

MILLTHORPE SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on Thursday 3rd July 2014 at 6pm



Present: Mr Trevor Burton (Headteacher) [from 6.45pm] Mr Bill Schofield
Mr Tim Hooper (Chair) Ms Helen Thomas
Mr Tim Moat

In Attendance: Mr Alex Collins (School Business Manager)
Mrs Sheila Sweeting (Bursar)
Ms Helen Ainsworth (Staff Governor)
Miss Amy White (Clerk)

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interests Apologies for absence were received from Bob Sydes and Naomi Heaton. Eileen Robertson was also absent. There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th April 2014 (previously distributed) With reference to Item 12 and Action Point 3, it was clarified that Helen Thomas' meeting with Alex Collins and Sheila Sweeting was to discuss staff training in the context of the SFVS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subject to the above clarification, the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair. 	
3.	<p>Matters Arising With reference to the Action Plan, all actions were completed and the following updates were given:</p> <p>1. <i>Write letter to Steve Wells to outline scope, fee and timescales</i> Alex Collins reported that e-mail confirmation had been received following the request to outline scope, fee and timescales. Steve Wells had noted that he was confident the work was progressing well and should be completed by the end of the year. However, some of the timescales for some information were outside of his control. A governor asked when a proposal or report would be received. Alex answered that it was due to be received and reviewed at the Finance and Staffing Committee meeting in the Autumn Term but could be brought to an earlier Full Governing Body meeting if necessary. It was agreed that the report would be circulated to governors via e-mail as soon as it was available.</p> <p>2. <i>Contact the LA regarding the deficit license and the concerns regarding the contingency for staff absence. E-mail governors with the information received</i> Alex had spoken to LA Finance regarding various aspects of the deficit position. Considering the contingency amount, this was for the school and governors to agree before the license is applied for. A governor asked if the school had received confirmation of the deficit license from the LA. Alex answered that there had been no confirmation or money; this meant that the school was effectively borrowing the money from the LA with a small interest charge.</p>	Action
4.	<p>Budget Monitoring Report Period 2 (previously distributed) Governors received and noted the Period 2 report, which had been previously distributed. The budget would remain tight for the rest of the Year and Sheila Sweeting noted that there would be some cash flow challenges.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding the cash flow and license, Sheila explained that the school received a lump sum at the beginning of each year but a proportion was retained by the LA to cover the bills paid for on behalf of the school. The remaining sum was divided into twelve equal amounts received each month. A governor asked what problems were created by a negative cash flow. Sheila explained that schools could not purchase on credit and the negative cash flow created problems paying bills. In response to further questions it was clarified that the school would do its utmost to pay invoices within the 30 day period and could receive a cash advance from the LA. The difficulty was monitoring what was in the bank account at the time of paying invoices and prioritising the payments. Governors discussed that the deadline for applying for a license had been in March 2014 and the school</p>	

<p>should have received confirmation and income. It was agreed that governors would write a letter to the LA regarding the license which would be sent on 19th July if confirmation had not been received by that time. Governors were conscious that they did not want to the school to wait until the Autumn term as this could result in returning to a backlog of bills that could not be paid.</p> <p>Questions and comments relating to the monitoring report were invited:</p> <p>With reference to <i>E20: ICT Learning Resources</i>, a governor asked why 45% of the annual budget had already been spent. Alex explained that the expenditure included an upfront service charge payment to Vital York of approximately £15,000.</p> <p>With reference to <i>E21: Exam Fees</i>, a governor asked what proportion of the budget was allocated to second sittings (following early entry) and re-sits. Alex answered that this was possible to quantify but he did not have the information at the present time. A governor noted that the Exam Policy maximised the opportunities but did not provide a clear sense of the cost and impact on improvement. Alex acknowledged that it would be beneficial to consider English Literature in terms of cost and impact as students would be able to sit this exam again. However, some second sitting and re-sit decisions that had previously been made would not be an option in the future. It was agreed that monitoring of re-sit cost and impact would be put in place.</p> <p>In response to a question relating to the 44% of income received for <i>I03: SEN Funding</i>, Sheila explained that this funding was received in three instalments and the first was the largest.</p> <p>A governor asked when the expenditure for work experience was located in the budget. The answer was <i>E27: Bought in Curriculum Services</i>. It was noted that the Quality and Curriculum Committee had discussed concerns regarding the company supplying work experience and a governor said that it would be beneficial to see the contract in light of the concerns raised. A suggestion was made to evaluate the current year's work experience placements. A report could be produced outlining how much the contract cost, how many placements were agreed through the company and how many placements were found by parents.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding how the company was paid, Alex explained that they were paid per placement but the critical aspect to consider was timing. When a placement is found students need to arrange a contact meeting with the company and there might not be enough time to do this. Despite the timing issues, the company take full payment for the placement as soon as it is found.</p> <p>Governors were informed that Tim Gillbanks, Deputy Headteacher responsible for careers education, would be arranging a meeting with the company Manager to discuss the issues and future assurances. Following this meeting, the Headteacher would report to governors. In response to a question regarding alternative options, it was noted that the school had considered taking the work in-house but evaluation of capacity and cost needed to take place.</p> <p>With reference to <i>E22: Admin Supplies</i>, governors asked why the expenditure was high. Sheila answered that the new phone system was included as it was categorised under CFR.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Agenda</p> <p>Agenda</p>
<p>5. School Fund (previously distributed) Governors received and noted that School Fund, which had been previously distributed. From Sheila Sweeting highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · There were some outstanding bills for the German Exchange, resulting in a slight deficit · It was likely that there would be a reimbursement of approximately £30 to all students who were part of the France trip · The 2013/14 fund had been audited and there was nothing to report. <p>Governors discussed that there was £8,136.71 in the general fund reserves and a suggestion was made to ask the School Council what they would like to purchase. A view was expressed that if a large proportion of the fund was saved then it would not be benefitting the current students.</p> <p>In response to a question it was noted that if there was an overspend on a school trip this was covered by the School Fund. It was further noted that some reserve money was needed to support upfront expenditure on trips for future years as deposits were not always received prior to payment.</p> <p>A governor asked if the reserve amount had grown over the years and Sheila offered to look into this. Once a workable reserve amount had been agreed, the School Council would be asked for expenditure ideas.</p>	<p>Action</p>

<p>6.</p>	<p>Lettings Charges</p> <p>Sheila Sweeting reported that she had compared the school's lettings charges with other schools and they were generally about the same. Some regular lettings were being reviewed to bring them more in-line with these standard charges. Governors discussed that, historically, the lettings charges had been slightly lower than standard for regular lettings in order to build and develop good relationships.</p> <p>It was noted that a Zumba class would be held at the school from September as part of the city's Adult Education program. Governors considered the current lettings and discussed the benefit to the school and the community.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Proposal to change the structure of the MFL Department <i>(previously distributed)</i></p> <p>Governors confirmed that they had received and read the proposal to change the Modern Foreign Languages Department structure. Questions and comments were invited.</p> <p>A governor asked if the reduction from 13 members of staff to seven also included MFL teaching assistants. It was clarified that the TAs were not included within the proposal.</p> <p>Governors noted that the proposal presented a small saving and there had been an internal advert and interview process for the Head of Department (HoD) position. Governors agreed it was positive that the proposed leadership structure (to two HoDs) would be reviewed if there was a change of leadership. It was clarified that the two HoDs would not be part of a job share, but both positions would be full time.</p> <p>Governor were informed that the Headteacher had carefully considered the options before making the proposal and positive feedback had been received from the MFL staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair proposed accepting the proposal to change the structure of the MFL Department, as outlined within the written proposal. Governors unanimously agreed. <p><i>The Headteacher entered the meeting at 6.45pm.</i></p> <p>The Headteacher reported that having two HoDs – with their individual skills and experience – would be beneficial to the MFL Department.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>School Improvement Plan financial implications</p> <p>Alex reported that there were not many priorities or objectives within the 2013/14 SIP that had a direct financial impact as most items were effectively cost neutral.</p> <p>The signage project had financial implications but these had been discussed and agreed in previous meetings. It was noted that this objective would be carried forward into 2014/15.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Review of School Improvement Priority 4 <i>(previously distributed)</i></p> <p>Governor noted that SP4c: <i>"We will review the performance management and teacher pay policies and procedures to ensure they meet upcoming national requirements yet still motivate staff and promote improved teaching"</i>, had been rated Green with an impact rating of two.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that every teacher had received evidence their observations and Y11 residual. The system was working well and continued to develop and embed.</p> <p>It was discussed that the Pay Policy had been approved the previous year and would be implemented from September 2014. Staff had, therefore, been given a year to prepare for the changes. The Headteacher reminded governors that if teachers did not meet set criteria they would not receive a pay increment. There was a clear expectation that teachers needed to be consistently Good and governors noted that support would continue to be provided to help staff achieve this expectation.</p> <p>In response to a question the Headteacher explained that reviews would start in September and be completed by the end of October. During the course of a year, a teacher could be formally observed two to three times. If a teacher did not achieve a judgement of Good they would have the opportunity for another observation and support would be provided. The Headteacher said that he wanted observations to be reliable and helpful.</p> <p>A governor asked if feedback was provided after observations. The Headteacher answered that feedback was always provided and staff wanted to receive it as they have high expectations for themselves. The Headteacher shared his view that if teachers were consistently good throughout the year this would lead</p>

to outstanding learning.

A governor asked if the impact of the Pay Policy changes would be seen. The Headteacher answered that improving the quality of teaching would improve exam results, but he did not feel that the Pay Policy and awards specifically would have an impact.

A governor noted that John Bates (Assistant Headteacher) had produced a report on the quality of staff training for the Quality and Curriculum Committee. The opportunities and level of training was very impressive. The Headteacher said that generic training would be provided but there was also opportunity to for groups to receive specific development as part of a teaching and learning community. It was noted that there was an expectation of 30 hours of training per year. Another governor highlighted that training and the cost of training was an important consideration for the Finance and Staffing Committee. The Headteacher briefly outlined the training days and how some of these were disaggregated. He explained that the school wanted to support changing practice to increase effectiveness.

10. SFVS Visit Form and follow up actions *(previously distributed)*

Helen Thomas reported that she had met Sheila Sweeting and Alex Collins to look at the School's Financial Value Standards (SFVS). The report from this meeting had been circulated and included some further actions for consideration:

1) Point of Vulnerability regarding staffing available for administering Finance

Helen explained that Sheila was the only member of staff currently administering a majority of the financial responsibilities of the school; including invoices and budget monitoring. There was no cover in the event of Sheila's absence and Helen felt this put the school in a vulnerable position and the admin staff structure should be reviewed. The admin staffing structure was tabled for information.

Governor discussed the options and it was clarified that there was no capacity within the team to provide cover or to receive training in this area. Sheila also highlighted the importance of doing the work regularly and not just ad-hoc. Governors noted that services could be bought in to support some work, for e.g. invoices, but these companies would not have background knowledge of the school and its position.

Governors further considered emergency cover and noted that it would always be an expensive way forward. Capacity within the current team was discussed and a suggestion was made to train a member of staff in some key areas and get them to take on a proportion of the workload. Governors acknowledged that there would be difficulties with this suggestion but it could be an option.

The Headteacher said there had been discussions regarding a member of office staff to take on some of Sheila's lower grade duties. However, to get this capacity there would need to be a broader structure review.

Governors acknowledged that it was an area of vulnerability and discussed further options and ideas for addressing the issue. A suggestion was made to consider an apprentice to increase the capacity within the admin team. It was agreed that this was a positive idea for further consideration.

Considering the wider staffing structure, the Headteacher said that the needs of the school had been matched to staffing but there had not been a detailed review of TLR (Teaching and Learning Responsibility) positions. Some reviews had been completed in part but there had not been a wholesale formal review.

Governors discussed that it would be difficult to carry out a full and separate review every year, but the appraisal and pay process provided an element of review. Governors further noted that they were confident that the school had reviewed specific areas in context of need and produced formal proposals for governors to discuss.

Governors briefly discussed pay protection, changing curriculum and the impact of reviews on staff. They acknowledged that too much review could be unsettling for staff and they felt confident that there was no gross unfairness in job weight or pay.

2) Annual governor skills audit

Helen noted that the Finance and Staffing Committee should do a skills audit annually. She said that the audit had not been circulated as the full governing body would be completing a skills matrix as part of their preparation for reconstitution.

3) Benchmarking

Governors discussed that they had previously considered benchmarking data and felt it would be more beneficial to look at data specific to items of discussion. It was noted that benchmarking data could be

	<p>produced for all CFR categories including amount per pupil, amount per teacher or percentage of overall budget.</p> <p>The Headteacher highlighted that previous benchmarking analysis had been looked at in terms of whether teaching support (for example) was expensive. He felt that it would still be beneficial to produce occasional reports and graphs on these areas.</p> <p>National benchmarking was briefly considered and governors noted that there were benefits but the data was from the previous year and there were some inconsistencies with CFR coding that would impact the benchmarking.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair would further discuss benchmarking data with Sheila in terms of specific areas and a general overview.</p> <p>Helen Thomas was thanked for her report.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Pay Policy discussion and review (<i>previously distributed</i>)</p> <p>As the Pay Policy would not be implemented until September 2014, a suggestion was made to defer the review until Spring 2015. The Pay Committee would be involved in the cycle of appraisal and pay considerations and a report and review of the process could then take place.</p> <p>A governor highlighted that there had been an agreement to look at the Policy at the end of the academic year 2014 so changes could be made for 2014/15 implementation. The governor asked if there had been any issues following the approval of the policy.</p> <p>The Headteacher said that there had been no issues and it would be more beneficial to review the policy following implementation and the completion of the first appraisal cycle. If the school or governors felt changes to the policy were needed – after the appraisal cycle in September 2014 – these changes could be discussed, agreed and implemented for the September 2015 cycle. Governors noted that it would be important to consult staff during any review.</p>	<p>Agenda</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Governor involvement in school</p> <p>Helen Thomas had presented her report under Item 10.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Executive Committee would be involved in trialing governor visits to lessons. This was a sensitive area for staff but if the visits were successful then the process would be rolled out to the rest of the governing body.</p> <p>A governor challenged trial with the Executive Committee, stating that the wider governing body should be involved in the visits, not just members of Executive. The governor acknowledged that it could be sensitive for staff but the key element would be to explain that governors were there to broaden their understanding and not to make judgments.</p> <p>Staff governor, Helen Ainsworth, suggested asking staff to volunteer to invite governors to visit, as some would be more open and comfortable with the visit. Helen then highlighted that the timing of visits would be important as teaching staff would be focusing on getting to know their new class during the first half term.</p> <p>The Headteacher acknowledged the comments and suggestions and explained that the idea to trial on a smaller scale was in response to the broad views of staff regarding lesson visits.</p> <p>Governors agreed that it would be beneficial to increase the profile of the governing body and have the opportunity to meet staff and students and get involved in school life on another level.</p> <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Alex Collins reported that a staffing decision had been made in May that had produced a slight net increase. Due to timing constraints, this decision was made with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of Governors, under the delegation agreement approved by governors. A report on the staffing change and impact was tabled for information.</p> <p>Governors noted that a TA3 had been appointed to ensure adequate support for students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and to provide support with intervention. This was following the decision to no longer jointly procure the Traveler and Ethnic Monitoring Support Service (TEMSS) from the LA.</p> <p>A governor asked if the skills of the TA3 would be required by other schools and if there could be a supply at cost arrangement. The Headteacher answered that the school had a large number of EAL students so there would not be capacity to fulfill the needs of the school and other schools. The Headteacher then highlighted the possibility of cluster arrangements in the future and said that work was taking place with</p>	

	<p>teachers to establish positive strategies for support EAL students.</p> <p>A governor asked for clarification of the overall cost increase and was told that it would be approximately £10,000. Alex explained that this was the net increase and also included another TA taking on a more senior role for a proportion of their hours.</p> <p>The Headteacher further clarified that when the budget was set, it was already known that the TEMSS would not be purchased.</p> <p>A governor asked if the school received additional funding based on the number of EAL students. Alex answered that there is no specific funding although the funding formula does take account of the number of EAL students.</p> <p>With reference to the tabled document, showing weekly teaching hours, a governor asked for confirmation that classroom support was 14 hours down from May 2014 to September 2014. Alex answered that there was a reduction but there had been an increase in hours for intervention and the use of the ISC.</p>	
13.	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>There were no items recorded as a separate, confidential minute.</p>	
14.	<p>Dates of future meetings – all at 6.00pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TBC at the Full Governing Body meeting on 9th July. 	
	<p>Meeting ended at 8.00pm.</p>	
	<p>_____</p> <p>Mr Tim Hooper Chair of Finance & Staffing Committee</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date Signed</p>

**Action Plan following the Meeting of the Finance Committee Meeting
Held on Thursday 3rd July 2014**

	Action	Agenda	Person	Date
1.	Circulate Steve Wells report	3	Alex Collins	As soon as it is available
2.	Draft letter regarding deficit license and circulate on 19 th July if confirmation of the license has not been received	4	Chair / Alex Collins	19 th July
3.	Produce and circulate a report following the work experience meeting	4	Headteacher	Next meeting (Autumn term)
4.	Review School Fund reserve amounts over the last few years and consider a workable amount.	5	Sheila Sweeting	Next meeting (Autumn term)

Items for Future Meetings:

- SIP financial implications (standing item)
- Monitor cost of re-sits and second sittings for exams
- Pay Policy discussion and review – Spring Term 2015
- Services to Schools – Autumn Term 2014