

Finance and Premises Committee

January 24th 2024

Committee members: Jade Cheung (JC) (chair), Julia Hutton-Squire (JHS), Carole Catley (CC), Cllr Hugh Rayner (HR), John Parnaby (JP), Nikki Simon (NS), Nick Mailer (NM), Roshi Klair (RK), Rajen Rajput (RR), Lisa Roberts (LR)

1. Apologies - none

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- Jade asked how the Pupil Premium was spent; CC responded that it was used to pay for School Journey, clubs, etc so that PP children get the same opportunities as other children at the school, plus it is spent on Speech & Language Interventions for PP children.
- HR asked about the use of Sports Premium, and specifically whether it is all spent, and CC pointed him to the website for the breakdown of usage and confirmed that it always all spent.

3. Matters Arising

4. Declaration of Business Interests

JC noted that all governors should complete this on Governor Hub.

5. 2022/2023 Return and 23/24 Q3 Quarterly Return

Gov.uk website benchmarking is showing Deansbrook as having a deficit of £400k at the end of last year. This is because an error in how the Borough's failure to pay on time was presented by the Finance team in the Borough – we have pointed out their error and asked them to correct it; it should have been shown as an accrual. JC asked Carole to ask the Borough to get this updated since it is their error.

The latest set of school pay-rises are higher than we anticipated or budgeted. The implication is that we are likely to reach a deficit of £120k at the end of this year.

We currently have 5 spaces across the year, and our Nursery is full. NM noted that this will be the first intake of applications post OFSTED. CC said that we have said to prospective parents that while we disagreed with the OFSTED outcome we have taken it as an impetus to improve and have been working hard to secure better results.

JC asked about capital projects; CC

6. Benchmarking data:

- The committee reviewed this data and had some queries which Lisa will follow up:
 - Why are we receiving less funds delegated from the Local Authority than other similar schools?
 - Why is our water bill per child so high? Lisa explained that we had a water leak in the driveway of the school, so our water bill was high, but now the water company has not billed us for some months. HR asked whether our insurance would cover us for the increased cost of water owing to a leaking pipe. Lisa responded that our insurance says that we weren't covered for water leaks.

7. Policies

- Pay Policy - ratified
- Anti-Fraud & Anti-Corruption Policy – this is a new policy. JHS asked that the GB should be consulted prior to making donations to a new charitable organisation. The committee agreed that in future the Finance & Premises Committee would be consulted. The committee discussed the decision to donate old books to Books2Africa, and ratified the HT's decision.

8. Income from Sharesy

9. Staffing Update

- Mrs Storey and Jemma Stacey have left.
- Fiona Turner returned from Mat Leave in January.
- Emma Smith returned from her Mat Leave today
- Jayne Gutwin has retired

10. Premises Update

- Red Class has severe dry rot. The room is locked but the damp has now got into the electric wiring so we have had to have the wiring disconnected.
 - We have had a quote for £15k. We have had 3 companies come, but 2 have told us that they will not quote because they don't want to do the work.
 - We have asked the Borough for money; they have said there is no money left for this year, but our request will be considered next year. Fortunately as the no. of classes has reduced we have been able to have a classroom not in use.
 - HR asked whether we understand how this damp situation occurred. CC responded that we believe that it's because an external seal has failed.
- HR noted that the boilers have lasted well, and recommended that we consider a replacement programme to avoid unexpected high costs to fix issues.