



Minutes

Approved by the Governing Body

Meeting of the Full Governing Body (FGB) of Fowlmere Primary School

Wednesday 20th March 2024 – 6.00pm

Via Microsoft Teams

Present

Suki Hinton (SH), Interim Head Teacher
Phil Butterworth (PB), Co-Chair
Hayley Woods (HW), Co-Chair
Abi Clarke (AC) (from 6.30pm until 7.10pm)
Kym Rouse (KR)

Apologies for Absence

None

In attendance

Lisa White (LW), Clerk
Wendy Whistler (WW), School Business Manager / Finance Manager
Sue Wright (SW), Executive Head Teacher

No.	Item	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>HW opened the meeting at 6.05pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mark Norman, Director of Finance and Operations, Cam Academy Trust.</p> <p>Apologies for her late arrival were received and accepted from Abi Clarke.</p>	
2.	<p>Declaration of Interests in relation to the Agenda</p> <p>It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.</p> <p>At this point, PB proposed, and it was agreed that Item 7 Budget Review is brought forward to allow WW to leave the meeting once this item had been discussed.</p>	

7.	<p>Budget Review</p> <p>WW explained that she is not able to share a full Budget report for the 2023/2024 financial year until the year end but advised that the current predicted carry forward into 2024/2025 is £15.5k.</p> <p>WW then explained that she is currently working on 2 different Budget scenarios for the next financial year pending the school's conversion to an academy, with the first version based on the school remaining as a Local Authority (LA) Maintained school, and the second incorporating any changes based on the school becoming part of the Cam Academy Trust.</p> <p>WW further explained that she has made some amendments to both versions with regards to employee contracts and then provided the following overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. LA option <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leadership post based at L6 from 1st April. ➤ Current agency supply teacher employed as agency but not on contract leaving a vacancy from 1st September. ➤ No finance employee with the plan to continue current arrangement (for budget purposes). ➤ Predicted carry forward at the end of year 1 of £23.7k and a deficit of £39k in year 2. ii. Academy option <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leadership cost of 20% at L24. ➤ Head of School at L3. ➤ Current agency supply teacher employed but this does not include hiring commission, as there will be other expenditure that is not taken out yet. ➤ Administration vacancy (costed as employee as agency costs unknown). ➤ Finance vacancy 5 hours per week (costed as employee as agency costs unknown). ➤ Predicted carry forward at the end of year 1 of £9.5k and a deficit of £61.8k in year 2. <p>WW then advised that the budget for all other items is based on current spend but with an uplift for items such as utilities.</p> <p>Governors asked: Question: Is there sufficient budget allocated against Supply given that there was an overspend this year? Answer: I think the issue this year is there were so many changes, coupled with difficulty recruiting, which lead to increased costs.</p> <p>Next year's Budget has been based on existing costs for Supply plus some additional Supply cover costs.</p> <p>Some of this will be offset by insurance claims as we can claw back some of the costs (£220 per day) after 10 days of absence, however that does not always cover the full cost of the supply teacher.</p> <p>Question: With regards to staffing structure and Teaching Assistant (TA) deployment, how realistic is it to have a more stable coverage rather than the current situation with several support staff on part-time contracts?</p>	
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Answer:

It is a challenge having several part-time TAs as this increases our on-costs, but I cannot see how we could currently afford to move away from this.

WW then explained that across the LA, schools are underfunded, with costs increasing by 8% compared to an increase in funding of 1.2%, meaning that schools cannot break even.

WW further explained that Support Staff costs have increased by 8% over 2 consecutive years, adding that unions are also asking for a flat rate of £3k in 2024/2025, although they have also asked for this to be fully funded.

WW then advised that a 3% increase has been built into the Budget for both Support Staff and Teaching Staff, which is considerably less than the unions have asked for.

Question:

A lot of schools' percentage of spend on Staffing costs is in the region of 90%, what is Fowlmere's?

Answer:

It is below that figure, but I do not know the exact percentage.

Question:

Why is there a reduction in the Learning Resources Budget in 2024/2025?

Answer:

This is an overspend this year as we are unable to budget for Educational Visits.

Question:

Does the income from Kidschoice increase?

Answer:

Yes. It is now approximately £5k per annum.

A discussion then took place regarding approval of the Budget during which governors noted that this is not possible until it is known if the school is joining the Cam Academy Trust.

In addition, WW advised that the school is currently working on the basis that they will remain part of the LA but continuing to work on a separate 5-month Budget for the MAT. WW then advised that the deadline for submission of the Budget to the LA is 10th May, with year end to be finalised at the end of the month.

Question:

If we do not convert on 1st April, we will therefore need a Head Teacher in post once SH's contract ends. Will we therefore need to recruit to this role?

Answer:

No. We have budgeted for L6, so all we will need to do is change KR's role to that of Interim Head Teacher.

We are still expecting the conversion to go ahead, even if this is not on 1st April, and we are already considering what needs to be in place to ensure a smooth transition if this is the case and we do not convert until 1st May.

Lastly, WW advised that a full year end report will be shared with governors in due course, along with more detail on the 2024/2025 Budget once available.

A brief discussion then followed regarding the removal of the school swimming pool, during which WW advised that there is approximately £8k Capital spend available to support with this, along with a further £5k for the 2024/2025 financial year.

	<p>It was noted that as there were no further comments or questions, governors thanked WW for her time.</p> <p>It was noted that WW left the meeting at 6.25pm.</p> <p>Governors also wished to record their thanks to SH for her hard work in ensuring the school has a carry forward amount into next year.</p>																																													
	Standing Items																																													
7.	<p>Membership of the Governing Body</p> <p>As noted previously, there are now 4 Co-opted Governor vacancies and 1 LA Governor vacancy on the Governing Body, with the agreement to wait until the school is part of the Cam Academy Trust before recruitment takes place.</p>																																													
8.	<p>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising from the previous meetings</p> <p>Draft standard minutes and one set of Confidential minutes from the meeting held on 7th February 2024 were shared with governors for their review prior to the meeting and were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair after the meeting.</p> <p>Matters Arising from previous meetings:</p> <table><tr><th>Item</th><th>Action</th><th>Who?</th><th>Status</th></tr><tr><td colspan="4">10 July 2023</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>Head Teacher to make some enquiries within the community to establish if the pool can be sold and relocated elsewhere in the village in order for the community to continue to benefit from it.</td><td>SH</td><td>Action ongoing.</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">6th December 2023</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Executive Head Teacher to share link to the Cam Academy Trust’s Prevent training module.</td><td>SW</td><td>Action complete</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>Executive Head Teacher to provide training on the Governor’s Role in Safeguarding at the next FGB meeting.</td><td>SW</td><td>Action complete.</td></tr><tr><td>16</td><td>Co-Chairs of Governors to review the current training offer and identify 2 modules for governors to complete before the next FGB meeting in February.</td><td>PB / HW</td><td>Agreed to remove pending conversion to academy and further governors.</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">7th February 2024</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Further explore the use of MVC’s minibus.</td><td>KR</td><td>Action complete.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Head Teacher to contact Andrew Page to ask if he is happy to assist with the Budget process this year.</td><td>SH</td><td>Action complete.</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>Head Teacher to check with the School Business Manager the process for completing the SFVS this year.</td><td>SH</td><td>Only change is A Page no longer on the GB. Action complete.</td></tr></table> <p>In addition, more detailed discussion took place on the following: <u>Swimming</u> KR advised that lessons for Year 5 and 6 pupils have been arranged for 7 weeks in the Summer term at the Melbourn Sports Centre, with transport also confirmed.</p>	Item	Action	Who?	Status	10 July 2023				7	Head Teacher to make some enquiries within the community to establish if the pool can be sold and relocated elsewhere in the village in order for the community to continue to benefit from it.	SH	Action ongoing.	6 th December 2023				4	Executive Head Teacher to share link to the Cam Academy Trust’s Prevent training module.	SW	Action complete	9	Executive Head Teacher to provide training on the Governor’s Role in Safeguarding at the next FGB meeting.	SW	Action complete.	16	Co-Chairs of Governors to review the current training offer and identify 2 modules for governors to complete before the next FGB meeting in February.	PB / HW	Agreed to remove pending conversion to academy and further governors.	7 th February 2024				4	Further explore the use of MVC’s minibus.	KR	Action complete.		Head Teacher to contact Andrew Page to ask if he is happy to assist with the Budget process this year.	SH	Action complete.	10	Head Teacher to check with the School Business Manager the process for completing the SFVS this year.	SH	Only change is A Page no longer on the GB. Action complete.	
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	<p>It was noted that AC joined the meeting at 6.30pm.</p> <p>A brief discussion then took place with regards to ensuring there is clear communication with parents on the change in provision, and the reasons why not all year groups will have swimming lessons, including the benefits of utilising the space where the swimming pool is currently sited for other things.</p> <p>During this discussion, governors also considered next steps with regards to the removal of the swimming pool.</p>	
	Main Discussion Items	
5.	<p>Head Teacher's Verbal Report</p> <p>Due to the focus on the school Budget, SH provided a verbal Head Teacher's report as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Current overall Attendance rate of 96% with the school achieving 2 national awards (one for the Autumn term and one for the previous Spring term). ➤ Significant support for 2 families with high needs children, who both have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in process. ➤ Full complement of staff this week, with both the Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCo) and Teaching Assistant (TA) back in setting following a period of absence. <p>Governors asked:</p> <p>Question: Is there a guaranteed route through an agency to recruit to the School Secretary position?</p> <p>Answer: Hopefully, as we received details of a strong candidate today through an agency.</p> <p>Question: Are the delays with academisation making our agency supply teacher feel vulnerable?</p> <p>Answer: I think they know that their position is secure once we convert, so hopefully this is not the case.</p> <p>Question: Are we happy in terms of their strength and suitability to that role that we do not need to advertise the position?</p> <p>Answer: We have to advertise the position and the strongest candidate will get the job. However, they have demonstrated strong teaching, as well as developed a good relationship with the children. They also have Senior Leadership experience, and there is a lot of potential there.</p> <p>Question: Is everything in place in terms of preparing pupils for their end of year assessments?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. Our Year 6 cohort are currently sitting mock tests, and Data is looking positive in several areas of the Curriculum overall. In addition, our Year 5 children have adapted well to being out of class while the Year 6 pupils are sitting mock tests.</p> <p>We are also working towards aligning our assessments with the Trust.</p>	

6.	<p>Academisation Update</p> <p>SH explained that the latest delay to the academisation process is that the Diocese contacted the school to say they carried out a rent review in September 2022, with a planned increase in rent from £6k to £32k per year, and that the school will need to pay the arrears.</p> <p>SH added that the school had no prior knowledge of this rent increase from September 2022, and therefore no knowledge of those arrears, which means there is no money available to cover this cost.</p> <p>SH therefore advised that the Trust is in contact with the Regional Director of Education to request a grant to cover this cost.</p> <p>SH then explained that as a result, conversion is now unlikely to be on 1st April.</p> <p>Governors asked: Question: Were those costs visible in our Budget or were they covered directly the LA? Answer: It may be that they were deducted from our funding at source by the LA, but as already stated, the rent review or rent increase has never been communicated until now.</p> <p>Question: What would be the impact if we said we no longer wanted the land? Answer: I do not think we would be able to offer the Early Years provision that we currently offer. Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children need to have outdoor space.</p> <p>Question: Could we provide that space elsewhere, for instance where the swimming pool is? Answer: Not in time to ensure there is a continuous provision.</p> <p>SH then advised that all other aspects of the conversion are moving forwards and once this issue is resolved, the school will be able to join the Cam Academy Trust.</p> <p>A brief discussion then took place regarding communicating any further delay on the conversion process to stakeholders.</p> <p>A governor asked: Question: What is the impact of this further delay on staff? Answer: We have taken the decision not to inform staff of this delay currently to support their wellbeing. We will however share any update with them before sharing it with parents.</p> <p>At this point, SW explained that if the conversion does not take place on 1st April, staff can still attend the Trust training day that is being held after the Easter holidays.</p> <p>A governor then asked which staff are due to attend that training day and KR advised that all the teaching staff will be attending.</p>	
8.	<p>Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)</p> <p>SH referred governors to the draft 2023/2024 Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) checklist that was shared with them prior to the meeting and explained that nothing of any concern was identified.</p>	

	<p>SH then asked governors if they were happy to approve the 2023/2024 Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) for submission to the LA by 31st March.</p> <p>It was noted that the Governing Body unanimously approved the 2023/2024 Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS).</p>	
	Routine Business	
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There were three other items of business added to the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Safeguarding <p>A governor asked if there were any issues with regards to Safeguarding that governors need to be aware of and SH provided a brief overview of the current situation for one pupil.</p> <p>During this overview, governors noted the impact the higher-than-average Safeguarding concerns may have on staff and asked whether the school has considered how to support staff on this.</p> <p>In response, SH advised that she has arranged for the Emotional Wellbeing team to hold some sessions with staff after the Easter holidays.</p> ii. Update on Playgroup <p>A governor asked for an update on the situation with Playgroup.</p> <p>Due to the nature of the content of the discussion on this subject, the rest of this item is covered by a separate Confidential minute.</p> iii. Visit to the school to understand Early Years Provision <p>AC asked whether a member of her team could visit Fowlmere to see how the Early Years Curriculum is taught, with KR / SH agreeing this could be done.</p> <p>It was noted that AC left the meeting at 7.10pm.</p>	
10.	<p>Dates and Times of Future Meetings</p> <p>Meeting dates and times were confirmed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wednesday 1 May 2024 ➤ Wednesday 10 July 2024 <p>All meetings to start at 6pm and in person.</p> <p>Lastly, governors wished to record their thanks to SH for everything she has done over her time as Interim Head Teacher at the school. In turn, SH thanked governors for their support, adding how much she has enjoyed being part of the Fowlmere community.</p>	
	<p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.15pm.</p>	