

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE FANS (FOREST ALLIANCE OF NURSERY SCHOOLS)
FINANCE, PERSONNEL & PAY COMMITTEE FOR CHURCH HILL AND LOW HALL
NURSERY SCHOOL FEDERATED GOVERNING BODY HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2024 AT
5.30 P.M. VIRTUALLY**

Present: Pauline France (Chair)- LA Governor (PF)
Jana Mills-Co-opted Governor (JM)
Helen Currie-Head Teacher (HC)
Aalia Chaudhary-Parent Governor (AC)

Clerk to the Governors: Caroline Russell

Also present: Hasina Rashid, Federation Business Manager (HR)

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute Number	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
2.	Meeting of chairs of committees to be convened to consider paper from Head Teacher and principles per minute in context of financial matters reported.	HT	Ongoing
5.	Financial Matters: (i) Development of CHNS garden area: Premises Committee to discuss. (ii)2024/5 Budget: HC/HR to consider. (iii)Increase in fee rates: HR to put proposal to FGB	HT HC/HR HR	Ongoing Mid May 2024. With effect from 01/04/2024
6.	Draft Budget 2024/5: Chairs to discuss per options identified by PF with MP to be invited in to discuss.	Committee chairs/HT	Ongoing
9	Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 7 May 2024-5.30 p.m.-Virtual.		

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Paula Vaz Cudna. The meeting was quorate with 4 governors present.
2. **NOTICE OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS:**
 - 2.1. –Convening of Meeting of Chairs of Committees:
 - 2.1.1. PF advised that the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher are convening a meeting of chairs of committees regarding strategic federation development plans and the annual cycle of School Development Planning. Planning will need to take account of local and national priorities in the provision of nursery and pre-school care and education.
 - 2.1.2. The federation is currently celebrating recent OFSTED inspection success which recognised both schools as ‘outstanding’, a sound educational basis on which to

plan the future development of the federated schools.

- 2.1.3. Both CHNS and LHNS are small schools which presents financial challenges in the context of current funding arrangements. These will be recognised when completing the annual Schools' Financial Value Standard Return (SFVS) which will help to identify the risks faced by the federation, possible mitigations and use of the budget in 2024/5.
- 2.1.4. The SDP will be developed within a 3-5 year framework following a recent financial audit recommendation. This will enable the federated governing body to reaffirm the values and vision of the federation's schools. The LBWF officer view recognises the financial challenges posed by small schools so is pro federation as a means of managing this. Sustaining the Federation's unique phase specific principles which have been put into outstanding practice at both schools continues to be high priority with governors and school leaders and must also be part of any discussions with local colleagues and professional partners.
- 2.1.5. HC stressed that decisions re federation and governance are for the Governing Body not the LA so any federated arrangements need to be with like minded Schools locally and possibly near out-borough. This is reflected in a paper sent by HC to chairs of committees.
- 2.1.6. Key questions/issues were identified by PF including as follows:
 - How do we continue to embed our 5 guiding principles for the federation including respect for and recognition of children's rights, the centrality of a child-centred approach and development of professional partnerships across the schools in an ethos of equity, fairness and consideration?
 - How can we financially sustain our 2 nursery schools as outstanding provisions?.
 - How can we maintain outstanding leadership and staff well-being whilst meeting the financial challenges inherent in running 2 small schools?
 - How can sustainable professional and community relationships be developed in the current local and national circumstances?
- 2.1.7. HC noted recent conversations with the chair of governors and the need for a Head Teacher and Governing Body that can develop a unique structure that is right for the children, staff and governors of the federated schools.
ACTION: Meeting of chairs of committees and HT to be convened to consider.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were no declarations made pertaining to any of the agenda items for this meeting.
4. **MINUTES:** The committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 06/11/2023 and agreed these to be an accurate record of the meeting. There were no actions arising not completed or otherwise considered on the agenda.
5. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**
 - 5.1. Budget Monitoring Reports Quarter 4: HR noted that these have been prior e-circulated on GovernorHub (also screen shared with committee).
 - 5.2. Church Hill Nursery School: The financial position is similar to that in Quarter 2.
Revenue Income:
 - This was low in the autumn term but additional supplementary funding was received for Nursery schools (now £188,000 from 01/04/2024) with some increase also applied in 2023/4 (additional £18,000 received on I01). There was a shortfall re 2 year old income (1:5 staffing ratio for 2 year olds).

-However, there has been an increase in numbers on roll from 74 to 83 and this could increase again in April. **Q.** Source of increase? **A.** 3 and 4 year old children .5 two year olds pm are placed with the 3 and 4 year olds.

HR noted that there are 2 new private Nursery providers locally (details noted) which potentially put numbers at risk. However, the federation does offer families a relatively low cost provision led by qualified teachers and an outstanding OFSTED rating. Admissions have started this term.

Q. Is there a publicity campaign? **A.** Yes, to publicise the schools including training school and partnerships.

-SEND Income: This was over budget by £6,000 re SENIF (SEN interim funding) and 2 Education and Health Care plans. There are 12 Early Years Pupil Premium funded children at CHNS.

-Salary Recharges: These have been increased to reflect the sharing of staff across the federation.

-Daycare Funding: This has been overachieved by £50,000. Some unfunded places can be offered to rising 3s.

-Teaching Cover: This was noted for both schools.

-Long Term L3 Sickness Absence: This was noted (deficit in Early Years practitioner line+ adjustment for NOPALS (notionally funded pension scheme) agreement.

-Site Services Officer Post: This is still vacant, advertised in November with revised proposal now to be tried (4 hours am +2 times 2 hours daily) with opening and closing arrangements noted.

ACTION: Chairs meeting to consider.

-Staff Parking: 2 part paid permits are held by the School for staff parking with 50% paid by the School. Conversations have been held with staff re use of public transport.

-Staff Training: There is Designated Safeguarding training for 2 staff and whole school 1st Aid and Forest School training. Where possible training sessions are shared with partner schools locally to reduce federation costs.

-Premises Costs: These were noted.

-Learning Resources Costs: These were noted as £1600 over budget.

-Agency Spend: There is a £9,000 overspend on Early Years Practitioner cover re sickness.

-Garden: A flexible space is needed so there has been work with an external consultant to consider possible Forest School provision (also being developed at LHNS). The garden is also used for after school club provision. The objective is to provide a year round provision with willow hedging. Privacy and safety needs to be ensured.

ACTION: Premises Committee to discuss.

-Closing Balances: HR noted £35,000 transfer to LHNS in year. Opening balance brought forward £115,800 and closing balance carried forward £66,000. The day care surplus has increased but the in year deficit has increased by 100% (potentially unsustainable). Therefore, this needs to be addressed this year or CHNS will also be a School Facing Financial Challenge.

-School Key Performance Indicators for Staffing and Income: These were noted as high risk with expenditure exceeding income. All staff are paid above London Living Wage rates. The School has tried to be prudent re staff redeployment with high staffing ratios (1:8 to 1:10). The use of apprentices is being considered for both schools. Term Time Only compensation payments were discussed and could continue to next year.

Q. Salary increases have been met within the budget? **A.** Yes, trying to increase recovery from the LA and budget setting for 2024/5 has started.

ACTION: HC/HR to consider 2024/5 budget.

(Strategies to mitigate risk including staff redeployment and use of apprentices with

a follow up meeting if necessary before the FGB meeting). The transfer CHNS to LHNS will be considered in the summer term.

-Capital Income and Expenditure: Brought forward balances of £12,900 were noted, £49,000 income and £2,500 spend on LED lighting.

5.3. Low Hall Nursery School:

-There is a brought forward deficit of £94,000 (funded by transfer from CHNS). It is anticipated that there will be an additional supplement on I01 of £15,000 with SEND funding also over budget.
-Income on Early Years' Pupil Premium funding has been overachieved and there is additional income for assistant head teacher consultancy work re Sheringham hub and Play Together Learn Together.
-Most cost centres are to budget.
-Key performance indicators were noted for school and daycare.
-Capital Budget c/f: This was noted at £45,000 (spent £15,000 on Forest School, £4,000 architectural fees, £2700 on 2 year old room, relocation of office and server, creation of new lobby. Carry forward £6,000.

Q. There is a 4 year plan to reduce the deficit and consider pay back to CHNS?

A. Yes, long term.

The benefits of federation and outstanding recent OFSTED were noted. HC has met with the new Director of Education and raised the issue of strategic planning for the federation.

-The meeting **AGREED** proposals to increase rates for the holiday playscheme (£35 to £40), day care (£27 to £30), tea time club to £25. HR noted that these are reasonable fees locally. Discussion noted that Friday day care is unlikely to be viable following a parental survey of need.

ACTION: Proposal to be put to full Governing Body.

6. FUTURE OF FEDERATION AND DRAFT BUDGET 2024-5:

This will be discussed by chairs of committees but with options identified by PF as follows:

Option 1: Continue as now and maintain outstanding provision and service extension with local campaigning.

Option 2: Increase self-sustainability and partnership models.

Option 3: Soft federation with a local primary school e.g. re INSET, commissioned training.

ACTION: A preference was expressed for options 1 and 2 with HC to invite MP to visit to discuss.

7. PERSONNEL AND STAFFING MATTERS: Minuted as confidential under separate cover.

8. POLICY REVIEW: It was noted that these are posted on GovernorHub and have been signed off by PF. They include maternity procedure, menopause in the workplace, Disclosure and Barring Service, discipline, charging and remissions, adoption of Scheme of Delegation (banking mandate amended to include Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, School Business Manager and PE).

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 7 May 2024-5.30 p.m.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: There was none.
The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.