



ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Co-ordination Committee
Wednesday 24th April 2024. 1pm

Present: Adedayo Benson (Chair); Robert Howell; Dave Dymond; Andrew Burrell; Hajar Alami; Zoe Watling; Vincent Onuchi; Sze-Hang Wong;

In Attendance: Alice de Croos;

Apologies: Kate Gordon; David Colwill.

Clerk: Deborah Savage

Agenda Item	
	This meeting was held in person, in school.
1	Apologies. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He commented how good it was to be able to meet in person, which is not something that we do often. Apologies had been received from Kate and David who were unable to attend a day time meeting due to work commitments. These were accepted.
2	Declaration of Interest. There were no declarations of interest made.
3	Minutes of the meeting held 7th February 2024. The minutes of the last meeting held on February 7 th 2024 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the committee was given the opportunity to ask for any errors to be corrected. The minutes were accepted as a true record and ACTION: Will be signed in GovernorHub by the chair as soon as possible.
4	Review of Actions and Matters Arising. The Chair asked the Clerk to review the actions and the meeting was informed that many of these had been completed. The Governors in school morning had to be postponed and a new date is being sought to hold this before the end of the academic year. A governor reported that there are plans to for himself and KG to meet with Yota soon, where a discussion can be had about her future in the GB. It is hoped that a decision will be made before the end of this academic year. Governors have been into school to sign the SFVS.
5	4th Quarter Revenue Report. A report on the 4th Quarter Revenue along with accompanying notes had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the SBM spoke about the main points.

The school had a good financial year 2023/24 and finished with an in-year balance of +£148K. Since some funds were carried forward from the previous year as well, the carry forward figure into the financial year 2024/5 is +£334,874. ASPS is in a strong financial position compared to many other schools in the Reading area. The fact that ASPS and Redlands are sharing some staffing costs has helped the positive financial situation which has brought benefits as the school is able to fund staff development opportunities, high quality teaching resources, a strong level of quality staffing and also some improvements to the physical environment of the school. Approximately half of Reading schools are in deficit.

Governor Question: Has the SEND grant helped with this budget outcome? No – as we have not yet received any ARP funding yet. We have been careful with our staffing – if someone leaves us we do not necessarily replace like for like, but look to be creative with our staffing and find innovative solutions. We have also received more in some grants than was predicted along with a Teacher’s Pay grant that helped to fund the pay rises. We have budgeted for Support Staff pay rises and this came in at our prediction so that also helped. However, we have seen some costs rise – energy has risen 92% over the costs of 21/22 and we spent £65K on our energy this year. This has been very impactful. Paper has also risen dramatically. However, energy costs are beginning to flatten out now, with a reduction in gas costs predicted of -12%. We have a project planned to replace lighting with LED bulbs which will help reduce our electricity consumption. The LA is funding a large scale project on the junior hall which will include a new insulated roof and replacement windows. Whilst this will be disruptive, we will benefit long term. The modular building will be removed.

Governor Question: Do RBC have a plan for the modular removal? Not yet – it is going out to tender and we expect it will be removed in the October half term.

At this point of the meeting, governors were informed of confidential plans that have not yet been shared with staff. **Governors were asked to keep this information confidential for the time being.**

A new staffing structure is being planned for 2024/25 which will see the EHT remain responsible for both schools and the appointment of a Federation Business Manager to be more strategic over both schools. There will be an office manager in Redlands, carrying out a supporting role to the FBM and the current HoS at Redlands will remain in post. The current DHT at ASPS will become the senior DHT and continue her focus on ASPS and Year 6. It is proposed to appoint two additional DHT’s, essentially covering EYFS/KS1 and KS2 respectively, but over both schools so working .5 in both of Redlands and ASPS. It will be necessary to back fill with teaching posts to replace the two staff appointed to DHT roles. All staff have been told that the DHT roles are open to all, and it may be that the school has 5 or 6 applications. The application process will follow the usual process should the roles have been in another school, so it will involve a two-day process. Governors were informed that the AHT roles were created in 2017 to meet the school’s need at the time, but that they are not really needed now.

Governors were also informed that the ARP is still in the planning stages, but that the school have been told that they can have funding to establish an ARP catering for 8 children. 6 of these children will be current ASPS children (although the school has many more than this number who would benefit). 2 places will be offered to children by the RBC RISE directorate. RBC expects that all Reading schools will have ARP's moving forward as the LA sees this as the way to cope with the increasing level of need and want to educate SEND children up to secondary level and then place them in special schools beyond year 6.

ASPS had hoped for a 12 place ARP but it is possible to apply for additional funding to increase the numbers in the next financial year. The ARP at ASPS will be for Early Years and KS1 children in the first instance. Funding per child is £28K and they are still expected to be in the classroom some of the time, but to spend 20-80% of their time in the ARP accessing specialist services and teaching.

Governor Question: Does this mean that you need to recruit a specialist teacher?

Yes.

At this point governors were shown a slide of the posts to be recruited for during the next 10 weeks before the end of the academic year:

- 2 x new DHTs
- 2 x teachers to back fill the DHT roles
- 1 x class teacher following a resignation (deadline is May half term for any further teacher resignations)
- 1 x specialist SEND teacher for the ARP
- 4 x LSAs for the ARP
- 1 x LTC

There may be additional phase lead opportunities for staff that attract TRLs.

This is a challenging level of recruitment to get through in a limited timescale and the current Office Manager will assist the SBM with this.

It was noted that some parents maybe concerned by the loss of known teaching faces if they move to DHT roles – the school will address concerns by pointing out the positive benefits.

As the modular is to go, the ARP can no longer be housed there, so the plan is to use the current staff room. This has its own entrance/exit, kitchen and toilet facilities and is close to the reception area as the children in the ARP will need to access the reception garden. Some building modifications will be required but it will open in September 2024 even if these modifications have not been done/ finished.

	<p>The staff room will move to the current infant library – which may cause some concern amongst the staff as this will be impactful. The FSO will move into the current DHT office, and the infant library will be relocated into the FSO office.</p> <p>It is planned to put a netball court where the modular is currently – improving our sports facilities.</p> <p>It was planned to put Year 6 into the junior hall, but because of the planned building works (that will take approximately 6 months) and the fact that they will be noisy and disruptive in such a crucial year for the children, the school have decided to put year 2 and the Sunshine Room into the junior hall instead. Year 6 will move to the current Year 2 accommodation so they are less disrupted. There will also be 12 new IWB installed over the summer.</p> <p>Governor Question: Does the school have any control over the schedule of the building works? No – RBC dictate the timing of the building projects.</p> <p>Governor Question: My concern is over the security of the site – keeping everyone safe during the works. As you are our H&S link Governor you are welcome to attend the meetings planning the work.</p> <p>Governor Question: What will be your message to parents and staff about these changes? We will sell the benefits to the school and the local community and let them know that ARPs are the preferred route chosen by RBC to educate the increasing number of high needs children - so we can't afford not to do this with the new funding levels the ARP places attract. We are still hopeful that the Trim Trail will be installed – which is an improvement that parents will see. Our school has filled all its places for next year – which is not the case for all schools including Redlands. Some schools are struggling for pupil numbers and therefore will be impacted financially. Pupil numbers are predicted to rise again in 2 years' time. The message to parents and staff needs to be that this is the best solution for the school and we need to make it work. Staff expectations will need to be managed.</p> <p>Governor Question: Does this need to be on the Risk Register? Yes – there are lots of implications and we need to review the Risk Register.</p>
6	<p>4th Quarter Capital Report.</p> <p>A report on the 4th Quarter Capital budget had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Governors were informed that Capital funds have to be spent on specific types of projects and that all expenditure needs pre-approval from RBC. Over the last two years, flooring had been replaced in KS1 and the junior hall, so the school floors are good. The energy efficiency grant will be spent on LED lights and new doors in the Junior Hall. There is a carry forward figure of £26K and an expected income of £11.5K this year. There were no issues or questions raised.</p>
7	<p>Proposed budget for 2024.2025</p>

	<p>The proposed budget for this financial year had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. The proposed new posts have been allowed for in the budget. A 3% increase in Teachers Salaries and also 3% in support staff pay has also been budgeted for. A 10% increase in energy costs had been budgeted for – all other costs allow for inflation of 1%.</p> <p>Governor Question: Where does this 1% figure come from? It is a figure advised to us by RBC who are working to this figure also.</p> <p>We know that teachers pension contributions will rise by 5% but there is to be a grant to cover this. Costs for water & sewerage have also risen.</p> <p>Governor Question: Working in partnership with Redlands has not had a negative effect on our budget has it? On the contrary – it has been very positive for us financially with savings on staffing costs.</p> <p>Governor Comment: We need to ensure the long-term sustainability of the new staffing structure. Agreed – in fact the Caretaker at Redlands has just resigned and we are proposing to ask our Site Manager to oversee Redlands too and become the Federation Site Manager – which he is keen to do.</p> <p>Measures were discussed on how best to keep the staff onside with all these changes, to take place over a short time period. Governors informed the school that the school has the GB’s support with these projects as the only feasible way forward.</p> <p>Governor Question: SATs test for year 6 will not be affected this year? No – and we hope to have the building work finished by April 25 so next years are not affected either.</p> <p>Governor Question: Do you think we need a dedicated Governor for the building project? No – as it a project overseen by RBC not the school. The input from the H&S link Governor into the Pre-project meetings would be useful however.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors approved the proposed budget 2024/25.</p>
8	<p>5 Year budget forecast</p> <p>A 5-year forecast had been circulated as part of the proposed budget and governors were informed that RBC ask schools to set a balanced budget for 5 years ahead – which is a tough ask. ASPS has managed this until a predicted year 5 deficit. The school always errs on the side of caution when predicting income levels and predict expenditure at a slightly higher level than is usually spent.</p>
9	<p>Staffing structure 2024/25</p> <p>This had been covered earlier during discussions in Item 5 on the agenda.</p>
10	<p>Roles and Responsibilities Statement for approval.</p>

	<p>The Roles and Responsibilities Statement had been circulated in advance of the meeting and DECISION: this was approved by the GB.</p>
11	<p>Statement of Internal Control 2024. This had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was signed by the EHT, Chair of the Resources Committee and Chair of Governors after the meeting.</p>
12	<p>School Fund account. The SBM informed the meeting that the account had still not been received back from the auditors – despite chasing a number of times. The contract is now up and the school do not intend to renew it but will instead look for a local accountant to review the account.</p>
13	<p>Policies for Adoption. One policy for adoption had been circulated in advance of the meeting – This was based on a model policy from RBC. a) Support Staff Pay Policy – DECISION: Adopted.</p> <p>Governors were informed that that were no changes to this Policy by RBC since it was last reviewed by the GB. DECISION: The Support Staff Pay Policy was approved by the GB.</p>
14	<p>Wellbeing & Equality. The Link Governor for Wellbeing & Equality had no updates – a report is still planned for the last PEC meeting of the year.</p> <p>It was noted that wellbeing issues for staff might be raised shortly once news of the accommodation changes within school has been released.</p> <p>Governors asked after the HoS at Redlands and were told that she is doing a great job and is thriving.</p> <p>The EHT took this opportunity to thank staff, especially the SBM and the HoS for covering for him whilst he was absent due to illness. Governors informed the staff that they are keen to help support in any capacity they can, and the school should not hesitate to ask for help if it is needed. The EHT was encouraged to take the time he needs to ensure a full recovery.</p> <p>A governor commented that he has made some visits into school and has been very pleased with what he has seen and talked about with staff who are positive and dedicated.</p>
15	<p>Issues for Parents/FGB/Confidentiality. There were no issues to be reported to parents. The FGB (to be held the same evening) would be informed about the budget approval. Governors were reminded that some aspects of the discussions are to remain confidential at this stage until all staff have been informed.</p>
16	<p>Any Other Business.</p>

	The chair expressed the hope that a date could be found for staff and governors to share a lunch before the end of the academic year. ACTION: Date to be established and circulated to governors.
17	Date of Next Meeting: TBC (in the Autumn Term 2024)

Meeting closed: 2.05pm

New Actions:

Action:	Owner:
Chair to sign RCC minutes 7 th February in GovHub	AB
Decide a suitable date for a staff/governor lunch in school.	EHT/SBM

Governor Attendance at RCC Meetings 2023/24 (three meetings to date)

Robert Howell	3 of 3 meetings
Dave Dymond	3 of 3 meetings
Adedayo Benson	3 of 3 meetings
Yota Dimitriadi	0 of 3 meetings
Andrew Burrell	3 of 3 meetings
Kate Gordon	2 of 3 meetings
Hajar Alami	3 of 3 meetings
Alice de Croos	3 of 3 meetings
Zoe Watling	3 of 3 meetings
Vincent Onuchi	2 of 3 meetings
David Colwill	1 of 3 meetings
Sze-Hang Wong	2 of 2 possible meetings