



Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing, Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 6th June 2018 at 4pm

Membership: Mr A. Wright (Chair)*
Mr T. Wilson (Head)*
Mr Matt Piper*
Rev L.Jørgensen*
Mr D. Williams
Dep H. Jones
Ms A. Frain*
Ms Z. Lawley*
Ms J. Greenlees

** denotes attendance*

In Attendance: Ms Alex Allan (Deputy Headteacher and Head of Children's Centre)

Clerk: Mrs Jane Smith (Cover clerk)

Mr A Wright *in the Chair*

BUSINESS

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms J Greenlees and Dep H Jones. Ms L Webb and Ms T Shortland also sent apologies.

2. Declaration of Governors

There were no declarations of any personal and pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda.

3. Dates of Forthcoming meetings

a. It was noted that the next Full Governing Body Meeting is on Wednesday 4 July 2018.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th February 2018 and matters arising

4.1 Minutes

Governors were referred to the draft Minutes (non-confidential and confidential) of this Meeting which were contained in their Meeting Pack. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

RESOLVED – that the Committee agreed the minutes as an accurate record.

4.2 Matters arising

- Action Point 1: Complete.

- Action Point 2: Mr T Wilson had reported to the Full Governing Body meeting on this and provided the following update. The School had advertised the role of crossing patrol to parents but there had been little interest. Mr T Wilson explained that there was very little money available so, in order to pay the London Living Wage, very few hours could be offered which made the job unattractive. The deadline for the advert is soon and if there is no interest from parents, the School will consider an SLA with the Tower Hamlets road safety team which will give access to the Tower Hamlets pool of crossing patrol staff. There is a deadline on the funding. When the Square project closes the funding will be lost so it is important that the funds are transferred to the School before this happens.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Could the job be offered to staff such as TAs or cleaners?

The job has been offered to staff without success but it could be offered again. However the School is reluctant to enter into jobs with a complex mix of roles which had taken a long time to unravel in the past.

-Action Point 3: The criteria for grants from the Lord Mayor's Fund have not yet been checked. Governors then discussed fundraising. Ms Z Lawley reported that Ms L Webb, the new School Business Manager, had met the two new parent governors to discuss strategies to target fundraising. It was felt that there were some easy wins through the social and corporate responsibility route, initially through their own companies (banking and insurance). She said that they were conducting some research to see what criteria companies are looking for and what projects these organisations would view as beneficial. Ms Z Lawley said that there is a list of jobs to be done around the school which were not very exciting to attract corporate sponsors but that some building companies could potentially be targeted for these.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Where did the list of jobs come from?

There are several lists with changing priorities as the School has no control over capital funds available.

After discussion, governors asked the Headteacher to prepare a prioritised spreadsheet with two tabs for non-capital works and capital works. The non-capital works should cover a range of costs and be ready to go and could include books, courses, technology and staff for specific projects. It was noted that the capital works are likely to be more exciting. The School Business Manager is looking at priorities and the next building survey should feed into the list.

ACTION POINT 1: Mr T Wilson to check the criteria for grants from the Lord Mayor's Fund.

ACTION POINT 2: Mr T Wilson to prepare a prioritised spreadsheet of non-capital and capital projects.

-Action Point 4: On agenda.

-Action Point 5: This action remains outstanding.

Governors discussed the suggestion made at the previous meeting that the nursery could be made smaller and staffed by one teacher and one TA. Mr T Wilson said this would mean

a big change in numbers with the loss of eight places and might mean that siblings would not get into the nursery leading to an increase in appeals. The current size of the nursery helps to ensure that the School is full which is important for the per pupil funding formula. Reducing the nursery size to 26 would save money but there would be implications and there would need to be difficult choices about prioritisation. If the nursery size is reduced there would have to be a consultation period and it could not be actioned until two years time. The City of London (COL) is to review the entire nursery application policy as it is out of date and there are anomalies with the national policy. At this stage the School continues to offer places in accordance with its published criteria. The Children's Centre review should update the policy.

ACTION POINT 3: Ms T Shortland to talk to Social Care regarding establishing a referral pathway for vulnerable families that are unable to afford the children's centre fees.

5. Terms of Reference

The draft revised Terms of Reference had not been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr M Piper recommended that the Terms of Reference for this committee be reviewed by the full governing body at its next meeting. This was agreed.

6. School Improvement and Development Plans

Governors were referred to the Single Year Plan 2017-18 contained in their Meeting Pack. Mr T Wilson said that this will also be discussed at Curriculum Committee and the Full Governors Meeting. He referred governors to Attendance and Welfare and reported that the medical forms have been revised with triplicate copies and that all forms from Early Years reach the office on the day. In relation to section 106 monies from the hotel development in the Minories, he reported that these are due to be transferred to the COL on 8th June 2018. Mr M Piper and Rev L Jorgenson would be attending the meeting. Mr T Wilson reported that the new cleaning contract is going well and that the school has entered an SLA with LB Tower Hamlets for Health and Safety. However this is moving very slowly and the School may consider going elsewhere. The planning application for new playground equipment has been submitted and further site drawings have been requested. It is likely that the installation of the equipment will be carried out in October half-term and Mr T Wilson explained that this is acceptable as there are already three projects in the summer holiday.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: is the project work in the summer likely to be conflicting?

The meeting to schedule the projects has not yet taken place but the work will be planned to avoid conflict.

Mr T Wilson explained that the three year budget has been compiled and it looks satisfactory. No decision has been made on whether to bring the catering in-house or participating in the COL contract. There is currently a good service which is working well and although the School could bring it in-house and make savings, there is a heavy workload commitment for some staff members, particularly the School Business Manager, and there can be difficulties at times. Decisions about the Children's Centre are on hold pending the outcome of the COL review.

Mr. T Wilson reported that overall spend is reducing. Next year a priority will be to build the capacity of the middle leadership team, looking at roles, devolving budget holding responsibility and providing more training. With regard to debt collection, this is a key task for the School Business Manager, but she hasn't had the chance to look at it yet. However payments for school meals, the Children's Centre and play centre are all on track.

GOVERNOR QUESTIONS: Some parents are saying that the system is not user friendly. Bills are not being raised in a timely way.

There may be a beneficial impact when school dinners become free in September. The raising of bills will be looked at and other systems will be considered next year.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Will school dinners be free in the nursery?

No but the School will challenge this as it is inequitable and involves only a small amount of money.

Mr T Wilson reported that further improvements to financial management will include the Finance Committee monitoring the private fund.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: How is the private fund made up?

The fund is mainly donations, particularly from the Cass Foundation, which are then transferred to the school budget.

Mr T Wilson said that with regards to lettings, this is also an area that the School Business manager will be developing. Lettings are generally not very lucrative and can be problematic because of wear and tear on the building and the need for Premises Officer overtime, although the arrangements with the scouts has worked well. The hall can be rented out but the playground surface is not in good condition for rentals. Governors noted that filming is lucrative and Mr M Piper said he has a contact with the Tower Hamlets film office. The School has decided not to use Whatsapp and other social media to improve notification of events because of GDPR.

7. Around the Site

a. Road safety- Aldgate Square – this had been discussed under item 4 Matters Arising.

b. Air Quality Monitoring Report – Mr T Wilson will circulate the report to governors. He reported that the air quality has improved and is below the legal limit on all sites over the last six months. He remains cautious but the position appears to be improving. The School continues to work with the air quality team and is talking about projects with the additional funds which are expected. There will be a reception on the roof in June to which governors will be invited. There will be an air quality activity with the children at the end of June. The air filtration units in the baby room have reduced particulate levels dramatically but the performance of the filters has reduced recently. They will be serviced and tested over the summer and governors will be asked to decide whether to install another filtration unit in the next door room.

ACTION POINT 4: Mr T Wilson to circulate the Air Quality Monitoring Report to governors.

8. Budget Monitoring 2018/19

a. To receive update on the School Budget to end of period 2

Governors were referred to the School Budget contained in their Meeting Pack. Mr T Wilson explained that overall the budget is in a satisfactory position. A reduction in TAs is expected over the summer when some children who have EHCPs leave the School, although there is another EHCP in the pipeline. Two permanent TAs are being recruited and there may be a termly arrangement with others in the future. There has been little expenditure on indirect employee expenses.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Are direct employee expenses on track?

Direct employee expenses at 17.1% are on target.

Mr T Wilson said that the expenditure on planned building works relates to the roof works. The big variation in cleaning materials with 69% spend is due to the contract with Initial for supply of nappies, wipes and toilet paper and nappy collection services which has already been paid. The grounds maintenance overspend will be reimbursed from the air quality fund. He reported that the income and expenditure for all trips has been put into the main School budget so that governors can monitor recoupment of money on school trips. Trips are heavily subsidised by the Cass Foundation.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Does the School budget for 100% income for School trips?

The target is 80% income.

Mr T Wilson explained that there has been little expenditure on equipment so far. In Fees and Services the professional services spend at 105% relates to the annual SLAs which have already been paid. The high expenditure in software maintenance and support should be coded to hardware as it relates to the server upgrade. He explained that the budget does not contain any additional income and the teaching staff budgets have not been revised to reflect teaching staff movements or reductions.

b. To receive update on the CCFC budget to end of period 2

Governors were referred to the School Budget contained in their Meeting Pack. Mr T Wilson explained that the dramatic variances were due to old codes being used. Some budgets had no spend because the costs have not been split. The direct employee expenses are on track and fees and charges are at a good level. The Children's Centre is full so income should be over target this year.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: What is the calculation in the final column Spend YTD?

It is the committed expenditure (5th column) divided by the budget (1st column) expressed as a percentage.

Mr T Wilson said that in future there would be more overview budgets.

9. Premises update

a. Governor walkaround notes

Governors were referred to the Report contained in their Meeting Pack. Ms A Frain reported that she and Chris Jabber, Premises Officer, had talked to staff to see what

needed addressing. The canopy for reception, dining room works, play centre office and the girls' and boys' changing rooms were already being considered and there will be a report back when quotes for the work are available. The other suggestions had been made by staff. These include work to Mr Wilson's corridor and the kitchen end stairwell which are most urgent, water damage to the Early Years/reception floors, the toilets attached to KS1 classrooms which have not all been refurbished, rugs which are a trip hazard and blinds in some classrooms because of the glare from the new building opposite.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Can the Premises Officer take forward some of the smaller items?

Yes, there is a budget for smaller works and some have already been picked up and scheduled for the holidays.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: These works need planning time which goes back to the need to integrate and prioritise the works in a spreadsheet. Has planning started for the larger projects utilising section 106 money?

The section 106 discussion is ongoing and so some of the larger projects have not been looked at yet. The School hopes that a decision will be made on 8th June 2018.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Could this be done this summer?

Drawings have already been done for unisex toilets with a communal washing area.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Are the toilets used as a changing room?

Yes but this is unsatisfactory as the area is too small. The children change in other spaces. Boys and girls change separately in years 4, 5 and 6. The Premises Officer has been tasked with pricing this work. It is uncertain whether the work could be undertaken this summer but preparations are moving forward. The boiler replacement is a priority for this summer.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Do the drains belong to the water board or the School?

The drains belong to the School and need more monitoring and rodding as they had not been checked for a while. A CCTV survey has been arranged for all the drains internally after a flood of rainwater in the basement.

b. Summer works overview.

Governors were referred to the Report contained in their Meeting Pack and viewed plans of the proposed works to the library at the meeting. Mr T Wilson explained that the library will be redecorated and refurbished to include more storage.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Is the work costing £20,000 in addition to the insurance money?

Yes.

Mr T Wilson said that the LCVAP money is being spent on replacing the flat roofs on either side of the School. There is a site meeting w/c 11th June and permission will be required from the Cass Foundation to erect the scaffolding. He reported that the sugar tax money (c

£4000) will be used to repair the playground hole and the School is exploring whether a wider section of the playground could be repaired.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: How deep will the repair work go?

The builders will dig down to the drains and then refill.

c. Boiler replacement specification.

Governors were referred to the specification and quote contained in their Meeting Pack. Mr T Wilson explained that two boilers will be installed that are below the Mayor's targets for pollution and that are very efficient so the School should see a reduction in gas consumption. There will be four temperature zones on separate thermostats and six separate circuits so that it is possible to drain down sections of the system for repair work. The work is scheduled for the summer holiday with a few Saturdays beforehand for preparatory work.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Is VAT being paid?

VAT payment is not required. The Cass Foundation is paying £75,000 towards the cost of the work.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: The quote mentions checking the chimney to ensure that a liner can be dropped down. What happens if it cannot be and what would be the cost implications?

If it was not possible to drop a liner down the chimney, a hole would have to be drilled in the side of the building. However a problem is not anticipated as the chimney is wide and there have been no previous flues.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: What is the asbestos charge likely to be?

It is anticipated that this will be less than £2,000 as there is only one piece of asbestos to be removed.

d. Fire safety report and fire risk assessment

Governors were referred to the fire inspection report contained in their Meeting Pack. Mr T Wilson reported that the fire risk assessment has not yet been received from Tower Hamlets although the inspector seemed reasonably content when he visited the School. The School's previous risk assessment remains in place.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Have the recommended actions in the fire inspection report been completed?

Some but not all of the recommendations have been done. The signage has been done. With regard to coats in the corridor, the corridor is wide enough for two flows of traffic and so can accommodate coats. The printer has not yet been moved but the door self closers have been fitted and the door to the boiler cupboard in the old caretaker's area has been made fire resistant. Tower Hamlets have been appointed to carry out the fire risk assessment of the building. The Premises Officer will fill the holes and gaps in the doors over the summer.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: What are the target times to evacuate the School?

The target time is less than four minutes; the quickest is 3.5 minutes and the slowest is 5 minutes (one child in reception causing delay). The evacuation for a bomb threat is slower.

10. Income audit report

Mr T Wilson reported that this is not yet available as it is still being internally reviewed by the City of London.

ACTION POINT 5: Mr T Wilson to circulate the income audit report to governors when it is available.

11. Staffing

Mr T Wilson reported that in reception the class teacher will be a newly qualified teacher who has trained at the school and who will be paired with a more experienced teacher. The School Direct trainee teacher will also be paired with a more experienced teacher and it is envisaged that in both cases support will be reduced over time as the staff members become more experienced.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: How will work practically as support diminishes, for example, what will the more experienced staff member be doing?

Support will be more intensive during the first half of the year but as this reduces, the more experienced teacher will take more small intervention groups. Intervention groups have been very successful, for example, for maths in Years 2, 3 and 4. Traditionally children who are falling behind have often been given less experienced staff such as TAs but these children achieve very well over a shorter period with an experienced teacher.

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Parents will see two teachers in these classes. Will the less experienced teacher be the class teacher?

With the School Direct trainee teacher, the experienced teacher will be the class teacher. With the newly qualified teacher, they will be the class teacher.

Although the School has a full complement of teachers, it is attempting to recruit another teacher to bring extra resource to KS2 where there is some pressure. KS1 and Early Years remain largely unchanged. The School is discussing extending the seconded French teacher's contract until January 2019 when the teacher returns. As previously discussed, there will be two permanent TA appointments and all temporary TAs have been invited to apply for these posts. It is likely there will be some further temporary TA arrangements from September 2018. Strategically, the leadership structure is set. The idea of an Assistant Headteacher may need to be revisited.

12. Children's Centre SLA and Monitoring Schedule

Governors were referred to the Children's Centre SLA contained in their Meeting Pack. Mr M Piper recommended that the Children's Centre SLA be noted but not signed until the COL Children's Centre review had been completed. The targets on page 23 and 24 were unrealistic and need to be reviewed. Governors noted that the SLA was a major change being introduced part way through the year.

Governors **agreed not to approve** the Children’s Centre SLA pending the outcome of the COL Children’s Centre review.

13. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

The meeting ended at 5.30pm.

CHAIR.....DATE.....