

MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE MEETING

FRIDAY 19 OCTOBER 2018

07:45 – 09:00 at The School

MEMBERS

Foundation Governors

Lynne Evans (Chair)
Alice Gavin Atashkar (LDBS)

Parent Governors

Ben Pullenayegum
Ajanta Kamal

Associate Members

*Catherine Mitri

Headteacher

Curtis Sweetingham

* Denotes member NOT present

PART I

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Governors and opened the meeting.

2. Acceptance/Non-acceptance of Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Catherine Mitri.

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

No Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The HT ASKED for any nominations for Chair of the Personnel Sub Committee.

BP nominated LE for Chair. The nomination was seconded. LE elected as Chair of Personnel Sub Committee.

LE nominated AGA for Vice Chair. AGA elected as Vice Chair.

5. Terms of Reference for Personnel Sub Committee

The Chair explained that there have been no changes to the Terms of Reference and asked if Governors are happy that the ToR strategically covers what is required.

Governors confirmed and approved the ToR.

Terms of Reference circulated for signature.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting - 20th October 2017

The Committee discussed that with the previous meeting being a year ago, it was difficult to remember what had been discussed.

The Chair proposed that as this Sub Committee meets so infrequently, minutes should be circulated once ready following the meeting, to be agreed and signed off.

Minutes of Previous Meeting agreed as true reflection and signed off.

7. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

The Chair confirmed that all matters arising were to do with policy amendments which she has since completed.

No outstanding matters arising.

8. Chair's Action (urgent actions taken by Chair since last meeting)

The Chair reported that no actions have been taken since the previous meeting that haven't already been discussed at FGB.

9. Pay Committee

9.1 *Review anonymised sample performance management review of teaching staff showing links to SIP*

The Chair explained that the Governors are due to review an anonymised sample performance management review of a member of teaching staff, so the board can check that the SLT are doing what they say they are doing.

The Chair explained that it is important that Governors are assured that the HT is implementing strict and effective performance management with staff.

The HT explained to Governors how the performance management process works:

Targets are set at the beginning of the year, and those targets are tracked and monitored throughout the year, through lesson observations, learning walks, Pupil Voice, data, information. The SLT check in at pretty much every observation, to talk about whether targets are on track. A mid-year review is held to check everything is on track. There is then a final meeting where teachers are asked to present their findings. Two documents are completed, one by the teachers individually (teacher self-review), and one in collaboration with the SLT (teacher review). Both documents are against the teaching standards targets.

The HT presented the two documents to the Governors and explained:

The targets are on the left-hand side. The documents give prompts and talking points, such as: was there anything that stood in your way; barriers to learning. This helps teachers explain.

The HT explained that for some targets he will ask for evidence, e.g., one of the targets was interventions run successfully, which shows a nice example of how progress was made over given points on one of the interventions that was running.

The HT explained that he also checks whole school data for the class against the targets, to make sure targets are being met, which they were.

The HT explained that reading was a target.

A Governor ASKED whether the data is for the whole school or just one class.

The HT answered that it is just for one teacher of one class.

The HT explained that you can see an increase year-on-year in progress made, with blue representing last year and pink representing this year, showing that the children in this teacher's class made significant progress compared to the progress made last year.

A Governor ASKED if the comparison is for the same group of children, or the two different groups of children who have been in that class.

The HT ANSWERED that it's the same group of children.

The Governors ASKED for clarification as to whether it is a comparison of one teacher at different points, or a comparison of the current teacher with the previous teacher.

The HT CLARIFIED that the data shows the children's progress with the teacher who is being reviewed in this document, compared to the progress made with their previous class teacher the previous year.

A Governor CHALLENGED that comparing the progress achieved by the current teacher against the progress achieved by the previous teacher might not be a good representation, if the previous teacher had performed poorly.

The HT ANSWERED that it's not comparing against the teacher, it's comparing the children's progress.

A Governor ASKED if the children's progress is being used as a reflection of the teacher's performance.

The HT ANSWERED that attainment is also considered.

A Governor ASKED whether there is an expected standard of progress expected from the teacher, to enable this target to be evaluated.

The HT ANSWERED that there isn't a standard, but that he expects children, from their starting point, to at least stay within their range, or get better than their range, and not go backwards.

The HT EXPLAINED that in terms of a standardised score, 100 in Year 6 would be counted as a pass.

The HT EXPLAINED that it's just an example of the children making progress, though, and shouldn't be compared to Year 6 or standardised scores, because it's not the Year 6 class, but it's an example to show that they've made better progress than last year.

The HT ADDED that last year's progress in the anonymised example review wasn't bad, and that if it was, he would address that with the relevant teacher.

A Governor ASKED what the role of the Governors is in reviewing this document.

The Chair EXPLAINED that the role of the Personnel and Pay Committee is to ensure the HT is performance managing the staff effectively, in advance of the HT then recommending various pay increases for the Committee to agree, to demonstrate the necessary standards or targets have been met in order to justify the increases.

A Governor CHALLENGED that the Committee don't look at the performance management review for every teacher, so the anonymised example could be for the best teacher or the worst teacher.

The Chair explained that the HT is demonstrating to the Committee that he is doing proper performance management reviews, which therefore should back up his recommendations when proposing teachers move up pay grades.

The HT explained that setting pay grades is not strictly performance related, but rather a case of, if teachers are doing their job well, as ensured by the performance management reviews, they should get their rise, and if not, they shouldn't.

A Governor CHALLENGED that the performance management reviews make no reference to the school values, and ASKED whether that is part of the conversation.

The HT ANSWERED that school values currently are not considered in the performance management reviews, but that it's a very good point and something they should look at including.

Action: School values to be integrated in performance management reviews before the next round of reviews

9.2 Teacher Pay Grade Recommendations

The HT RECOMMENDED that all teachers get their pay award.

The HT outlined what this would look like, and explained that it could become a problem, as the school is becoming top-heavy, with two more teachers going through threshold this year, meaning there are now more upper pay scale teachers.

The HT explained that it's positive, because it means teachers are progressing, doing their job well, leading and bringing value to the school, so it can't be viewed negatively, but at the same time they need to be aware that it has a financial impact on a small school.

A Governor ASKED what teachers have to do to progress through threshold.

The HT ANSWERED that they have to complete all the performance management review documents, and then complete another document to demonstrate everything they do to contribute towards the school. The HT EXPLAINED that in reality a lot of the school's teachers teach that way anyway.

A Governor ASKED if threshold just means moving from one pay scale up to the next.

The Chair ANSWERED that teachers have to be seen to have done over and above their normal teaching responsibilities, and they have to apply, to go from the main pay scale to the upper pay scale.

The Chair explained the challenge facing all schools, and particularly one-form entry primary schools, due to limited the funding received, but also the recruitment and retention crisis in teaching nationwide, making it important to ensure teachers are properly compensated to retain them and maintain morale.

The HT presented the threshold document to the Governors, which applicants have to complete in order to be considered.

The HT showed Governors a document outlining what is expected of threshold.

He explained that the green column is a new teacher, the purple column is a teacher with four years' experience, the pink column is threshold, and the yellow column is TLR. The document is shared with all threshold teachers, and all teachers who want to go through threshold, so they know what's expected.

The HT gave an example of the difference between threshold and non-threshold:

Teaching standard 1.1 establish a safe environment.

Threshold is expected to support colleagues to develop a select range of practice. In contrast, green must "demonstrate", purple must "do it well", pink (threshold) "support others", and then leadership must "lead others".

The HT explained teachers receive this document before completing their application.

The HT emphasised that threshold means providing support beyond just yourself, so supporting and helping the school beyond just your own class. The HT reiterated that a lot of St John's teachers are at that level anyway, as that's what is expected of them.

A Governor ASKED whether the HT is worried about losing teachers.

The Governors and HT discussed the challenges of losing very good teachers who are hard to replace, and the work and mentoring required to bring NQTs to the same level as a good teacher.

The HT explained that the school has a very strong and dedicated team of teachers, including NQTs who choose to run clubs, and choose to put more in, without being directed to do so.

The Governors and HT discussed that there are both benefits, such as increased experience and opportunities to learn, and drawbacks, for teachers in a small school.

The Chair ASKED the HT to CLARIFY the recommendations on the pay awards for the different grades of teachers.

The HT EXPLAINED his recommended pay awards:

Current UPS teachers are all UPS 3, so can't go any higher anyway, so UPS 3 will all stay on UPS 3.

Two M6 teachers will go up to UPS 1.

The remaining four teachers will each go up one point from current pay grade.

9.3 Salary Increases

The Chair ASKED what the actual percentages of the pay rises, as discussed in the Finance Sub Committee, should be.

The HT explained that generally teachers have been getting 1% increases, although St John's gave 2% last year. However, a new pay policy recommends that instead of 1%

increase on Main Pay Scale (MPS), teachers get a 3.5% increase on the MPS. The HT explained that all unions and the Diocese have recommended that all grades on the MPS get the 3.5% increase, all Upper Pay Scale (UPS) grades get a 2% increase, and TLRs (Teaching Learning Responsibility) get a 1.5% increase.

The HT and Chair explained that the government have agreed to fund the difference between the 1% pay rise which the schools have to meet, and 2% or 3.5%.

The HT and Governors discussed the mechanism of this funding and the implications for now and future finances.

The Governors discussed the challenges of understanding the budget as it is presented in the new format.

A Governor CHALLENGED that looking at the budget, it feels like although this year the financial situation isn't so bad, the problem is just being pushed on to future years, which doesn't feel very strategic.

A Governor RAISED that last year the Pay Committee had decided to go with the best option for the teachers, and award a higher increase, and now this will be the second year in a row of doing that.

The Chair RAISED that due to the financial situation, and thinking strategically about moving forward, there is the option to stick to the government recommendations, as opposed to unions and LDBS, which is only applying the additional increases to the top and bottom levels, so M1 and M6, UPS 1 and UPS 3.

The HT ANSWERED that he thinks you'd lose teachers.

The Chair ANSWERED that although being devil's advocate, it is an option that the committee should consider. She ADDED that it is helpful to have the HT's answer and his opinion on what the outcome would be.

The Chair RAISED that she feels uncomfortable voting in favour of quite large pay increases across the board, given the pay increases last year, and knowing that this is going to cause financial concern in the future, albeit the costs will be covered this year.

A Governor ASKED how much money is in the pot.

BP ANSWERED that whatever decision is taken here, there's not enough, and explained that the impact isn't on this year, it's going forward, because this is a fixed cost that continues to increase.

BP RAISED that due to the percentage increase to the salary awarded to each pay grade, and the movement of teachers to higher pay grades, the individual teachers would be receiving more than a 3.5% pay increase, and they should be considered in conjunction.

The HT ANSWERED that they are separate matters, as the movement in pay grades is performance related, and teachers either go up or not.

The Chair SUMMARISED that an example teacher at M1 on the MPS, by giving them the recommended 3.5% increase, it will now bring them in to the right level of pay for their grade, because the school teacher's pay and conditions and the LDBS and pay policy

have updated their levels, to say if you are at M1 you need to be earning X amount, which St John's teachers currently are not receiving.

The Governors and HT discussed that if the teachers went to any other school, they would receive those prescribed salaries for their pay grades.

BP ASKED whether teachers moving to higher pay grades had been budgeted along with the percentage pay increase.

The HT ANSWERED that both of these factors had been budgeted for.

The Governors and HT discussed the challenge of being required to comply with the recommendations but also have to deal with the financial implications in future years when there is no guarantee of funding to cover the increased salary costs.

The Governors and HT discussed how the recommended pay increase compares to other sectors.

A Governor RAISED that it would be helpful to have scenario planning to work out the financial implications of each of the options.

The Chair CLARIFIED that the proposal is not to apply a blanket percentage increase across the board, but rather adopting the salaries across the pay range as outlined in Appendix 1.

A Governor ASKED how this fits in with the proposed government percentage increase.

The HT explained that the school always gives a 1% pay increase, but the government will provide funding to make up the difference to enable a 3.5% pay increase for minimum and maximum levels on the pay scales. Because St John's already awarded 2% increase the previous year, the increase required to fall in line with the salaries resulting from the government's recommended 3.5% increase (pay ranges detailed in Appendix 1) will actually be less than a 3.5% increase, as some of the difference has been made up already by the previous year's increase.

10. Policies

a) Teachers Pay Policy

The Chair ASKED whether the Pay Committee ratify the Teachers Pay Policy circulated in advance of the meeting.

The HT RAISED that there are some typos in the policy that was circulated. The Chair AGREED that the policy needs to be reviewed and corrected.

The Chair ASKED whether Governors approve the strategic side of the policy, regarding the pay scales.

Governors VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve.

Action: CS to go through Teachers Pay Policy and cross-check the dates

The Chair explained that all other policies due for review are automatic ratification as they are exactly the same as last year.

The Chair ASKED if all Governors are happy to ratify the policies.

11. Scheduling Headteacher's Performance Management Review

The Chair reported that this is in progress, and that BP will be joining the panel. The Chair explained that she will check dates with BP so they can put together a selection of dates to take back to the external advisor, and that this will take place before the beginning of December.

12. Staffing Structure

No changes proposed.

13. How has this meeting helped move the school forward

The Chair SUMMARISED that the Committee have taken decisions to invest in the staff, which invests in the children and their outcomes, to keep them on track.

The HT AGREED that the decisions will help with staff retention, morale and motivation.

14. Date of Next Meeting: Friday 28 June 2019

15. Close

The Chair thanked Governors and closed the meeting.