GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL
FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
24th October 2024 AT 5PM
The meeting was held via Teams

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

In attendance: Sajna Begum (SB) (School Business Manager), Suhal Kadir (SK) (Finance Consultant), Salma Siddiqua (SSa) and Marzana Ahmed (Clerk)

**Italics denotes absence*

The meeting started at 17:02

1.	**Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declaration of Pecuniary Interests (including potential conflict – financial or otherwise)** *This part of the meeting was Chaired by SSa* Apologies were received from Kiran Rahman (KR). There were no declarations of interests.
2.	**Election Of Chair of Committee** MY nominated SS for the position of the Chair of Committee. All Committee members present agreed unanimously. SS accepted the role for the current academic year. *SS chaired the meeting from this point.*
3.	**Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising- May 2024** The Chair explained that the minutes for the meeting held in May were missing. Due to unresolved issues with the budget, the Committee had met again in July. The minutes for this meeting were also unavailable. SSa acknowledged that it was very unlikely that either of these minutes would be retrieved.

	The Chair informed the Committee that a revised budget had been agreed at the meeting held in July.
4.	**<u>Finance</u>** The Chair introduced SK as the School's Finance Consultant (FC). **Budget Monitoring Report for the period ending 30 September 2024** SK presented the BMR: I01 – A notable change was the addition of the Central Schools Block Grant (CSBG). This had only been agreed recently and so had not been included in the budget planning. This had added an extra £35,000. The budget currently looked stable. I03 - An unexpected £100,000 had been added. NN had received the recent statement which suggested that the funding forecasted today was £367,000. The School would need to continue to monitor this and ensure that the data was still relevant. I07 - There had been adjustments to Key Stage 2 (KS2) meals claims which SK needed to go over with SB. An extra £5000 had been generated. This was masking some of the clawback which was currently. He assured the Committee that this would not have an adverse effect and that he would check how this had happened. I08b – The School had received backdated interest payment which constituted a large part of the £14,000 budget uplift. SK cautioned the Committee not to expect more sums like this to accrue. I18d – There had been a reduction in the income from the Universal Infants Free School Meals (UIFSM) grant. SK stated that he thought this could be to do with a lag in numbers and adjustment. The PE grant had been confirmed. The School's income was in a good position. The expected figure had been £2,612,683. The actual figure was £2,758,852 which was £146,169 more than had been budgeted. This had been largely due to the SEND funding and the number of children on role who were receiving the support and funding available to them. **The Chair asked** if I01 included the Phoenix grant received by the school for children in the Pearl class. SK replied that the grant had been included in I03. The Chair stated that I03 was only the banding ground. The Phoenix grant was for the special project the School was running for 2 years and they received above the banding for this. SK clarified that it had coded to I03 as the project was not being treated as an alternative resource provision place. **The Chair requested** a sense check of the I01 grant. She questioned the £2,000,000 which had been approved. SK explained that this was the statutory income from the Local Authority as well as the Early Years funding.

The Chair requested that the SBM check that the School had submitted all claims for UIFSM between January and March 2024 to ensure that there had been no oversight. The SBM confirmed that they had but that she would check again with Makda.

Action: SK to check all claims for UIFSM grant had been submitted between January – March 2024.

SK stated that the expenditure needed reviewing and he hoped to complete this for QTR3. It appeared to be fine in terms of staffing and pay, There was a variance due to the fact that a member of staff had not been replaced. The HT added that the School had rearranged some staffing structure when to save some money. SK also highlighted that there was currently an overspend on agency staff. This would need to be reviewed by SK and SB and updated for the QTR3 report.

The Chair reported that the Pay Awards for Teachers and Staff were out. Support staff would be getting an extra £1575 added to every pay scale (inner London rate), The Teachers Pay Award was due to go through Parliament and she expected the LA to implement the award in November. **She asked** SK to have this part of the budget for QTR3 completed in order that the School had a realistic view of the total expenditure.

MY asked if the School expected the overspend on agency staff to remain. The Chair stated that they did. MY stated that a strategy needed to be found to tackle this as it was a burden on the School finances. The Chair agreed and suggested that she, MY and the HT meet the following day to discuss this.

Action: SS, MY and NN to meet on 25/10/24 to discuss the overspend on agency staff.

The Chair suggested that she and the HT make a formal request to the LA to draw on a contingency budget. The HT had previously made an informal request and was told that this was not possible. The Chair stated that she was the representative for the Harbinger School's governors on the LA Schools Forum and that the School contributed £9,000 to the contingency budget the forum had. The School was in a contingency situation and therefore should be able to receive an amount from this budget. MY added that the School would need to demonstrate that they had examined all possible avenues applying for the contingency fund. SK agreed with the Chair's suggestion.

SK noted the expenditure was currently £8,500 under budget but this was likely to change. A review would need to be carried out and updated figures would be presented in QTR3.

The current In Year Revenue Surplus stood at £137,573 above the budgeted figure. This amount demonstrated that the School had been diligent with their spending.

	There was a small surplus in the Capital. However the In-year deficit position was budgeted at £240,497, a significant amount. An In-year cumaltive deficit of £152,730 was projected with a carry forward of £83,840 and an In-year deficit of £68,891. **The Chair asked** SK if it was possible to use capital to for revenue. SK replied that it was not. Action: The Chair suggested that the school move some of the capital expenditures in the year from revenue to capital such as IT expenses. The Chair requested that in preparation for the next meeting, the QTR3 report be produced as well as projections for QTR4. The latter would help in curriculum and resources planning for the 25/26 academic year. The Chair thanked SK. *SK left the meeting at 17:31* **Expenditure over the HT Limit** There had been no expenditures over the HTs limit. **Pupil Numbers** The HT reported that as of today's date, 290 students were on roll. The HT credited the effort of the Admissions Officer who had been liaising with the LA to recruit more pupils. The Chair commented that pupil numbers translated into staff pay and grants for the School so this had been a positive outcome. Approval of SFVS The Chair informed the Governor Services Manager and the Clerk that the SFVS would be carried out in February. If the next resources meeting does not occur before the deadline of the 28th February the SBM would email it.
5.	**<u>Staffing Update</u>** The HT reported that two teachers had left. Only 1 replacement was made. A rearrangement of PPA and HLTAs, with support from the HT and DHT, ensured that the second teaching position was covered. The SBM and HT had attended a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) meeting. The SBM reported that schools may need to pay an extra £60,000 when they take over the staffing element. MY had also attended a Chair of Governors forum at which an LA representative delivered a presentation on the PFI exit. From this, **MY suggested** that the school start planning for which resources and services they would require solely for the School's use and which ones they could share with other schools.

	The Chair agreed and felt it would be a prudent idea to share. She highlighted the need to have an understanding of what the School would be inheriting including job descriptions. **MY suggested** the HT start planning an annual assessment of maintenance requirements (which could possibly be obtained from the current contractor). **The Chair asked** SB to obtain the existing SLAs so that the School can start creating a shadow plan well before the exit. *Action: SS and SB to meet and go over current maintenance and personnel contracts to start planning.*
6.	**Building and Health and Safety Update** SB reported that the EYFS playground would be jet washed to remove the moss. The caretaker would then continue maintain it weekly to ensure that it is not slippery and dangerous. MY said that he would carry out a H&S walk as part of his role as H&S governor. He would carry this out with the caretaker. *Action: MY to carry out a H&S walk with the caretaker.* The HT added that the G4S had delivered a fire awareness twilight training for staff.
7.	**Policies** (For Review and Approval) The following policies (dated September 2024) had been circulated earlier and were available to read on GovernorHub: Best Value Statement Charging Policy Financial Code of Practice Scheme of Delegation Health & Safety Policy Recruitment and Selection Policy Special Leave Policy Teacher Appraisal Policy and Procedure Whistleblowing Policy Staff Safer Recruitment Policy Information Governance Policy **Governors approved** all the policies. The Chair reported that the Pay Policy had still not been issued by the LA. This would most likely be released once the Teacher's Pay Scale had been agreed. The Chair would share this with the SBM as soon it became available.

	The Chair informed SSa and MA that the appraisal for pay progression was not yet due. She suggested that the HT arrange a meeting once these had been completed. She was happy to minute the meeting if SSa or MA were not available. SSa asked her to send an email when a date had been arranged.
8.	**Next Meeting Date –** 6th March 2025

The meeting closed at 17:51