

Portesbery School

Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee of the governing body
held at the school at 09.30 on . 18 OCTOBER 2012

Present: Mr Patrick Dawson
Mr Chris Hamilton Committee Chair
Mr Jonathan Spink
Matthew Sartin Headteacher

In attendance: Ms Debbie Attard School Business Manager
Mr Chris Thomas Clerk to the Governors

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Susan Carpenter, and were accepted by Governors.

2. Declaration of Interest

No governor declared any interest in any agenda item.

3. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee

One nomination was received for the position of Chairman, from Mr Hamilton; he was duly elected. One nomination was received for the position of Vice-Chairman, from Mr Dawson; he was duly elected.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of 21 June 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting of Finance and Staffing Committee of the governing body, held at the school at 09.30 on Thursday 21 June 2012, were amended to show, on the penultimate sentence of para.5.2, the words '...the school had no data on that at the meeting.' They were then confirmed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair of the committee.

5. Matters Arising from the minutes

- a. *Governor to be nominated to assist in SFVS process:* it was agreed that Mrs Carpenter and Mr Spink would work on the Schools Financial Value Statement process with the School Business Manager. The SBM said that all governors had been circulated with a copy of a form to be completed as part of the SFVS Skills Audit, and requested that these be completed as soon as possible.

Action: SBM to arrange meeting with SC and JS on SFVS process

Action: All Governors to complete SFVS skills audit

- b. *SBM to circulate FMR statements in advance where possible:* Done.

6. Terms of Reference and Work Programme

A draft Terms of Reference and Work Programme had been circulated in advance.

- a. Governors agreed that the Terms of Reference should show the Committee's new name, and the name of the current Chairman and Clerk; that the abbreviation 'DCSF' be changed to 'DoE'; that the words on 'the Statement of Internal Control' and 'Financial Management Systems in Schools' be replaced with 'to ensure full compliance with the Schools Financial Value Standards and complete the Skills questionnaires'. Under Policy Review, it was agreed to delete the listing of individual policies and to replace it with '..'to ensure that all policies within the remit of the committee, as detailed in the Policy Planner, are reviewed at appropriate intervals'.
- b. It was agreed that the Work Programme should continue unaltered.

7. Report by the Headteacher

- a. A printed copy of the Headteacher's report had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting (copy in minute book). Further comment and discussion included:
- b. Staffing: the Headteacher added to his report the information that plans were being made to appoint staff to vacancies that would arise following retirements. Two staff undertaking an NVQ course had had extensions granted – there might be a financial penalty to the school if they did not complete their courses on time.
- c. Teacher Standards and Appraisals: the Headteacher confirmed that the school had introduced new standards which were compliant with the most recent guidance.

8. Financial Monitoring

A printed copy of the Financial Monitoring Reports for Q1 and Q2 had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting (copy in minute book). Further comment and discussion included:

- a. The School Business Manager explained that total expenditure was so far running at 47% of the planned expenditure for the whole year. There were no major concerns to report. During October there would be a review of possible changes to the forecast of the year-end position. Governors asked about the difference between the 'original' and the 'current' budget; the SBM said that original budget was that drawn up in April 2012 based on provisional date, while the 'current' budget showed actual income figures, based on figures fixed at the start of the financial year. The percentage expenditure figures were based on the current budget.
- b. Governors noted that costs of supply staff. The SBM explained that the cause was that a member of staff engaged on a two-term contract, was being coded under 'supply costs' (following LA policy guidelines) rather than as normal teaching staff costs. Staffing costs were 50% of budget, while

Premises costs were slightly under 50%. Energy costs were distorted by the fact that the LA was not charging back the school's consumption that was supplied through a gas meter shared with another LA facility; provision for the uncharged costs had been made in the budget over the last three years.

c. Governors noted that Revenue Income was only some 31% of budget, although the financial year was half-way through its course. The SBM said that the school was awaiting a settlement of a maternity claim, and that some funding due by the end of Q2 had not arrived when the report was compiled – the funding had been received in the interim.

d. Capital expenditure. Governors asked whether the underspend of £32,000 on new construction was earmarked for any future project. The SBM said that the school could carry the amount forward and, if appropriate projects were identified, the funds could be used for them. Some £4,000 of the amount was on retention from the recent school extension scheme. The school had made a contribution to the costs of the new school build from its own resources.

e. Staff Absence. The SBM presented analyses for Summer 2012 against the same period in 2011. Absence was below 5% in both cases. Governors agreed that the figures were reassuring.

f. Governors thanked the SBM for the clear presentation of the FMR statement.

9. Draft Budget Plan

The SBM explained that the draft Budget Plan was not now required until the end of January 2013. The school's Finance Consultant had little information on what could be expected; the SBM would start budgeting expenditure, and then match income to it, when more was known. Governors agreed to arrange a special Committee Meeting for 28 January at 09.30 a.m. to discuss the draft Budget Plan. A Consultation Paper from the Department of Education on funding for Special Schools was expected in December; changes in the system of funding were anticipated and the Headteacher added that they could particularly affect small schools – central government was trying to unify the funding arrangements as these were currently widely divergent.

10. School Fund Account

A printed copy of the School Fund Account had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting (copy in minute book).

a. The SBM reported that the LA had this year requested details of the account. In essence the cash was being held for additional facilities at the new school. The school had committed some £30,000 from the fund to its grounds improvement project; this amount had then been matched by a donation.

b. The SBM said that she had received a request for £6,500 of expenditure on 'Eye Gaze' equipment for the Music Room; governors approved the expenditure.

c. Governors asked if the school invited ideas on spending the money; the SBM said that the fund was not explicitly publicised, but neither was it a secret. Governors noted the extent of the funds in the School Fund Account and remarked on the requirement for families to fund the costs of school trips; the SBM said that the funds were not for curriculum expenditure. Governors asked who was responsible for decisions on the expenditure; the SBM said that governors had an overview. Governors discussed the way in which donations to the school were made and agreed that there would be benefit in associating future large donations with specific schemes.

d. Governors accepted the annual audit of the School Fund Account.

11. Benchmarking

A printed copy of Department of Education comparators had been circulated in advance of the meeting (copy in minute book).

a. The SBM said that three similar local special needs schools had been selected for the exercise. 78% of the expenditure at Portesbery was on staff; the SBM drew governors' attention to the fact that the school employed a driver and two support staff for a home to school service, which increased staff costs, but also increased income. Community expenditure at Portesbery was relatively high, because of the After-school Club and the Summer Club – these activities also generated extra income. Other schools might offer such activities but might report the costs and incomes associated with them differently. The cost of bought-in specialist services was also higher at Portesbery than at comparable schools.

b. Governors agreed that there were no extraordinary discrepancies in the Portesbery comparators, and that while there were variances there were reasons for them. Governors thanked the SBM for the clear presentation of the FMR statement.

12. Pupil Premium

a. The SBM said that there was a requirement for the school to show on its website the income it received from the Pupil Premium, and the ways in which it was spent for the benefit of the pupils who attracted it. The Headteacher confirmed that the school's website complied with this requirement. The SBM said that she had attended a course on the topic which had clarified the relationship between the funding and the pupils. A case study was shown and supporting evidence was available.

b. Governors noted the words that 'other funding was added to this' and asked what the source of the additional funding had been; the SBM said that it came from the delegated budget. It was agreed that the wording on the website would be amended to clarify the point

ACTION: SBM to review wording on Pupil Premium on website

13. Safer Recruitment Review

The Headteacher confirmed that the school's Safer Recruitment practices were in conformity with the LA Guidelines.

14. Policy Reviews

Draft copies of the following policies were displayed at the meeting:

- a. Health and Safety Policy and Premises Plan: The Headteacher reported that the Chairman of the FGB had signed both these policies. Governors asked how they were to maintain oversight of the actions under these policies; the Headteacher said that this would be done through the Headteacher's Report. Governors ratified the policies.
- b. Appraisal Policy and Disciplinary and Capability Policy: the Headteacher said that these were the model policies from the Babcock 4S site. Governors ratified the policies.
- c. Pay Policy: the Headteacher said that this had been up-dated. Some teachers were now on a pay rate for 'Teachers new to the service'. SEN allowances had previously been paid at one of two flat rates, but there was now an opportunity to pay such allowances on a variable scale; the Headteacher asked governors to consider whether the school should implement a five-point scale or stick with the current two-band system. Governors asked what the budget implications of a change might be; the SBM said that she did not want staffing costs to increase. Governors asked what other schools did, and whether there was any evidence in favour of a change. The Chairman summarised the view of governors that in the absence of a powerful argument for a change, the system should remain as it is.
- d. Part-time staff. Governors discussed the issue of part time teachers, who - when they worked on a day for which they were not contracted - currently received either a day off or an additional payment, at normal daily rates; governors agreed that this system should continue.
- e. Upper Pay scale Progression Policy: the Headteacher said that he did not know what this was going to be, as there was no guidance yet to hand on the new policy. Governors agreed that it would be deleted and replaced by the new policy when it became available.
- f. Overtime Pay Policy: Governors ratified the policy.
- g. Special Leave of Absence policy: the Headteacher said some staff changed their address several times a year, and the provision that a day's leave be granted for moving house was perhaps inappropriate in such cases – it had been intended for those who owned their properties, rather than rented them. It was agreed that the policy should allow one day per annum for all staff.
- h. Managing Changing Staff Needs Policy: the Headteacher said that this was a new policy, brought about by a potential future re-structuring at the school

which would mean changed staff roles and job titles. There were no planned redundancies or financial implications, and the restructuring might now happen in the Summer term. The policy was a model Babcock 4S policy. Governors ratified the policy.

15. Health and Safety

A printed copy of the Accident and Incident Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting (copy in minute book). Health and Safety information items had been included as a part of the Headteacher's Report.

a. Governors asked if there were any matters of concern in the H & S incidents listed; the Headteacher said that there were not. Governors asked if the format could be simplified to show trends more clearly. Governors asked about 'near-misses'; the Headteacher said that the school maintained an 'H & S Concerns' folder in which such incidents could be recorded.

b. Governors noted that the School Nurse (NHS staff) was retiring. The Headteacher said that he had been involved in the interview process and an appointment had now been made.

c. The SBM advised that from September 2012 it was no longer necessary to obtain a CRB check for person performing certain roles. School Governors no longer needed such checks unless they were in regular and unsupervised contact with children. The LA no longer recommended that staff CRBs be updated every three years. The Chairman suggested that the topic be placed on the agenda of the next FGB meeting with the recommendation that renewal of CRB checks every five years be considered,

ACTION: Clerk to include item on CRB checks on FGB agenda.

d. Health and Safety walkabout. Mr Spink confirmed that he had participated in the last walkabout. Some minor issues had been observed, such as slightly uneven paving, that were not worth attending to given that the school would move to a new site in two years. Window opening mechanisms (top-hinged vs. bottom-hinged) were noted. It was agreed to include an item on dates for future H & S walkabouts on the agenda of the next FGB meeting

ACTION: Clerk to include item on H & S walkabouts on FGB agenda.

16. Restructuring of Class-based Support Staff

Item deferred until next meeting of Committee

17. New School Build

The Headteacher presented the most recent set of plans. They would be presented to the next FGB.

18. A.O.B

A member of staff had asked for financial support for a two-year degree course. After discussion, governors agreed that the school offer £1,000 for the 2012 – 2013 academic year.

ACTION: SBM to write with offer to the member of staff

19. Date of next Committee Meetings

Spring: Wednesday 27 February 2013 at 09.30

Summer: Wednesday 26 June 2013 at 09.30

20. Confidential items.

None

The meeting closed at 11.45

Resources Committee

Signed:  Chair...

Date: 27/2/13

PORTESBERY SCHOOL

Resources Committee

18 October 2012

Action items summary

SBM to arrange meeting with SC and JS on SFVS process

All Governors to complete SFVS skills audit

SBM to review wording on Pupil Premium on website

Clerk to include item on CRB checks on FGB agenda.

Clerk to include item on H & S walkabouts on FGB agenda.

SBM to write with offer of support on fees to the member of staff on degree course