

THE GOVERNING BODY OF RAVENSHALL SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held at 4.45 pm at the school on Wednesday, 22 January 2025.

PRESENT

Ms S Lee (Chair), Miss S Hoffmann, Mr R Robinson (Head Teacher)

In Attendance

Miss J Tingle (Minute Clerk)

Ms R Thackray (School Business Manager/Associate Member)

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Ms K Dickinson and Mrs J Kilbride.

There were no declarations of interest.

11. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th SEPTEMBER 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 25th September 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 4 (b)

The correct spelling of Ms Thackray's name

Minute 6

The substitution of the word 'training' in place of 'draining'

12. MATTERS ARISING

There were no actions in the Action Log in the previous minutes.

13. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

(a) Budget spend, SAP Report, Money Manager

Prior to the meeting, Ms Thackray had distributed copies of the Period 9 Budget Report and a forecast to the year ended 31 March 2025, which showed a projected deficit of £220,000. The Head Teacher's email to the LA dated 20th December 2024 had also been shared with the governors in which the Head Teacher asked the LA to reconsider the decision to reduce the school budget by £200,000. A reply from the LA had not been received.

The deficit was discussed at the last meeting. The Head Teacher reiterated that that there are a number of pupils on the incorrect banding and if this was changed, then an additional £114,000 would be received. There was concern

that the LA had said nothing would be done whilst they are in the middle of a SEND review and that could be up to another 18 months.

Q: Is there a collective amongst the schools on this?

A: Yes. The Head Teacher is on the school forum which is a board which discusses the educational budget and the LA attend that as well. There is also a public forum every half term or so but that is not well attended.

Ms Thackray advised that she and the Head Teacher had met to review areas where changes can be made to cut costs for next year. The governors expressed concern that there will be an end to the safety net at some point in the future.

(b) Significant Income

Ms Thackray advised that there was nothing to report since the teachers' pension grant notified at the last meeting.

(c) Significant Expenditure

Ms Thackray updated governors who were informed that a cabin for PFA was purchased. Also, iPads were bought for classrooms and new PCs for teachers to replace some older PCs. As expected, £16,000 was clawed back under the NTP programme. A sum of £5,000 was paid out in December on behalf of the LA in cost-of-living vouchers. However, the school will be reimbursed this sum.

The Head Teacher was pleased to report that in recognition of the outstanding Ofsted report recently received, the staff were rewarded with baristas serving speciality hot drinks for the day in school which had cost around £1,000. The governors agreed that this was well deserved.

Questions of clarification on the cashflow document were received by email before the meeting from a governor which Ms Thackray responded to as follows:

Q: Has the Teachers Insurance money which was put aside been used? If so, has there been an increase in long term absence?

A: This is the premium for long term sickness insurance. The school opted out of the LA scheme this year. So far the school has had £30,000 back but it has been used to off set the expenditure on supply teachers. Ms Thackray is assessing whether the insurance scheme is cost effective.

Q: Is there an overspend on Repairs & Maintenance?

A: Yes. The Head Teacher distributed a breakdown of the £25,000 and Ms Thackray explained the various expenses.

Q: What is covered by Rail Fares?

A: This is for a staff member who attended a course.

Q: There are high outgoings for IT Learning Resources. Is this an unusual year of unexpected spends?

A: Yes, it is unusual. It is for the iPads for classrooms and PCs for staff as mentioned earlier and a £5,000 upgrade for the server. The school has however claimed back £4,360 from DFC to offset spend.

(d) SFVS

This was an annual check of the school's financial capability and the opportunity for governors to ensure that the school was managing finances effectively. Ms Thackray had circulated the document, and governors were invited to contribute. This was discussed and agreed. The Chair of Governors signed the SFVS. It was noted that this will be discussed at the next governors meeting.

(e) Benchmarking

Ms Thackray distributed a copy of the benchmarking tables. It was noted that the school was 5th in the financial year 2023/2024. The Head Teacher elaborated on the various items of expenditure in comparison to other special schools. Ms Thackray had noticed that Total Educational Supplies was the only area that looked out of sync. It included equipment and furniture and in that financial year, the school had paid out £36,500 for pond development, nearly £11,000 for the outdoor gym, £17,000 for the sensory garden and £5,000 for some trikes for Discovery class. All of these items were funded by grants and therefore the overall spend should be reduced as it was reimbursed. This would lead to a recalculated spend of £790 per pupil and bring the school down the list.

14. PREMISES AND RESOURCES

There were no items for discussion.

15. HEALTH AND SAFETY

It was reported that a pupil had slipped on ice in the outdoor gym area. The caretaker was aware for future reference in terms of areas to grit. A member of staff had bumped her head on the top of the stable door however, was fortunate this had not resulted in an injury.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of any other business.

17. DATES OF THE NEXT MEETING AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

The Head Teacher suggested that the next meeting start at 4.30pm.

RESOLVED: That the date of the next meeting be confirmed as Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 4.30pm.

18. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

There were no actions to carry forward and the Chair closed the meeting at 17:35pm.