



**Eastburn Junior & Infant School Governing Body  
Resources Committee  
Minutes of meeting of held on 14 January 2019**

The meeting opened at 5.43pm

**Present:** Ian Bester, Ann Craggs (Chair), Richard Grayson, John Hughes, Jo Waterhouse (Head)

**In Attendance:** Helen Osman (Clerk – BC/SGS<sup>1</sup>), Heather Toner (School Business Manager – SBM)

**Action**

**Res 37/18 Apologies for absence and their acceptance**

Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Rebecca Reynolds, Sarah Teal and David Wilson.

**Res 38/18 Notification of other urgent business and requests to vary the agenda order**

No other business was notified and there were no requests to vary the agenda.

**Res 39/18 Declarations of interest for items on this agenda**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Res 40/18 Minutes of meeting held on 19 November 2018 and matters arising**

At the request of the Business Manager, the Committee agreed the following amendments to the minutes:

*Item Res 07/18 (taken under Res 20/18)*, paragraph 1 – Delete “Administrator” and replace with “Deputy Headteacher”.

*Item Res 07/18 (taken under Res 20/18)*, bullet point – Delete “Administrator” and replace with “Inclusion Leader”.

*Item Res 21/18*, page 3, sixth bullet – Delete “payments” and replace with “e-mail access”.

These amendments were marked in manuscript by the Clerk and initialled by the Chair.  
*Amended copy attached*

<sup>1</sup> BC/SGS – Bradford Council’s School governor Service

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- Subject to these amendments, ***the minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting***, signed by the Chair and passed to the Headteacher.

## Res 41/18 Receive Quarter 3 (end-December) Budget Monitor

*Agenda paper*

### Income

The Business Manager (BM) informed governors that forecast income for 2018-19 had increased by £75.5k since the start of the year. This included:

- School Improvement Grant funding from the Local Authority (LA) to enable the school to purchase the services of an School Achievement Officer (SAO), Janet Keefe. This funding was available because the school was categorised by the LA as a Priority 3 school in terms of its need for support. SAO services had previously been provided free of charge to the school, but were now provided as a traded service.
- Life Skills Grant – this was being use to improve the mental health of pupils.
- School visits income – **Replying to questions**, the BM said that this additional income was balanced by expenditure on school trips.
- Friends of Eastburn had made a donation that had been used for the new library and to purchase Read Write Inc<sup>2</sup> resources.
- Income from Funzone – the BM said that the £33k income originally forecast had already been received; further income of between £2k and £5k was anticipated by the end of the financial year.

### Expenditure

The BM said that she and the Headteacher had reviewed the budget line by line with the Bursar and had identified a number of savings:

- Buildings maintenance and improvement – The Site Manager had carried out work that would otherwise have been undertaken by a contractor (eg to the Library and corridor flooring and heating in the small meeting room).
- Energy – Commitment were now all on the financial management system and the size of the contingency had been reduced. Actual expenditure was lower than planned due to the installation of the new and more efficient boiler and continuing energy efficiency measures.
- Learning resources – all expenditure for the year under this heading had been completed.
- Continual review of the procurement of goods and services had identified other savings.

### Forecast balance

These savings, combined with the additional income, had reduced the cumulative deficit from the original forecast of £43k to £9k.

### Community focused activities revenue budget

<sup>2</sup> Read Write Inc – a series of four literacy programmes, developed by Ruth Miskin, for children of various ages from 3-11 covering Phonics, Literacy & Language and Spelling.

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The BM said that the forecast cumulative surplus for Funzone was £17k. This offset the £9k deficit in the main revenue budget, leaving a forecast surplus of £8k overall.

**Replying to questions**, the BM said that the £33k transfer of Funzone income to the main budget (budget heading I08, Income from facilities and services) reflected the change in status of the Funzone. For the benefit of newer governors, the Head explained that the Funzone had been established, a number of years ago, as a separate business. It had proved unsustainable and had been closed as a business and the activity taken over formally by the school. Since she and the then Executive Headteacher had taken up post, a number of steps had been taken to bring the accounting arrangements into line with this change in the status of the Funzone. This transfer of income to the school budget was the final step in doing so. Among other things, it reflected the fact that Funzone staff were paid by the school.

**Asked** about attendance at Funzone afternoon sessions, the Head said that the first sessions were usually full (as were morning sessions) but that attendance at the second sessions had declined during December 2018 – it was not yet clear whether numbers would recover during the Spring term. The school had reviewed the staffing of the second sessions in light of the reduced attendance: it had decided, for the time being, to keep the same level of staffing but to deploy one of the staff members to other tasks when attendance was low. This would be reviewed again if the low attendance continued. Bearing in mind the need to change staff contracts if staffing levels were changed, it was important to be clear whether the drop in attendance was a temporary issue or a longer term trend.

The school had also reviewed competition between the Funzone and other activities. It was interesting to note that Funzone was increasingly drawing in Reception aged pupils: there was evidence from the admissions process that parents viewed the provision of before and after school activities as an attractive feature of the school.

**Asked** whether there was information on why parents were making less use of the second afternoon sessions, the Head said that the cause appeared to be the cost.

**Asked** whether the school had considered discounting this session, she said that it had. She planned to gather more data in the coming weeks and bring recommendations on staffing and charges to the next meeting.

Replying to questions, the Head said that she believed the school could do more to market the activities offered by the Funzone. She was currently working with Funzone staff on developing forward plans of activities.

**Capital budget** – Governors noted the capital income, expenditure and balance. The BM reminded them that the school expected to receive a further £9.5k from the capital money announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for “those little extras”.

**Replying to questions**, she said that this sum was expected in the current financial year and confirmed that capital could be carried forward, so the school would not be required to spend it before 31 March 2019.

**Asked** about her priorities for use of this funding, the Head cited:

- Improving the acoustics in the Assembly and Funzone Halls
- Purchasing stage-type curtains to line the Assembly Hall (to improve the acoustics further) and a small lighting rig for pupil performances.
- Substantial work to refit the area used both for staff work and cooking with pupils – to be fit for purpose, the flooring and furniture needed to be replaced and proper storage installed for cooking equipment.

Costings for these projects would be brought to the next meeting. The Head confirmed that there were no other building works required that would cost substantial sums.

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Discussion

Governors congratulated the BM and the school more generally in the significant achievement of reducing the £43k deficit to an £8k surplus, particularly while managing to invest in essential additional resources to tackle school improvement priorities. **The Committee noted**, however, that most of the additional income was one-off and ring-fenced for specific purposes; and that most of the savings were also one-off. It was important to be clear that, while the school had done well to balance the budget for 2018-19, its overall financial position remained unsustainable.

While governors were pleased that the budget position was so much more positive than it had been at the start of the year, **they asked** whether more could be done to improve the accuracy of budget-setting. The Head said that the completion of the transition to the new leadership team, including herself and the Business Manager, had entailed unpicking of previous financial and other issues and significant changes to secure school improvement. At the time that the 2018-19 budget had been set, accurate costs for items such as the resources for Read Write Inc had not been available. Furthermore, the school had not known about the additional sums that would be received in-year from the LA and from Friends of Eastburn. As a matter of prudent budgeting, it would not have included income that had been bid for or requested but not yet confirmed. The school was now in a position to align the budget more clearly with the School Improvement Plan.

**Res 42/18 Review progress against financial audit action plan, recommendations 6, 7, 8**

The Head confirmed that the outstanding recommendations from the financial audit (recommendations 6, 7 and 8) had been completed: she would say more as each came up under later items on the agenda for this meeting.

**Res 43/18 Approve draft response to Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)***Agenda paper*

John Hughes reported that he and the Business Manager had attended LA training on the SFVS. They had learned that the SFVS would be replaced next year by a similar scheme which would be more detailed and place greater onus on governors to understand the basis and depth of their school's financial plans. They had worked through the SFVS form to identify sources of evidence, primarily from Governing Body and Resources Committee meetings, and the BM had updated the 2017-18 return accordingly but had not indicated whether each question should be answered with "Yes", "In part" or "No". The responses took account of the actions taken in response to the recent financial audit.

**Replying to questions**, John Hughes said that the LA used the SFVS returns to drive their audit action plan by identifying the schools that needed to be prioritised.

Referring to question 11, **governors asked** whether budget projections were based on current data. The BM confirmed that they were.

Referring to question 12, **governors discussed** whether the Governing Body (GB) could say that it set a well-informed and balanced budget each year. They concluded that the answer was "In part". The school's structural deficit meant that it could not set a balanced budget, though it did agree a budget deficit plan with the LA. It made the best possible use of the information available in setting the budget but the dearth of timely and accurate funding information meant that the budget could not be described as well-informed. These constraints and the school's efforts to mitigate them needed to be made clear in the "Comments, evidence and proposed actions" column. Similarly, at

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question 16, the deficit position meant that the GB could not say that balances were at a reasonable level.

Referring to question 17, governors asked how close the school was to encountering serious issues with the premises and/or Health and Safety due to budget constraints. The Head and BM reassured governors that the building was in good condition, and reminded newer governors that this had been confirmed by the Building Condition report discussed in the autumn term.

Governors thought that the answer to most of the other questions in the SFVS was "Yes". They would provide any further comments to the Business Manager by close on Friday 25 January 2019. She and John Henkel would prepare a final version for circulation with the agenda for the next meeting of this Committee, which would be invited to recommend its approval to the Governing Body meeting on 11 March 2019.

All  
J Hughes,  
BM

**Res 44/18 Preparation for setting 2019-20 budget**

*Agenda paper*

- a) Review contracts and SLAs – The Clerk reminded governors that the purpose of this item was not to review every Service Level Agreement (SLA) and contract in detail but, rather, to assure the Committee that the school had in place a robust system to ensure that all SLAs and contracts were reviewed regularly to ensure that they continued to represent value for money; to give enable governors to question any of them; and to provide the school with an opportunity to alert governors to any changes that they proposed to make to the more costly items.

The Head said that the contract for SPTO<sup>3</sup> had inadvertently been omitted from the agenda paper but would be added. [*Clerk's note: in commenting on the draft minutes, the BM confirmed that this had now been done.*] The company that provided SPTO was expected to fold at the end of the year and the school was therefore seeking an alternative. The Head thought it likely that it would be possible to find a cheaper tracking system that was also easier for staff to use. **Asked** whether governor involvement would be helpful, she said that it would: this would be discussed at the GB meeting on 21 January 2019. **Asked** about the costs of migration to a new system, the Head said that the main cost would be for the extensive staff training that would be required. Most tracking systems would upload pupil data directly from SIMS<sup>4</sup>, minimising the data transfer costs.

Noting that the cost of using Fusion HR for HR advice was significantly higher than it would be to use PACT HR, **governors asked** how the additional cost was justified. The Head said that the school was exploring the scope to make a saving on this and would make a decision based on quality of service *versus* cost.

Although the amount was small, as a matter of principle Governors asked that the school investigate the reason for the three-fold increase in the cost of cold water booster sets. And, indeed, what cold water booster sets were for.

[*Clerk's note: In commenting on the draft minutes, the BM said that the booster sets had been installed to address low pressure issues. They were not required with the new boiler and had been included on the list of current contracts and SLAs in error.*]

The Head said that the school planned to review the cleaning contract to see whether it continued to offer best value.

BM

<sup>3</sup> SPTO – School Pupil Tracker Online

<sup>4</sup> SIMS – School Information Management System (Local Authority)

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- b) Rolling programme of ICT renewals – The Head said that most of the school's ICT equipment was now leased. This made the costs far more predictable and ensured that kit was always up to date with the rapidly changing technology. The school was currently in the second year of a three-year lease, which would therefore be re-tendered in 2019-20.

The exception to the leasing arrangement was for projectors and interactive whiteboards, the replacement of which would be built into the budget. **Replying to questions**, she said that the life of projectors was typically two years and that of interactive whiteboards four to five years. The interactive whiteboards had been replaced in every class during the summer of 2018 and would be replaced on a rolling programme.

**Res 45/18 Receive report on staff pay statements**

The Business Manager confirmed that pay statements setting out their full entitlements had been sent to all teaching staff. The Head said that the pay statement for one member of staff had required clarification and, **replying to questions**, confirmed that the issue had been resolved.

For the benefit of newer governors, the Clerk said that this item related to the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that pay statements were sent to all teaching staff.

**Res 46/18 Note update on any other staffing issues arising since previous meeting**

The Head said that there were no new staffing issues to report. The school would give thought this term to the request of a member of staff on maternity leave to return part time, because if it proved necessary to recruit it would be desirable to do so in May to reach the widest range of candidates.

**Res 47/18 Note update on current building works and consider whether action is required**

- a) Replacement of newer section of roof – The BM said that the school continued to await a date from Bradford Council for this work to start.
- b) Work to boiler - The BM confirmed that this work had been completed.

**Res 48/18 Note update on any other premises issues arising since previous meeting**

The Head reported that recent work to resurface the floor of the Sports Hall had been of poor quality, as had the work done by the contractor to rectify the position. The contractor was due to visit again over the weekend of 19-20 January 2019 for a third attempt. **Replying to questions**, the Head confirmed that the rectification work was being carried out at the expense of the contractor. **Asked** whether the poor work presented a health and safety concern, she said that it did not. Both attempts to resurface the area had left the floor in better condition than it had been before, though not to the proper standard.

**Res 49/18 Review General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) audit report and approve action plan**

*Agenda paper*

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**The Committee noted** the RAG rating<sup>5</sup> of the compliancy audit as shown in the agenda paper. The Head and BM confirmed that action had been taken in respect of the areas rated as red and amber:

Digital security (red) – The school had arranged for its Data Protection Officer (DPO) to conduct an IT audit after the February half term to ensure that the actions taken by school in light of this audit and the recent breach of e-mail security were sufficient, and to advise on any further areas in which procedures could be strengthened.

Evidence of staff training (amber) – Staff training had been provided on GDPR. This needed to be revisited, particularly with respect to new staff.

Physical building security (amber) – Staff were now routinely using Sharepoint rather than taking documents home.

Paper security (amber) – A further round of training would be conducted on the need to keep desks clear of papers. General GDPR awareness was now high, with staff often drawing colleagues' attention to ways to improve practice.

The Committee was satisfied that the school was making good progress towards full compliance, as was required.

#### Res 50/18 **Agree mechanisms for Committee monitoring of eSafety policy and procedures**

The school's monitoring arrangements would be considered as part of the IT audit referred to at item Res 49/18. The monitoring mechanisms included:

- the school's routine first-of-the-month checks, in which Sarah Teal, as Named Governor for Safeguarding, participated on behalf of this Committee;
- the headteacher's reports to the GB, in which she highlighted any matters of concern; and
- the recently implemented internet monitoring software, which immediately alerted the Head to searches for high risk sites or search terms and allowed for monthly reports of lower risk searches that might indicate a pattern of behaviour. These monthly reports were checked as part of the first-of-the-month checks.

**Replying to questions**, the Head said that the internet monitoring system did not block access to sites – it just provided alerts. The school had already had separate and very rigorous software that blocked access to inappropriate sites.

#### Res 51/18 **Consider recommendations on use of a school mobile device to take photographs for website, and rules of use**

The Head reported that the school now had a dedicated camera that was used to take photographs for the Newsletter and website. The camera stayed in school at all times and pictures were immediately uploaded to the school system and deleted from the camera.

#### Res 52/18 **Review policies and other key documents:**

*Agenda papers*

- a) Charging, Remissions and Lettings policy (Two documents) – The Head talked through the changes proposed to the policies and highlighted in the agenda papers.

<sup>5</sup> RAG rating: Red, Amber, Green ratings - a visual representation of progress

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*Charging and Remissions policy, Section 3, third paragraph* – Noting that the school reserved the right to cancel trips if voluntary contributions to the cost amounted to less than 70% of the cost, **governors asked** what proportion of costs was usually recovered. The BM said that the proportion was high – usually well over 90%.

*Charging and Remissions policy, Paragraph 6.7* – The policy now included a statement that the full replacement cost of any lost books would be charged. The Head said that this would help but would not cover the full cost implication of the loss of a Read Write Inc book, because these books came in sets that cost £40 each and could only be replaced by purchasing the whole set. The loss of a single book from the set thus prevented the teaching of a whole group of pupils. Governors accepted that it would not be reasonable to charge the full cost of the set if a single book were lost. However, **the Committee agreed** that the school made clear to parents and pupils the impact of the loss of a single book, which might otherwise be seen as a relatively cheap item. The Head said that this could be done in the letter that was sent to parents at the start of each year.

Head

*Lettings policy, Purpose section* – **The Committee agreed** that, in light of the financial position of the school, the policy ought to make explicit that one of its purposes was to generate income for the school. The school would add income generation as a fourth bullet.

Head

**Replying to questions**, the Head said that there was not a great deal of demand for letting of the premises. Given the costs of paying for clean-up and locking up, the school had not actively promoted lettings. Current users did not pay for use of the premises and in one or two cases the school actually lost money. **The Committee was clear** that, in light of the school's financial deficit, this could not continue: as a minimum, the school must recover the full cost of any letting, including the planning and administration costs; and ideally it should be looking to generate income from lettings. Governors recognised, however, that charges needed to take account of the school's community focus and competition with other providers. They considered that the charges set out at Appendix 2 of the policy struck the appropriate balance.

The Head believed that the policy provided the scope that the school needed to explore further the charging of existing users and the scope to run holiday clubs, perhaps based around the Funzone, though it might be necessary to review the policy again once firm proposals were made.

- **The Committee unanimously approved** the Charging and Remissions policy.
  - Subject to the amendment agreed, **the Committee unanimously approved** the Lettings policy.
- b) *Capability policy* – **The Committee agreed** to adopt the formulation in the first option presented on page 9 of the policy (power to dismiss). It noted that the policy was a model produced by PACT HR, cleared legally and agreed with the unions.
- **The Committee unanimously approved** the Capability policy.

Noting the statement at the top of page 5 that the policy could also be used for all other (ie non-teaching) members of staff in school, **the Committee indicated its expectation** that the school would do so.

- c) *Finance policy* – The Head said that the policy had been reviewed by the person who had conducted the financial audit; reflected the new leadership structure and audit recommendations; and was aligned with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

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*Virements section* – Governors asked that the policy be brought into line with the Committee’s Terms of Reference (specifically, the financial delegation).

Head

*Purchasing and contracts section, page 5, first bullet* – Governors were surprised that there was no longer a requirement for schools to obtain quotes for purchases of contracts whose value was less than £10k. The BM confirmed that this reflected updated guidance on Bradford Schools Online (BSO). Governors thought this seemed high, particularly so for this school, given its deficit position and the need to ensure best value for every penny. **The Committee therefore asked** that the school reconsider the £10k threshold with a view to reducing it.

Head

*Purchasing and contracts section, page 5, fourth bullet* – **Governors asked** that the policy be brought into line with the Committee’s Terms of Reference (specifically, the financial delegation).

Head

**Replying to questions**, the Head said that her current financial delegation (£5k) did not present issues in terms of delays to business. She rarely had occasion to spend more than £5k at a time and, if she did, she would bring the matter to governors as a matter of course, regardless of the level of her delegated authority.

*School Fund section (final page)* – **Governors asked** that, for the sake of clarity, a sentence be added stating explicitly that, where funds in the account had been raised for charity, they would be sent in their entirety to that charity.

Head

*Audit* – a Governor with financial experience in a different sector said that his experience was that finance policies usually included specified how frequently an external audit would be conducted. ***Governors noted*** that staffing pressures at the LA meant that they were not always able to meet requests to conduct audits but ***agreed*** that the policy should include a statement that the school would request an audit every three years.

Head

The school would make these amendments and bring the finance policy to the next meeting with a view to approval.

**Res 53/18 Urgent other business referred from Item Res 38/18 above**

There was no other business.

**Res 54/18 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held at **5.45pm** on Monday **04 March 2019**.

**The meeting closed at 7.38pm**

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