supplement on Monday 15 February. It had however been late actually getting onto the OCC Website. The appointee is currently travelling in Asia and had therefore been interviewed by skype so CB has not met her in person or seen her teach a class. CB has however spoken to both her previous head teachers who she said gave very positive references. Following the meeting, [a number of concerns and questions \(annexed to these minutes\) about the school's recruitment procedure were raised](#) within the governing body, and JP and RG on behalf of HPR undertook to discuss these with CB, the outcome to be formally annexed to these minutes. **Action JP and RG**

- (ii) It was agreed that [future communications of this nature should be made by email in advance of hard copy letters being given to children to pass to their parents](#). As such the school would be doing its reasonable best to inform parents before their children, and therefore enable them to prepare how best to discuss the situation with their children, many of whom in the current case had been upset by the news. **Action CB**

II. Exit interview feedback

AR had conducted an exit interview with the departing reception teacher. He had shared the points arising from this with CB and follow up actions had been agreed which he will monitor. **Action AR**

III. Proposed school business manager role

Planning for the creation of a business manager role is underway and AR, representing the governors, is keeping track of progress in his regular 1:1 meetings with CB. The aim is to have the new role in place for September 2016. It is anticipated that a business manager could take responsibility for a range of matters that currently fall to CB freeing her up to focus on more important and strategic matters. It would also be necessary if in due course the school becomes an academy. It was noted that all schools seem to organise this type of role in different ways. It was felt that ideally the role would be made as wide ranging as possible, subject to the availability of funding for the salary. It is envisaged that one of the existing office roles would be deleted and replaced with a different, and more senior role. The current admin support role may also change to some extent for example perhaps taking on some of the administration currently undertaken by the SENCO. It is envisaged that CB will report to FGB3 with her proposal with a view to an extra FGB meeting being convened subsequently if necessary to progress the matter further. **Action CB and AR**

7.0 Health and Safety

I. any concerns or incidents

CB reported that there had been another broken arm following a fall in the playground, and a child had also trapped a finger in a two way door on which door guards had now been fitted (having previously been assessed as unnecessary here).

II. H&S governor visit and monitoring of H&S policy

CC briefly summarised the key points from his paper. As noted above, his recommendations will be factored into the maintenance spending priorities list.

III. Staff Wellbeing Survey

JP is liaising with CB, RG and CC on the way forward and bringing the various strands together. The aim is to have a staff well being policy which is linked to a new annual survey. JP is working on the first draft of the policy and will then invite input on it with a view to it being approved at FGB3. She aims to run a workshop with JC and CC within a staff meeting in the hopes of getting face to face engagement from staff and hopefully increased participation once the survey is issued. The aim is to undertake the survey well before the end of the academic year. All staff meetings before Easter were reported to be fully booked but JP and CB will arrange a slot in one of the meetings after the Easter holidays. **Action: JP and CB**

8.0 Buildings, Maintenance

- I. The new fire exit for the hall is now in place and use of the hall has returned to normal. Matt Bird is exploring the possibility of having a moveable ramp rather than one that is permanently in place jutting into the playground. **CB** to report back on this at HPR3
- II. JP undertook to lobby OCC with a view to getting the old windows overlooking the stair case replaced. The view is that it is not possible or viable to repair them. **Action JP**
- III. The need for new toilets is within the strategic maintenance plan list and is likely to be regarded as one of the priorities.

No other matters were raised beyond those already discussed and noted above.

9.0 Security

The difficulty in actually reaching a decision on the best course of action was acknowledged, given the number of competing considerations. JP briefly summarised the findings from her visits to other local schools. It was agreed that at the very least, when the school is not in use the school gates should be padlocked and a chain put across the car park. A further safeguarding and security visit from the OCC safeguarding officer will be arranged by CB which KF will attend if she is able. CB will then prepare a proposed security plan of action detailing any further steps to be taken which will be presented to HPR3 and the parent forum for feedback. [The aim is then to bring the debate to a close, make and implement a decision on steps to be taken](#) and review this after a 12 month period. **Action CB (and KF)**. In the meantime, it was confirmed that the last newsletter had noted that the safety of children using the school playground outside of school hours is entirely the responsibility of their parents/carers.

9.0 Policies

policy review

JP is assisting CB with the drafting of the accessibility plan and equality policy which, when ready, will be circulated to governors for any comments and presented to the parent forum for consultation.

Action CB/JP

11.0 A.O.B.

- I. Possible subjects for a governors' newsletter this term were discussed:
 - a. the inspection of the school by an external adviser (on 3rd March 2016)

- b. the 5 year strategy and the process that is underway to get this into place. (Jenny Crewe is leading on this and AR has been liaising with her following the recent task force meeting. Consultation will take place with governors, staff, parents and carers, children and the wider west oxford community (through the local newsletter) to conclude by June.)
- c. the SDIP
- d. any particular points of interest from recent minutes.

Action RG

- II. Many governor photos are still outstanding, both for use in the newsletter and for display in reception. RG will continue to chase and as a long stop, all governors will be asked to attend when the next school photographs are scheduled.
- III. Various plans were discussed for enabling governors and teachers to have more contact with each other. AR and CB are making plans for governors to be invited to a staff meeting and it was agreed that a joint governor/staff meeting should be arranged to discuss the next (draft) SDIP. In addition it was felt that some more informal occasions would be possible and CB suggested that some governors may like to join the next "take one object" outing and brainstorm. **Action AR and CB**

The meeting closed at 7.50pm

11.0 Date and time of next meetings:

Budget meeting 20 April 5pm at WOCPS.

HPR3 25 May 2016 6pm at WOCPS

Appendix 1

Papers used at this meeting

- HPR 1 draft minutes from 12/11/15
- Budget monitoring reports to end January 2016 (period 10)
- CC's H&S governor visit notes
- JP's email security report

Appendix 2

Recruitment Process Questions raised with Clare Bladen following HPR2

As all recruitment is strategic and it is good practice for a candidate to visit the school and teach a class as part of the recruitment process, the governors would like to raise the following questions:

1. Have the Governing body completely delegated responsibility for recruitment to the Head and SLT? Best practice calls for a member of the governing body to be included at all stages of the recruitment process, from decisions about how to run the process, drafting of adverts, shortlisting, interviewing, etc.
2. Were governors were not involved with the recruitment process?
3. Has the appointed teacher been given a permanent contract?
4. Could we have details about why she is currently taking time out? How long has she been away from teaching and why did she decide to take a break?

5. What skills and experience does she have that will enhance the current teaching team? It is a small team of teachers and there are many many roles and responsibilities that will need covering. What will she bring to the table that may currently be missing?
6. Why didn't the advertisement appear on the County Council website?
7. The new teacher will need to hit the ground running, taking on a class at this stage in the year. Is that going to be possible as she relocates to Oxford?

Appendix 3

Clare Bladen's responses to the recruitment process questions

1. Has the Governing Body completely delegated responsibility for recruitment to you as headteacher and SLT?
All teacher recruitment decisions lie with the head or to persons delegated by the head.
2. Were any of the Governors involved in the recruitment process?
No - governors have only ever been involved in Senior leadership recruitment roles such as EYFS lead, Deputy and Head
3. Has the new teacher been given a permanent contract?
Yes as that what was advertised for.
4. Could we have details about why she is currently taking time out? How long has she been away from teaching and why did she decide to take a break?
That's not really our business - and I don't see the relevance. A six months break for a person in their 20s to go travelling is not unusual.
5. What skills and experience does she have that will enhance the current teaching team? It is a small team of teachers and there are many roles and responsibilities that will need covering. What will she bring to the table that may currently be missing?
Initial teacher training mentoring and teacher coaching
Literacy strength
Keen interest in PE
In the current climate where recruitment is difficult, nationally, however we are looking for quality teachers first and foremost of which according to her excellent references, which have been confirmed informally by me with her referees, Tessa is.
6. Why didn't the advertisement appear on the County Council website?
It did - but not until after the half term as we uploaded it in the half-term break.
7. The new teacher will need to hit the ground running, taking on a class at this stage in the year? Is that going to be possible as she relocates to Oxford?
She isn't relocating to Oxford. She lives here.
Lots of teachers join mid-year, Pete did last year. Joining mid- year is normal for teachers. The majority start in September but lots teachers move schools at Christmas and Easter too - some at half term.
NB. I moved to Oxford on the Saturday and started work on the Monday as a new head - it is doable.

I am confident in our recruitment of Tessa so I would hope that the governors are supporting this.

Peter Cox found this method of recruiting creative and forward thinking.