

SIR JOHN CASS'S FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing and Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 1st March 2017 at 4:00pm

Membership: Mr A Wright* (Chair)
Ms A Godas
Mr D Williams*
Deputy H Jones*
Rev L Jørgensen*
Mr T. Wilson (Head)*
Mr T Mullee

** denotes attendance*

In Attendance: Mr M Paddon – School Business Manager (SBM)
Ms Alex Allan (Deputy Headteacher)
Ms R Basit – Clerk

Mr A Wright asked Alex Allan to open the meeting with a prayer.

Governors enquired whether David Hogben was on the Committee. The Clerk would look in to this.

Action: Clerk

Declarations by governors of any personal and pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

Dates of the forthcoming meetings

Governors noted the dates of forthcoming meetings.

Minutes of the previous meeting (circulated)

The minutes of the last meeting held on 9 November 2016 were previously circulated.

There were minor corrections to the minutes.

RESOLVED – that the Committee agreed the minutes as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

[Item 2 – School Budget 2016/17, page 2] Governors asked whether the staff sickness issue in the Play Centre was resolved. The Head said that this was being managed.

The Head said the new Business Admin Apprentice had been appointed.

[Item 8 – Update of the school expansion, page 6] *Action – The Head to look into the use of the Section 106 funding which had been set aside for school expansion.*

The Head said the City would like to discuss Section 106 funding and EFA funding, this will then be discussed at the Governing Body meeting. Governors enquired whether there was a time-limit for the use of the Section 106 monies. The Head would look into this.

Action: Headteacher/Clerk

Deputy Henry Jones asked whether the school required any assistance. He said that he would have a discussion with the developer of a further development in the area with the hope of securing further Section 106 funds for the school.

RECEIVED

1. School Budget (MP)

The Budget monitoring report was circulated in advance of the meeting. In addition to the report Mark Paddon highlighted the following:

- £50K was to be recouped from the City for the air quality project
- There were overspends in the budget as highlighted, however it was anticipated that this should be covered by the recoupment.

The Chair said that at the last meeting the school was projecting a surplus and asked what had changed.

Mark Paddon explained the purchases and overspends in the budget. The Head said the school budget was used fully and funds were spent for children this year.

Governors asked about the dinner monies debt. The SBM explained that the school was owed £40K in debt, which included dinner monies and childcare fees for the baby-room. Governors asked whether parents settle the bills. The Head said that in most cases they do. The school was now more rigorous in obtaining a deposit for the baby-room. The Head added that it was often the vulnerable families that ended up in arrears. In such circumstances the school works with Social Care, however it is not in the family's interest to maintain unsustainable costs.

Governors noted that where the school was unable to recover the debt it was passed on to the City to recover. The City could pursue the debt all the way to a County Court Judgment.

RESOLVED – That the Committee approved the budget 2016/17 as presented.

2. Budget 2017/18

The 2017/18 budget was circulated in advance of the meeting.

A discussion ensued on the National Funding Formula review. Governors noted the uncertainty around funding for future years. Schools could expect reductions from 2018/19 onwards.

The Head said that the school fell outside of the national funding formula review. Governors enquired whether the school should respond to the recent consultation. The Head said that it was likely that the City would respond. Mark Paddon would email the City to emphasise that the school should not be any worse affected than other schools in London and should be treated distinctly from other London schools (as proposed in the National Funding Formula review), given its unique position as the only maintained school in the City.

Action: Mark Paddon

Governors noted that the 2017/18 budget had increased and were informed that this was largely to do with the bulge class. Governors were also informed that the Pupil Premium funding was reducing.

The Committee was informed that the SEN budget was also increasing and the school was expecting more children with EHCP. The school currently has twice the national average of SEN at EHCP.

Cuts had been made in supplies and services. The Head said that the school had underspent funds from the Digital Learning Grant from the Cass Foundation, due to the VAT claim. The school would submit a proposal to the Cass Foundation to use the funds for a further tuition programme.

Action: Headteacher

Cass Child and Family Centre Budget

The funding level for this budget was maintained.

Resolved – that the Committee approved the school's block grant allocation for 2017/18 of £1,796,777.

3. Approval of individual purchase orders over £10,000 (MP)

Mark Paddon presented the purchase orders that required approval from the Committee in line with the scheme of delegation.

In reply to a question regarding the Anna Freud Centre, Alex Allan explained that it was working onsite with targeted children, enabling them to build positive relationships from an early age. Alex added that staff from the Cass Child and Family Centre were working alongside and learning from a clinical Psychologist from the Anna Freud Centre.

Resolved – that the Committee approved the purchase order for the Anna Freud Centre for the amount of £15,912

4. Schools Financial Value Standards (SFVS)

The Committee completed the SFVS form, to be signed by the Chair of Governors.

Resolved – That the Committee completed and approved the SFVS.

5. Building Management Plan

The Building Management Business Planning report was circulated in advance.

Mark Paddon highlighted the key aspects of the report.

The LDBS building maintenance scheme cost for 2016/17 was £5,987.52 Mark advised that the school received funding of £92,000 from the LDBS. The scheme was considered as good value for money and had enabled the school to carry out urgent external repairs and pay for the refurbishment of classes 5 and 6.

As part of the maintenance priorities plan, the following areas had been identified for urgent repair:

- Urgent Gable wall repairs to play ground (estimated £71,082)
- Boiler replacement – the boiler was over 25 years old and did not meet current standards (estimated cost £203,544)
- Second floor toilet refurbishment (estimated cost £83,625)

The school had submitted bids for LCVAP to the LDBS and was awaiting the outcome of the bids.

It was agreed that a working party should consider the wider maintenance plan to devise a schedule of work.

Resolved – Andy Wright, Henry Jones and Mark Paddon will form the Working Party to consider the maintenance plan and schedule.

6. Mitre Square

The layout of the Mitre Square was circulated. The Headteacher said that the work was on schedule. The school was receiving fortnightly updates. Further information was available on the City website. The Square was due to open in May 2017.

The Headteacher said that the Aldgate Square was behind schedule by a year due to complications around the pavilion.

The Headteacher said there was a need to look at the crossing at the corner of the school as pedestrians tend to cross at this point. The Headteacher was concerned that children would do the same and that it was not a safe point to cross.

The Headteacher will contact Deputy Henry Jones to arrange for an officer to visit the school to look at the crossing.

Action: Headteacher/Henry Jones

7. Air Quality Monitoring

The report on air quality monitoring from the City was circulated in advance. The report provided a detailed breakdown of the air quality from each section of the school.

The Headteacher said that due to the location of the school was badly affected. The Headteacher said that the recent reduction in traffic to flow had improved the air quality.

The Headteacher advised that there was one day with particularly high particulate and meant that the school was affected that day. However, based on 2013 to 2015 data, the school has improved since 2015 as appropriate measures had taken place.

The Headteacher advised that the City had given £50,000 for the improvement of the air quality and another possible £100,000 for a project. As part of the strategy to improve the air quality, air purifiers were installed in the Early Years setting. The filters needed to be replaced and a school was in discussion with the leading supplier for this. However, further review of the system may be required. This will need to be monitored and an update will be given at the next meeting.

RECEIVED

8. Staffing Update

The Headteacher updated the Committee on the recent staffing changes which included appointing a Business Admin Apprentice, which was a positive start.

Two Early Years practitioners were appointed on term-time contracts which would mean that from April 2017 the school would not need to employ temporary staff in Early Years.

One finance officer was on a temporary contract until the end of the term.

Other recruitment included a Maths/English teacher and a PE teacher.

The Headteacher said that he had tried to recruit a class teacher for 2017, in anticipation of staff retiring or moving on from the school, but was unsuccessful due to a poor field of candidates.

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9. Playground

The Headteacher introduced Catherine Tidnam to the Committee.

Catherine Tidnam said that she was working on the school playground by introducing plants and trees to support the greening project. She explained that as well as the greening project, practical and aesthetic improvements were also taken in to account.

The Headteacher said that due to the location of the school the air quality was badly affected. The Headteacher said that the recent changes, allowing the traffic to flow had improved the air quality.

The Headteacher advised that there was one day where the air quality had particularly high particulate and meant that the school had to take action on that day. However, based on 2013 to 2015 data, the air quality had improved since 2015 as appropriate measures had taken place.

The Headteacher advised that the City had given £50K in funding towards the improvement of the air quality and another possible £10k towards the Greening project. As part of the strategy to improve the air quality, air filtrations had been installed in the Early Years setting. The filters needed to be replaced and the school was in discussion with the leading supplier to resolve the situation, however further review of the system may be required.

This will need to be monitored and an update will be provided at the next meeting.

Action: Headteacher

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8. Staffing Update

The Headteacher updated the Committee on the recent staff changes. These included appointing a Business Admin Apprentice, who had made a very positive start.

Two Early Years practitioners were appointed on term-time only contracts. This would mean that from April 2017 the school would cease to have any temporary staff in Early Years.

One finance officer was on a temporary contract until the end of the summer term.

Other recruitment included a Maths/English teacher and a Sports teacher.

The Headteacher said that he had tried to recruit a class teacher for September 2017, in anticipation of staff retiring or moving on from the school, but had been unsuccessful due to a poor field of candidates.

RECEIVED

9. Playground

The Headteacher introduced Catherine Tidnam to the Committee.

Catherine Tidnam said that she was working on the school garden and was introducing plants and trees to support the greening project. Catherine explained that as well as the greening project, practical and aesthetic reasons were also taken in to account.

Catherine added that the impact of children's activities were taken into consideration i.e. football. This had meant that certain protection was required.

Catherine said children were involved with the planting so that they developed ownership and learnt about plants.

Friends of the City Garden were encouraging the City to plant/green-up the neighbourhood.

Catherine informed the Committee the work taken place to date. This included:

- Hedge on the back wall
- Lavender Hedge
- Planted trees, including fig trees

Catherine said that she was working on utilising the school entrance as a greenhouse. Catherine had invited teachers to look at sustainable projects for the greenhouse. The Head advised that this would be taken to a staff meeting.

The next steps for the project were to look at St James Passage and other hidden areas; improving the green roof and building on the space as a learning resource; renovating existing climbers and the space in Children's Centre to be looked at.

In reply to a question the Head said that the roof garden was maintained by volunteers. However, as the previous volunteers had ceased their involvement with the school, this space was now poorly maintained and under-utilised.

David Williams said that he could produce some illustrations for a publication in relation to improving the air quality and the greening project. This would be discussed further with the Head and Catherine outside of the meeting.

Action: Headteacher/David Williams

Further work was planned for next year, to include the 'big shed'. Catherine said that the area would offer both enjoyable and learning opportunity for the children.

The Committee reviewed the plan as circulated and noted the revised planning application. The Head said the school would like to install a canopy for the roof garden area.

David Williams suggested that the Livery Companies may be interested in sponsoring the school's roof garden. He said he would look into this.

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10. Any other business

None

[The meeting closed at 5:50pm]

CHAIR.....*Laura Jorgensen*.....DATE.....*13/12/17*.....