

SEVENOAKS PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES TEAM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9th MARCH 2016 AT 7.45 PM

Governors Present: Melanie McInerney (Chair) Rod Mclay
Steve Collins Simon Leigh
Alan Duffy Silvia Schwark
Natalie Fitz-Gerald Trevor Thake
Alex Kevan Bri Wood

Other attendees: Kath Baillache (clerk)

Action

PART I OF MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Business Interests
Apologies were received in advance and accepted from Peter Davies. No changes in business interests were declared.

2. Minutes & Actions arising from Resources Team meeting of 20th January 2016
No changes were requested to the minutes and the actions from the minutes were run through:

Financial Efficiency Tool - governor responsible for financial monitoring (Natalie Fitz-Gerald) confirmed that she was investigating the new tool and would report back in due course.

Free school milk - confirmed that requirements were being met.

Staffing plan - a draft plan had been circulated and some comments received from governors. Further details were discussed later in this meeting.

Parts I and II of the minutes from the last meeting were signed as an accurate record by the Chair.

3. Admissions Update
Preliminary admission figures had been received for reception children starting in September 2016, the number of applications has reduced this year. The headteacher advised that this pattern had been seen across the partnership and had not been foreseen by KCC. For the last 3 years SPS had been the first choice for over 100 families. This year there are 67 first choices applicants which includes 30 siblings.

Risks:

- Key risk is that third reception class is only partially full which would present a financial challenge as the school is funded at a rate of c£3000 per pupil.
- Bursar is currently budgeting for 80 new children however final numbers will not be known for a while. Offer Day is April 18th, parents then have one month to accept the place.
- Staff recruitment will therefore be deferred until after the Easter holidays.

Poor visibility of intake demand has proved problematic in Sevenoaks over the last 6 years. With every indication that high demand would continue, the school initiated a program of open evenings to cater for the level of interest. Although these were received positively, it is thought that that Parent tours undertaken by the headteacher may have a bigger impact. Agreed that in times of uncertain demand and with the impending building work HT tours should be re-instated.

Governors also suggested that as some very local parents had been disappointed in previous years others may have considered it a 'wasted' choice to place SPS first if they considered it a highly unlikely outcome. Suggested that in the future that it was made clear to parents how the KCC allocation system worked. If there are still spaces after 'Offer Day' then these could be publicised.

4. Finance

Financial accounts - current position – Natalie Fitz-Gerald has met with the Bursar and the estimated rollover for the year end at February 2016 (11 month position) was £73,768. This shows an improvement from the forecast position at 9 months of £64,599.

As is usual at this point of the year the Bursar confirmed that the curriculum budget had been frozen and was underspent for the year. Learning and Development Team meeting noted that phase 3 literacy was underspent. The Bursar explained that budgeted literacy assessment resources for the end of the key stage had not been required.

Variances discussed:

I03 High Needs top up Funding (HNF) - note within the financial report confirmed that all HNF applications submitted had been approved. Three awaiting additional evidence, one was pending submission for a child in year 6, a further was pending the outcome of a review into a suitable school placement.

I12 Contributions to visits - governors noted that the figure was down however Bursar confirmed that the recorded figure was not accurate as prepayments made by parents via the Tuscas system had been entered nor debts expected received.

E02 Supply Teaching Staff - currently showing £11K over budget expectations of £12K. This had increased further in recent months due to staff absence.

E12 Building Maintenance - currently £8.5K under spent against the £20K budget due to the site teams good work.

E20 ICT Learning Resources - £9K below budget levels due to good control of spending and fewer equipment failures than anticipated.

E22 Administrative Supplies - £10.8K overspend. Bursar explained that a lot of items were included within this line including some 'in and out' expenditure which is matched in the income account, e.g. SPISA related expenditure, gym camps, cycling proficiency. The Bursar confirmed there were no material net adverse items.

E24 Special Facilities - this showed £3.9K overspend against a £5K budget. A governor asked what this line related to. Bursar confirmed this was payments for breakfast and after school club for some pupil premium children and is offset by incoming PP funding.

Catering Contract Tender Process update

A new catering company, Accent Catering, has been appointed by unanimous panel decision following a thorough tender process managed by Litmus Consulting. Prior to award, the headteacher visited 2 reference schools and their food offer and feedback was positive. Accent has a healthy and exciting food offer, a commitment to development and quality control and will be instrumental in the education of children i.e. providing tasters to encourage children to try new foods alongside their meal.

The process though lengthy was compliant and achieved a good outcome. A governor suggested that Bursar wrote a list of bullet points of what went well with the process and what improvements would be needed next time for future reference.

BW

The new contract is awarded for 3 years with the option to extend for 2 further years. Accent has commenced the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981) process and has spoken to all kitchen staff except the cook. The school would like to retain the cook however Independent are not keen to lose her. Bri has asked that the cook is given information from both companies in order that she can make an informed decision. Accent will know by the 11th March whether a new cook will be required.

Due to the size of the contract (£175k per annum) FGB approval will be required however still awaiting the draft contract from Litmus.

FGB

The contract commences on 1st April. Accent will visit at the end of the Easter holidays to finalise preparations and commence staff training. The team who have helped throughout the process were thanked for their hard work (Bri Wood, Lindsay Anderson, Melanie McInerney and Jo Williams)

School Meals Costs - due for annual review. Confirmed it had been decided to maintain these at £2.25 which is still below the KCC meal cost of £2.30. As £2.30 is also received per universal free school meal the school is making 5p per meal.

School Financial Value Standard - this statutory document has been prepared by the governor responsible for financial monitoring and the Bursar. Natalie was thanked for all her work. Governors approved with a minor amendment to the Chair of governors tenure; chair of finance for 4 years, Chair of governors for 8 years and governor for 13 years. Recommended to the FGB for ratification following the amendment. The governor responsible for financial monitoring confirmed that the Statement of Internal Control and Best Value Statement were no longer a requirement for schools.

FGB

Budget headlines - the delegated budget has been received and will be worked on over the next few weeks. Bursar had attended a recent meeting and highlighted some key areas:

Positives:

- Sports Legacy funding will continue until 2019.
- Clarity was provided on the complex calculations for HNF. The KCC software attributes a standard cost for the required provisions and schools receive HNF if this exceeds £6k. However, where the total amount to be paid for by the school exceeds a certain %age of income, KCC provides some reimbursement. The Bursar has calculated that this amounts to the school paying £2.2K per HNF child. KCC are keen for children to be taught in mainstream schools wherever possible. It was confirmed that HNF applications are resubmitted annually however subsequent submissions will be updating evidence and will be less time consuming.

Negatives:

- School again subject to the minimum funding guarantee (-1.5%).
- Potential reduction in numbers in Foundation Stage 2016-17.
- 1% rise in teachers pay with no funding for pay rises.
- TCP outcomes
- Increasing pension contributions and National insurance.

5. Staffing

Well Being Survey - A summary report of the outcomes of the recently completed staff questionnaire was circulated. Simon Leigh and Silvia Schwark, governors who had devised and analysed the data confirmed that 40 staff members had completed the survey and that the sentiment in the answers had been positive. Overall responses were broadly positive with staff feeling supported with a core understanding of the nurturing nature of the school but with limited capacity to change pressures from the outside. The final report was circulated to all governors following the removal of names to protect anonymity.

Thought that those who didn't respond were generally staff members who are only in school for a few hours each week e.g. midday supervisors. The survey did capture information about each respondent ie teacher / support staff; full /part time. So deeper analysis can be undertaken.

Positives:

- Staff felt headteacher and management team were supportive.
- 85% of respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' that school supportive of well-being (15% somewhat unsatisfied).
- Staff held in high regard with teacher assistants treated as valued team members.
- Questionnaire and it's follow up demonstrates that the governing body takes well-being of staff seriously.

Challenges

- Key comments related to workload with demands and expectations on staff being unrealistic.
- With increase in size the school has lost the family feeling.

Main suggestions for supporting well-being were; yoga sessions, team building activities and more training and guest speakers on subjects like mindfulness.

Suggestions from staff included consideration of the longer term view, time in staff meetings to discuss issues, timing of events to reduce pressures, provision of parenting courses, non contact time for staff.

The survey confirmed that the well-being focus of the inset day was positively received by staff. Simon and Silvia were thanked for analysing the data and governors agreed that results should be celebrated.

Actions going forward:

- Provide a summary for staff and present results to staff as soon as possible to celebrate the positives. (Simon agreed to work with the headteacher on this.)
- As workload was a key area mentioned, suggested that Phases groups met, shared ideas and decide collectively on efficiency improvements.
- Silvia & Simon to explore the negative areas to understand what else can be done.
- Complete the staff survey at the same time next year and compare the results.

Staffing Structure - at the meeting the headteacher circulated a draft staffing structure. This was discussed. Governors were reminded that this was currently confidential due to its' sensitive nature. The structure had been devised from research in other similarly sized schools in 2014. The aspirational model to improve effectiveness floated originally for 2014-15 was scaled down due to budgetary constraints but changes for the year included the appointment of two Assistant Head teachers and Phase leaders. It is the held view that this continues to be a model to work towards as budget allows.

With knowledge of the projected budget this year and projected reduction in numbers of foundation stage pupils the leadership team has had to look closely at the structure for the year ahead. The committee chair also confirmed that she and Silvia Schwark who will be taking on the human resource responsibility for the governing body had met with the HT & Bursar this week to discuss the plans in detail. The headteacher picked out for governors the main proposed changes, benefits and risks.

Further staffing matters are recorded in the confidential minutes.

6. Policies due for review

Governor's allowances - reviewed by Melanie McInerney who confirmed that there was no updated guidance and therefore suggested the policy was marked forward for a further 3 years. Approved by those present.

Teacher Capability, Teacher Appraisal, Absence and Special Leave – the school had adopted KCC model policies. The bursar established that the current model KCC policies weren't materially different, so had uploaded them to KLZ for review with several minor SPS customisations. There were no changes requiring governor discussion or decision. The committee Chair had reviewed each and the meeting agreed to approve and mark forward.

Simon Leigh thanked the chair for the useful email regarding the reviewed policies. He suggested (as agreed at the L&D meeting) that an individual governor was given responsibility for ensuring that each policy was approved by the GB according to the policy review calendar. In order that this is done efficiently, the governor should liaise with the staff member responsible at least 4 weeks in advance of the governor meeting to enable them to make any policy updates which can then be discussed with the lead governor. The lead governor is responsible for signposting the changes to all governors a week before the governor meeting.

Clerk added header sheets and uploaded approved policies to KLZ post meeting.

7. Premises

Grounds Maintenance Contract - since the last meeting committee members were notified of the 3 quotes for the contract and approved the award to Landscape Services via email. They submitted the most competitive quote and positive references were received. The school had employed them previously and were happy with their service until their pricing became uncompetitive. The three year contract commences in April and will cost £5,670 per annum, a significant reduction from the current price.

8. New Build Update

Planning permission submitted on 11th January. Client Engagement Meeting 7 took place this morning at SPS. The developers confirmed there had been a number of local objections on three main themes:

- Drop off and Drive through - this was a condition of the three form entry approval, however due to safety concerns wasn't fully implemented. This will be fully addressed when the demolition has been completed.
- An amendment to the application has been submitted which reflects a 1m increase in roof height..
- The further information was requested regarding the of the modular buildings – a robust defence was provided by KCC and Pick Everard,

There are no further known obstacles to planning approval.

KCC funding agreement update

KCC representatives met with the EFA this week and restated the joint positions (KCC & SPS) that there are no additional funds to put into the project. Specific price increases in the schedule presented by the contractors have been queried.

9. AOB

As the meeting had already overrun slightly the chair asked that any items of additional business were covered with her by email before the end of the week.

Meeting closed at 10.05pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 27th April 2016

Signed by the Resources Chair : _____ Date: _____

Actions arising from this meeting:

Action		Date	Completed
<i>Bursar to prepare short list of things that went well and improvements for next tendering process.</i>	<i>BW</i>	<i>Post meeting</i>	
<i>Simon to work with headteacher on the presenting staff survey results to the staff.</i>	<i>SL</i>	<i>Post meeting</i>	
<i>Approval of catering Contract from Litmus.</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>FGB Mar</i>	
<i>Ratify SFVS</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>FGB Mar</i>	
<i>Natalie to investigate financial efficiency tool mentioned in KCC newsletter and update at next meeting.</i>	<i>NF</i>	<i>Res Apr</i>	

Extract from governors year planners 2015/16:

	Resources Team
Standing Items	Review expenditure and Forecast H&S update Staff update – teaching standards, PM timescales Staff welfare & attendance New Build Chgs in Business Interests School Security issues
May Term 4	Risk Review (c/f) Finance Update on start of new catering contract Prepare draft 3 year plan & budget Keeping balances audit - best practice (SIC not req'd) Loan update Update on residential trip income/shortfall Staffing Headteacher interim review Staffing update. Clerks interim review update Premises Premises updates RM Security protocol (2 yr) c/f changes required as result of new build Review: 3 year plan & budget Review of asset register Staffing structure (ann) Whistleblowing policy (3 yr) Ck contacts in whistleblowing policy

Policies due for review

Policy	Staff Member responsible	Governor Responsible	Review date
Whistle Blowing policy	Bri Wood	?	June 16