

BURDETT-COUTTS AND TOWNSHEND FOUNDATION CE SCHOOL

Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 March 2018 at 5.00pm

Present: Mrs N Bowles (Chair) Mrs R Dyer (Headteacher)
Mr S Brickell Ms L Playford*
Rev G Buckle Mrs E Siddall
Mr P Carrivick Mr W Walter
Rev C Duce Mr A Woodward (Vice Chair)

Apologies: Mrs S Butcher [*for part of meeting]

In attendance: Mr N Cressy (Bursar)* Ms C Mehegan (Clerk)

1. Opening prayer; welcome and apologies

1.1 All present were welcomed to the meeting, which was opened with a prayer led by Rev Buckle. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Butcher.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 It was noted that, in the event of any questions regarding the review of Service Level Agreements, the Clerk, the Bursar and Mrs Bowles had financial interests and should leave the meeting while this was discussed.

3. Financial matters (including budget for 2018-19)

3.1 A number of documents had been circulated prior to the meeting, as follows:

- A budget monitoring report for Period 12 of 2017-18
- A year-end report comparing actual spending with budgeted spending
- A review of Service Level Agreements
- A proposed budget for 2018-19
- A three-year budget plan.

Mr Cressy and Mrs Dyer presented these documents and invited questions.

3.2 It was reported that the sum carried forward at the end of 2017-18 was broadly in line with projections: £139,519 as compared with a projected £140,000. Overall income for 2018-19 was reported to be considerably reduced, some £380,000 less than in 2017-18, for a number of reasons. The lump sums provided to schools by the Local Authority would be considerably lower, with the school due to receive a lump sum £130,000 in 2018-19 (with a further fall to £110,000 in 2019-20) as

compared with £175,000 in 2017-18. Income based on the number of pupils would also fall, as it was based on 37 fewer children on roll, giving a reduction of around £135,000. There would also be reductions in income relating to Pupil Premium funding and funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals and in money received from the William Shelton Foundation. A QUESTION was asked about funds to compensate for falling rolls, such as had been made available in previous years. It was reported that falling roll funding of around £60,000 had been applied for, but that the Schools Forum had yet to meet to discuss such funding. The Bi-Borough Director of Education had contacted the Headteacher and invited himself for a school tour. Although the agenda for the tour was to view the school building, the Headteacher and Bursar took the view that it would be wise to prepare for a conversation about funding, and in particular the application for the falling roll fund and the school's plans to set a balanced budget. Mr Heggs had postponed the original meeting (26 March 2018) and it had been rescheduled to 20 April 2018.

- 3.3 It was explained that a reduction of such magnitude in income had made it necessary to consider how to reduce costs throughout the school's budget. With staffing costs forming some 85% of the school's spending, it had been necessary to include reductions in staffing as part of those considerations. Governors were reminded that Service Level Agreements had been reviewed in the two previous years to ensure continued value for money. A QUESTION was asked regarding future funding. It was explained that the possibility of income to compensate for falling rolls might lead to reductions in income being smaller than projected but that income would not rise again unless the number of pupils on roll increased over the next 12 months.

[Clerk's note: Ms Playford joined the meeting at 5.15pm]

- 3.4 Individual budget headers were then considered in detail. It was noted that there would be a natural reduction in the number of teaching staff as of September 2018: there would be fewer classes and one teacher had already informed the school of their intention to move on at the end of the current academic year. The formal deadline date for the submission of resignations was 31 May 2018. One temporary contract was also not expected to be renewed unless this became necessary to cover any further resignation. The budget for teaching staff costs in 2018-19 would, nonetheless, be very similar to that in 2017-18, with allowance having been made for pay rises of around 2%, progression along the pay scale and Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments. The effect of the reduction in staff numbers was greater in the second year of the three-year budget plan, where it had effect for a full financial year.
- 3.5 It was reported that a reduction in the number of Teaching Assistants was also envisaged, for example the non-renewal of fixed term contracts in relation to support for pupils with Special Educational

Needs who would be leaving the school. No changes were envisaged in the numbers of premises staff. The hours worked by the school's administrative staff (two office staff and the Welfare Officer) were also reported to be under review. There was some discussion of whether investment in technology could improve efficiency. It was noted that reductions in headcount did not always make significant savings, due to the costs of redundancy compensation etc.

- 3.6 In response to a QUESTION, it was confirmed that other local schools were facing similar financial challenges, with some having run in-year deficits in previous years (in some cases, despite having no pupil vacancies).
- 3.7 In response to QUESTIONS, information was provided regarding costs of administrative supplies and spending versus projections, which sometimes appeared inconsistent due to the timing of receipt of invoices. It was noted that there was very limited scope for reductions in general running costs, many of which were fixed. In response to a QUESTION, it was explained that there was no sum recorded under the budget headers for catering staff as this were included elsewhere, under Service Level Agreements.
- 3.8 A QUESTION was asked regarding the reduction in income relating to Special Educational Needs. It was explained that this was due to the number of children for whom the school received additional funding (beyond the £6,000 per pupil schools were expected to allocate for pupils with SEN from regular funding) due to high needs, some of whom were currently in Year 6 and who would be leaving the school in July 2018.
- 3.9 There was some discussion of the cost of agency supply staff as compared with past projections, and the future projected reduction in expenditure. It was explained that, in previous years, supply teachers had been used to cover not only sick leave but teachers' Planning, Preparation and Assessment time and training courses. It was intended in future to arrange cover for PPA time in-house and less cover would be needed for training now that all teaching staff had completed the Outstanding Teaching programme. The sums allowed both for PPA and for unexpected absence due to sickness had also been reduced in line with the reduced number of classes.
- 3.10 There was some discussion of the costs of cleaning and catering, which had been affected by inflation, national pension requirements and changes to the national living wage, and of water, sewerage and utilities costs, which appeared inconsistent year upon year due to issues around billing and payments.
- 3.11 Spending on staff development and training was discussed. It was noted that this would be considerably lower in future as over £10,000 had been spent putting all teaching staff through the Outstanding

Teaching Intervention programme over a period of two years, part-funded by the St Giles-in-the-Fields & William Shelton Educational Charity. Approaches learned through OTI were used in staff meetings and in support for Newly Qualified Teachers. It was noted that a variety of training was sourced via the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the Local Authority and that cascading of key learning points took place. The aim was for an average of £300 per person per year to be available for members of teaching staff to receive external training in addition to any in-house support and development - although some courses, such as Maths Mastery, were noted to be considerably costlier and others less so. It was recognised that high quality teaching could have a considerable impact on learning outcomes and that quality training could have benefits in terms of staff morale.

- 3.12 There was some discussion of any additional action which the school could take to maximise its income. It was noted that one-off rentals did not always justify the related site management, cleaning and insurance costs but that longer-term bookings were sometimes beneficial. Any additional uses of classroom space no longer needed would require more long-term planning and consultation.
- 3.13 In response to QUESTIONS, it was explained that the breakfast club was run by an external body and that its costs were not therefore part of the school's budget. The organisation paid for use of the premises and this was included in the school's income.
- 3.14 It was confirmed, in response to a QUESTION, that the school used benchmarking data to ensure that its charges and expenditure were in line with similar schools.
- 3.15 It was noted that it was important to consider the impact on staff and on learning of any cuts made. It was explained that the chief change was that the school was effectively becoming a one- form entry school. There would be little direct impact on regular class teachers, but teachers on the Upper Pay Scale receiving Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments would be taking responsibility for additional curriculum areas, the Assistant and Deputy Headteachers would be spending more time covering staff PPA time and the Headteacher would also cover some PPA time. There would be limited impact on resources for pupils, but possibly fewer intervention groups. It was noted that the Maths Mastery approach allowed for more differentiation within classes, which could be more effective than separate booster classes. It was further reported that pupils would spend more time with staff already known to them and less time with agency staff. In response to a QUESTION about spending on trips, it was noted that the Year 6 group trip was funded by the school's Trustees and that the Friends of Burdett-Coutts would be invited to help fund other trips.
- 3.16 Governors considered the proposed three-year budget plan, which showed an in-year deficit of around £60,000 in the first year (unless

falling roll funds became available, as with the £108,000 received and spent in 2017-18), which would be funded from the £140,000 carried forward at the end of 2017-18. There was further discussion of local funding issues and the extent of in-year deficits which would be permitted by the relevant authorities. It was noted that further information about future funding was expected to be available in April/June of 2018.

- 3.17 It was noted that it was possible to approach the school's Trustees for help with specific projects, building improvements etc, but that funding for day-to-day running costs (e.g. staff costs) would not be provided. Possibilities of further collaboration with other schools, in addition to current approaches such as sharing Speech and Language Therapy support and some SEN provision, were noted. It was reported that the local cluster (ten schools) had done some shared work on procurement but that other shared efficiencies could be considered.
- 3.18 The content of the review of Service Level Agreements was noted: the costs of financial support and clerking services had been reduced, cleaning costs had increased slightly, and website costs had been fixed to December 2019.
- 3.19 Governors thanked Mr Cressy and Mrs Dyer for their explanations of the school's current financial position and their work on the proposed budget. The proposed budget for 2018-19 was APPROVED. It was noted that further documents might need to be agreed in future, in relation to changes to the school's staffing structure, and that governor input into meetings with unions etc would be appreciated.

[Clerk's note: Mr Cressy left the meeting at 6.10pm]

4. Minutes of meeting of 8 February 2018 and matters arising

- 4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting were AGREED as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4.2 Governors considered actions from the previous meeting, which were largely reported to be ongoing. Ongoing actions are listed at the end of these minutes, following new actions from this meeting.
- 4.3 Action to fill governor vacancies/succession planning (Min 4.4): It was reported that initial contact had been made by a number of governors with a number of potential future governors.

[Clerk's note: see also Chair's report]

- 4.4 Governor visits (Min 5.2): In addition to the reports submitted for a later item in this meeting, it was noted that Rev Buckle had attended the 'Maths Mastery' session for staff, led by Mr Brickell, and had been impressed by the presentation and by staff's willingness to learn new methods. Governors were welcome to attend further such sessions,

with one planned for the following day and more during the Summer term.

5. Chair's and Vice Chair's reports

- 5.1 Chair's report: A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. This covered a number of areas including membership matters, Ofsted preparation, links with other schools/governing bodies and meetings between the Chair and Headteacher, which governors were welcome to attend. Mrs Bowles gave an additional verbal update.
- 5.2 It was confirmed that an **Ofsted Inspection Readiness** training session for governors had been scheduled for 21 June 2018 at 5.00pm. Governors were encouraged to attend if at all possible, with the exception of the Headteacher and Staff Governor, who would not attend the governor session during an actual Ofsted visit. There was some discussion of the likely timing of a visit, of the new, more targeted, approach of inspectors and of expectations of governors.
- 5.3 Governors were reminded that, due to the Governing Body's membership of the National Governance Association (NGA), three places at the **NGA London Regional Conference** on 21 April 2018. were available.
- 5.4 It was confirmed that the school office staff took responsibility for reminding governors about obtaining/updating **Disclosure and Barring Service checks**. Governors were reminded of the importance of responding in a timely fashion to communications from the office regarding DBS checks.
- 5.5 Governors were reminded to let the Headteacher know whether they were able to attend the school's **Angela Burdett-Coutts Day** celebrations on 18 April 2018.
- 5.6 Thanks were extended to governors having undertaken **link visits** and to all concerned in the panel meeting to review a formal written **complaint** from a parent. Written reports had been provided.

[Clerk's note: see next item]

- 5.7 It was reported that a number of **potential future governors** with useful skills had been identified by the Chair via the Inspiring Governance website and initial contact had been made with three of these. It was confirmed that, given the current Foundation Governor vacancy, the criterion regarding willingness to promote and develop the Christian ethos of the school had been taken into account. It was reported that other governors had also encountered some potentially strong candidates.

- 5.8 It was reported that the Chair had attended a recent Headteacher's Conference and had been struck by the commitment of all present. A key topic of interest had been the role of the Governing Body in **ensuring an appropriate work-life balance for school staff**. It was noted that guidance was available from the Department for Education and the NGA regarding the Workload Challenge. It was recognised that staff often worked above and beyond their contractual requirements and that it was important to develop respectful working relationships and to avoid contacting staff outside working hours (or to make clear that an immediate response was not required). The impact of financial challenges upon staff was noted. It was emphasised that governors have a responsibility for the wellbeing of staff, including members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 5.9 Vice Chair's report: Mr Woodward gave a verbal update on **governor training**. Governors were reminded that training on **HR and Finance** had been scheduled for 3 May 2018, 5.30-7.30pm. It was further reported that the Vice Chair had attended training on the **Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools**, following a meeting with Mrs McMullan, the school's SIAMS Co-Ordinator, and that Rev Duce had attended a school coffee morning on a relevant topic.
- 5.10 It was noted that an inspection under the new SIAMS framework was not expected before 2020, but that it would be a positive step to review the school's **vision** and check that it was appropriately aligned with the Church of England's vision. It was AGREED that Foundation Governors would meet at 5.00pm before the May 2018 meeting of the Governing Body to review the school's SIAMS self-evaluation, with the full meeting beginning at 5.30pm.

Action: Foundation Governors

6. Reports from Committees, Link Governors etc

- 6.1 A report from a Link Governor visit to review **Early Years Foundation Stage** provision had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- 6.2 An anonymised letter setting out the findings and recommendations of a recent meeting of a panel of the **Complaints Committee** had been circulated prior to the meeting. A QUESTION was asked regarding support available to staff who were the subject of complaints. It was explained that the Headteacher had met with the relevant staff prior to the Stage 2 investigation by the Chair and that feedback had been provided and thanks extended following the interviews. Staff had also been made aware of the Employee Assistance Programme, through which telephone support or a number of face-to-face counselling sessions were available. As this service was confidential, it could not be confirmed whether any member of staff had used it in relation to this complaint. A QUESTION was asked regarding pupil safeguarding issues. It was confirmed that there were not currently believed to be

any safeguarding issues in relation to the child whose parent had made the complaint.

7. General Data Protection Regulation

- 7.1 It was reported that a meeting had been held regarding any changes needed to prepare for the coming into force of the General Data Protection Regulation. This had been attended by the Chair, the school's designated Data Protection Officer, the Office Manager, the Bursar and a representative from the school's IT contractors.
- 7.2 A number of changes were to be made, with information provided on those which would affect governors. School email addresses had been set up for governors and a change to online access and storage of Governing Body documents was planned. Governors were reminded that they did not need to keep paper copies of previous meetings and that any confidential papers could be brought to school for shredding.
- 7.3 The school's **Freedom of Information Policy** and **Data Protection Policy** had been reviewed with a view to ensuring compliance with the GDPR. Both had been circulated prior to the meeting, with no changes made to the FOI Policy and minor amendments - mostly relating to the new Data Protection Officer role - to the DP Policy. Both policies were APPROVED.

8. Any other business

- 8.1 Social/community issues: Information was provided regarding the action taken by the school in response to a recent tragic event on a local estate in which a relative of a number of pupils (himself a former pupil of the school) had been killed. Pupils had, of course, been affected by this and counselling had been provided. A multi-agency meeting including police and social services had been held. The school, respecting the family's wishes, had delayed sending out a letter to parents but was now to do so, with advice from the London Diocesan Board for Schools having been taken on content. With the assistance of an external adviser, the school had also reviewed its curriculum, including work on social issues, mental health, prevention of extremism etc. Plans were in development for workshops for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils around attitudes to weapons and how to avoid being drawn into gang culture/violence.
- 8.2 GB links with other schools: There was some discussion of the links being developed with the governing bodies of other schools. It was noted that the Chair and Vice Chair were to consider how many spaces could be made available for governors of other schools at the forthcoming training on HR and financial matters. There were also plans to develop a Chairs'/Vice Chairs' forum, and the possibility of more informal meetings had also been raised.

8.3 There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Summary of action points

Action (and relevant section in minutes)	Owner
Meet ahead of May GB meeting to review SIAMS self-evaluation (5.10)	Foundation Governors

Actions outstanding/ongoing from previous meetings

Action (and relevant section in minutes)	Owner
Make arrangements with the relevant staff to organise link visits (5.2, February)	Link governors yet to complete visits
Aim to complete relevant governor actions from SIP by meeting of March 2018 (7.11, December) [See Headteacher's email of 12 January 2018 for summary]	Link Governors yet to complete actions

Signed as a correct record by the Chair:



N. Bowles (Print name)

19th April 2018 (Date)