

**GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

19 October 2023 AT 5PM

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

In attendance: Mai-Anh Dien (School Business Manager), Naomi Barnes (Clerk) and Rochelle Clark

*\*Italics denotes absence*

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| 1. | **Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declaration of Pecuniary Interests (including potential conflict – financial or otherwise)**  An apology of lateness was received from Kiran Rahman (KR).    An apology for absence was received from Martin Young. |
| 2. | **Election Of Committee Chair To elect a Committee Chair for the 2023/24 academic year.**  KR nominated SS for the position of Chair of the committee. SS accepted to take over the role for a year and suggested that KR to hold the position next year. |
| 3. | **Committee Terms of Reference** **To review and agree the committee’s Terms of Reference**  The Chair confirmed, there were no changes made to the TOR. |
| 4. | **Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising – 11th May 2023**  The Minutes were agreed as a correct record and would be marked as signed by the Chair via Governor Hub.  **Matters Arising**  It was reported that G4S were working extra hours for Harbinger. MD **explained** the reasons for the additional hours was for the lettings, as the school wanted it for the football contract. So far, the extra hours have not been needed. Nothing has been budgeted this year, anything additional is a bonus.  KR **suggested** alternatives routes for example, fundraising due to the limitations and time commitments from the parents.  In response to a question regarding opening a bank account for PTA, KR stated that it has not been possible to open an account as yet. The Chair confirmed Harbinger has a school fund account and should use this when doing a piece of fund raising and to agree the scope. It is noted, the threshold is too low for the PTA against the high banking charges, therefore the committee has decided Harbinger will complete activities through the school fund account. Any out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed through contact with the school business manager. KR **asked** for the topic to be revisited, this was confirmed by the Chair.  KR **confirmed** having spoken with charities for example, Asda and Canary Wharf Kathari Group however, they would not donate money directly into school accounts. The Chair **confirmed** there are two school accounts.  Disbursement Account and School Fund account. School can receive donations into the school fund account when required KR said she would follow up with the charities to confirm and discuss any concerns.  The chair **asked** whether there had been any follow up regarding the Deputy Mayor and caretaker bungalow and renting it out. MD **confirmed** there had been no update. The Chair **suggested** this be pursued as it is a piece of land and has potential to be a hub(MY) . NN stated There is now a specialist hub at Harbinger this started in September 2023. The class is specifically designed for those children with autism and holds up to 10 from age nursery up to year 3, the school are looking for staff and are looking into arrangements for this.  Harbinger have made some new arrangements with the help of staff from Early years are keen to get involved and are working with the school. It is an intervention for the initial two years with a view to supporting the children into joining the mainstream. Jubeda Ahmed has been working with the class teacher to provide support.  MD **commented** the school are supporting the children and that this project needed time to embed into the wider processes. The Chair **suggested** accepting the offer from the LA. NN **confirmed** Harbinger has a SENCO for two days of the week through the SLA which is available until Christmas. MD **confirmed** having budgeted for a full-time position to start in the New Year, if the budget cannot be used the school will look to find a replacement and for the SLA to continue in the role.  KR **asked** if the intervention teacher attended the class on a daily basis or if this more on a sporadic basis. NN **confirmed** across Tower Hamlets 11 schools are involved with the pilot project who are working with Phoenix setting up the specialist classes within the school. Whereby the school staff are trained by Phoenix, the children are with their teachers for part of the day and then join the mainstream classes for the remaining part of the day. Jubeda Ahmed will be working with teachers to help set up part of the classroom to meet the needs of the children with a vision to build this into a full day.  The Chair **commented** this was helpful experience in providing teachers with CPD**.** The Chair **asked** whether the funding from Phoenix had already been committed to the children. MD **confirmed** the school is waiting to receive £10,000 for the refurbishment to accommodate the children.  **Action:** SS will contact an SLA contact to refer any leads of interest in supporting on a freelance basis. |
| 5. | **Finance** Budget Monitoring Report Expenditure over the HT Limit Pupil Numbers  MD **presented** the BMR reportand explained the variances **in** the income, of the I01 there was a variance of £18,754 due to the funding of teachers’ pay support from the DfE . This is what the school will receive and has already been incorporated into the budget. Harbinger budgeted 5% and the agreed increase was 6.5%.  IO3 this is then new SEN position the forecast is agreed and confirmed by the SEN department. Harbinger are looking to require additional funding have put together the EHCP plans and application, Harbinger are now waiting for this to be approved, with the hope of achieving more funding during the spring term. There are three children waiting for approval.  IO7 there has been an overspend, this was due to the cash advances of £125K to help with Cash flow towards the end of last year end and beginning of the new fiscal year that needs to be repaid by December 23 – provisioned for in the current forecast.  **SS reminded** the group of the cash flow issue during last year when the LA borrowed the school £125,000. **MD** has made a provision to repay the LA back. This figure balances out the deficit and what the school is receiving with what is forecast.  IO8 the variances was because the school had more money coming in than originally forecasted. Harbinger has also opened up the school nursery class for those parents who can afford for their children to attend full-time, but do not have 30-hour funding codes.  At the end of the year, the school forecasts to receive £46K more income than originally budgeted for  Expenditure E01, Teaching and Staff salaries, there was an underspend. The reason for this is due to not yet recruiting a full-time SENCO.  E03 TA’s and support staff, the pay award increase is yet to be factored in so the surplus there may be reduced. The Chair **confirmed** this was marked by an estimated of around 6% and this provision has been made presuming staff pay rises and income.  KR **asked** regarding E08 the calculations for this. The Chair **confirmed** the accrual with last years, year-end there are some that may have been spend and expenditures and includes the refund.  MD **concluded** with figures for the bottom-line projecting a year surplus of £66,240.  NN **asked** what the procedure for staff on performance management M6. The chair **confirmed**, this would be conducted through the guidance in the pay policy application and to specify what qualities assurances are required. Showing evidence of their performance throughout M5 and M6.  KR **asked** if the pay committee was part of the finance and general purposes meeting. The Chair **confirmed** last year this was done last year however this year the pay review was completed early as the deadline is 31 October.  **Action 1:** The Chair and MD to review these variances offline and after November look at the Q3.  **Action 2:** MD to set aside time before the November payroll for The Chair, KR and MY to discuss and review the pay of staff excluding NN**.** |
|  | RC **asked** if the pay committee had TOR as this should outline how many members are required. RC suggested this was ordinarily done before the 31 October, agreed at the first GB of the year. The Chair **confirmed** the pay committee is Finance and General Purposes meeting and would take over the responsibility for the agreement of pay. MD **confirmed** and the group agreed to submitting the figures for Q2 to Tower Hamlets Local Authority.  MD **explained** there was going to be a substantial drop in figures next year because the school had already agreed to reduce the size of the reception class numbers from 45 to 30. This has had an effect on next year. In addition, no class was at full capacity with the exception of one which was at 44. Comparing this with last year, there will be a drop of approximately 40 children. Looking at the income per child, Harbinger are looking at figures of over £4,000 per child. The school will therefore drop £160,000 minimum. This does not consider the ELA reduction or any SEN changes. SS **confirmed** picking this up again in December to ensure we continue to mitigate.  KR **asked** what the school could do to retain the number of children. The Chair **commented** Ofsted visit and revised grading will support the retention. |

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| 6. | **Staffing Update**  NN **confirmed** Habida who has recently returned from Maternity leave is now teaching part-time in the specialist class. Recently, the school advertised for casual mid-day meal supervisors to help.  One staff from the mid-day meal on Mat will not be returning. The Chair **highlighted** a conflict of interest and confirmed the head teacher recruitment would go live from 20th October 2023, with a view to interviewing next half term. MY has been working with the recruitment’s supervisor on this.  KR **confirmed** that MY had already circulated letters to the parent community to update on this. |
| 7. | **Building and Health and Safety Update**  MD **confirmed** the pearl class has now been refurbished and to place new furniture. This is all now in place. This class is now up and running.  The porta cabin class this was reported previously as being completed. The resurfacing has been completed paid for by G4S and the funding has been secured for the pond area. |

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| 8. | **The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) 2023-2024**    The Chair confirmed this item would be postponed and covered in the spring with a deadline of 28 February 2024. The group would agree the contents by way of e-governance. |
| 9. | **School Policies**  The group agreed all MPHT policies to be adapt and ratified during November/December 2023. The policies were agreed during the meeting. The school had sent a list of policies to the clerk earlier in the month and this was not uploaded on the gov hub. SS requested that this be actioned and not missed to ensure governors have enough time to review policies on the governor hub before the meeting.  RC **asked** if the school had a school policy cycle. The Chair **confirmed** with NN the school does have a list of school policies.  **Action 1:** NB to upload the policies to Governor Hub.  **Action 2:** MD to forward a list of the policies to NB.  **Action 3:** NB to review and audit the school website and to feedback areas for improvement. |
| 10. | **Agenda Items for The Next Meeting**  Year-end update up to period 10.  NN queried dates for the pay committee, SS **suggested** one AM and PM one hour window. Aim for first week back of term. KR **confirmed** unavailability on Wednesday and Tuesday. NM will circulate dates where attendance can be met.  Action NN – Pay committee dates in the first week of Nov ahead of November payroll. |
| 11. | **Next meeting date - Thursday 29 February 2024**  **Date and Time of next FGPC meeting.**  Resolved that the meeting would take place on Thursday 11th May 2023 at 5:00PM. |
| 12. | **PART 2 – CONFIDENTIAL SECTION**  There were no items discussed. |

The meeting closed at 18:25pm

To be marked as signed electronically via GovernorHub.