

**GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

22 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 5PM

# MINUTES - PART 1

Members: Nimesha Nagahawatte (Headteacher), Srividya Srivathsan (SS) (Chair) Kiran Rahman (KR) and Martin Young (MY)

In attendance: Suhal Kadir (Tower Hamlets) and Naomi Barnes (Clerk)

*\*Italics denotes absence*

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| 1. | ***Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declaration of Interests (including potential conflict – financial or otherwise)***  The Chair welcomed committee members and guest presenter to the meeting.  An apology for absence was received from Naffisa Ayub. |
| 2. | **Minutes Of the Committee Meeting Held on 19 October 2023 and Matters Arising**  The Minutes were agreed as a correct record and would be marked as signed by the Chair via GovernorHub.    Matters Arising  None |

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| 3. | **Budget Monitoring**  SK **reported** on the income from the third quarter for the period ending 31 December 2023 and was explained as submitted.  The school originally has projected a in-year deficit of £13,269 and the cumulative deficit carry forward of £35,152.  However due to efforts from the school management, the school is now projecting an in-year surplus of £31,221 and the cumulative carry forward of £4,517.  The SEN income reconciliation needs to be carried out and the Chair stated that she will email LA to share the SEN register income reconciliation with the Head to check and confirm ahead of the March mop up payment by School Finance so that the year-end projections can be more realistic.  The chair also requested Suhal to keep an eye on the cash flow as the projected carry forward surplus is very small and can pose a threat to cash flow for March payroll if projections cannot be realised as planned; Also there is a deadline for applying for cash advance to School Finance Team and therefore the school needs to be kept an eye on that. SK has stated he will monitor and inform the Head should there be a need to apply for cash advance to tide over cash flow problems in March 2024.  In summary, the schools’ financial position is finishing positive for Q3 and projecting a surplus. The Chair **thanked** SK for his contributions and for the presentation.  **Action: SK will update the report and send back to NN for circulation to the committee.** |

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| 4. | **Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) 2024 – 2025**    The Chair **confirmed** last year’s SFVS was shared and that both the Chair and NN will work together and update to the reflect the new year. In particular, changes to the schools’ leadership, substantive head, and school business manager (SBM).  **Action: Chair and NN to meet offline to update and will circulate at the next full GB meeting.** |

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| 5. | **Service Level Agreements**  Update  The Chair **confirmed** there were there no new SLAs this was affirmed by NN. |

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| 6. | **School Premises Update**  NN **informed** the committee that a meeting with G4S had taken place on 25 January 2024 which reported no major issues. The team continue to complete minor repairs and maintenance around the site.  A governor **mentioned** a meeting at the school keepers house with Officers of Tower Hamlets. NN **confirmed** this was held on the back of an information meeting with headteachers in December 2023, which looked into developing Alternative Resource Provision (ARPs) and different ways of increasing school capacity.  The Chair **requested** this item remain on the agenda going forward at each meeting, to review the position for this piece of real-estate and for any changes. |
| 7. | **Staffing Update in relation to Budget**  This agenda was moved to the confidential Part 2 of the meeting due to its personal nature. |
| 8. | **Date And Time of Next Meeting**  Resolved that the meeting would take place on Thursday 9 May 2024 at 5:00 p.m. |
| 9. | **AOB**  KR **informed** the committee of a grant available for hosting events paid for by Tower Hamlets and expressed an interest in organising a corporate fun day. The application opens 1st week in March. KR would need a letter to for the PTA group in order to arrange, however was unsure as to how the funding arrangements would work. The Chair **confirmed** a letter could be provided by the school and further explore after the upcoming half-term in May and, an event could be planned to take place during June/July summer term. |
|  | **PART 2 - CONFIDENTIAL SECTION**  The Chair **highlighted** staff turnover and movement at the school, noting long-term sickness leave of the finance officer, and that it was important for the school to make a decision as to next steps.  NN **confirmed** having been in recent contact with the staff member who has sent through a further sicknote. NN was advised to make a rereferral to occupational health and, following the formal attendance review stage the next steps is to go down the contractual route. The Chair **commented** to engage with the union if required and a non-prejudice discussion, and the possibility of a panel if required with representation from KR and MY to represent for the school.  **Staffing Update in relation to Budget**  NN updated since the last meeting:  Before half term Jubeda Ahmed, deputy head and Mai-Anh Dien, the school business manager left Harbinger. JA held many roles including, SENCO. This is now being temporarily covered by NN. Fiona Keogh has been appointment deputy head and in the summer term an advert will go out for a substantive position.  The school is currently looking to recruit a new SBM and DSL as this is also being covered by NN and Jakie Garner as deputy.  NN explained the finances were being managed by Tower Hamlets as an interim measure and Suhal Kadir is providing this support remotely. NN went onto confirm this was also supported by a finance officer attending 1 day a week to process invoices and who is in communication with Suhal Kadir. The Chair **commented** this would provide savings from the former SBM role.  Also within the administration team, the school has taken on supply cover to cover reception. An advert for a SENCO has also gone out to advertisement for the position to start in September to replace JA previously in this role. In addition to NN supporting this role there is a SLA for a SENCO working three days a week with the school. The Chair **asked** if a full-time teacher is needed and the potential to keep the SLA and having a part time teacher two days a week? NN **confirmed** capacity is needed to increase out of class time for the three senior leaders.  There was a teaching assistant (TA) on long term sick leave and the school went through human resource (HR) procedures, and a conversation without prejudice took place and a settlement agreement made in January.  A teacher has recently returned from maternity leave and is now job sharing and therefore the school has two HLTAs equivalent of a full-time post.  The cost of supply staff has increased following a review of the need for HLTAs supporting children with special needs who did not have support. This followed a set of twins joining and increasing the need for two new TAs, who were appointed as these children required one-to-one support. This increased capacity to three staff and in total the school has taken on 5 TAs for the rest of the academic year. The Chair **suggested** exploring apprentices to reduce cost. NN confirmed they would look into this model of working.  One schoolteacher before the Christmas holidays was involved in an accident outside school and took three weeks off before returning. However, since half term has been off due to concerns following the accident. The Chair **suggested** holding a meeting to provide professional support . NN would arrange for this to happen.  Lastly, one of the teachers is away on compassionate leave. |

The meeting closed at 19:02pm.

To be marked as signed electronically via GovernorHub.