MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF INTERIM EXECUTIVE BOARD OF RADDLEBARN PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD AT THE SCHOOL AT 2:30 PM ON MONDAY 16 DECEMBER 2024

PRESENT	Justine Baker		
	Alex French		
	Catherine Griffin		
	Angela Lowry	-	Headteacher
	Charlotte Stubbs	-	Chair
IN ATTENDANCE	Dave Bagley		
	Alison Hicks		
	Claire Huxley	-	Deputy Headteacher

THE MEETING WAS DECLARED QUORATE

0051 **FINANCE**

The Finance sub-group had met on 3 December. Notes from this meeting had been shared with Governors prior to this meeting.

AUDIT REPORT

The Audit Action Plan (Paper 8) was shared prior to the meeting. Many items were RAG rated green and in progress.

The budget had not been approved by the IEB and so this was highlighted in red on the Audit Action plan. The previous Governing Board had approved the budget in March/April, and this had been approved by the LA. This could be changed to green on the Action Plan as it did not need to be approved by the IEB.

A Member asked why the documentation stated that the purchasing card would be done in the Spring. This was in reference to the policy as amendments needed to be made. It was highlighted in the audit that failure to following the purchasing card policy was a major failing. The Headteacher confirmed that actions were in place, but the policy itself would be coming to the IEB in the spring.

ACTION: (RPS 16) For the purchase card policy to be available for review by the date of the next meeting.

A member commented that a large proportion of the document was green.

A member asked about paying VAT on school meals for staff it was understood that this would be the case carried forward but asked whether it had been back dated. Historically the school had been charging staff the cost of a meal, VAT had not been factored in. However, as soon as staff were made aware VAT was added fewer staff had school meals. School had been

absorbing the VAT cost for staff meals, it would be impossible to backdate this and calculate how many meals had been purchased previously. DB highlighted that the LA dealt with VAT and the school would only be charged the net amount, the problem was identifying how the LA had accounted for the VAT.

0052(a) Update on financial position

DB had produced a report for the meeting. It was summarised that the financial position of the school was getting worse. Staff costs were increasing, due to:

- A delay in the restructuring
- Budgeting for staff absence and return
- An increase in the Teaching Staff Projection

There were also other staff costing issues due to sickness cover. There was an increase in costs for agency staff, electricity, security and alarms and educational visits. DB had suggested in meeting on 3 December that the school should not incur any unnecessary expenditure. There were some allocations unspent within the budget and these could be moved to help reduce the overspend.

A Member proposed a freeze on recruitment with immediate effect? (Exceptional cases to be made either to IEB or finance sub-group)

It was highlighted that the school should consider tendering for utilities as this could be a big area of saving. DB was asked what support DRB could give in relation to tendering. DRB stated that it was not part of the existing contract.

A member stated agreed that spending needed to be controlled but needed to be balanced against what the impact would be on pupils and the curriculum. Flexibility would be needed to ensure that the quality of education was not negatively impacted by any sort of spending freeze. **It was asked how much had been committed by the school up to the end of the financial year.** DB indicated that forecast had been made, and it was predicted that improvements might be visible towards the end of the financial year as unspent funds would become available. **A member asked what the big cost centres were to ensure quality of education (not including staffing)** The Headteacher highlighted stockroom equipment (paper, exercise books etc). **A Member highlighted that there was a £300k deficit but that stockroom equipment were small level consumables.**

ACTION: (RPS 17) DB to produce a list of balances that had been assumed committed but might remain unspent.

DB asked for clarity as to who the decision maker would be on the final spend and what autonomy they would have to make day to day decisions. **The Chair suggested putting a freeze on recruitment and that any spend over an agreed amount would need to go through a different process.**

ACTION: (RPS 18) For the finance subgroup to agree expenditure amounts as outlined.

A Member queried whether school was keeping on top of repairs. The site manager was managing repairs, a big spend was not expected on repairs and maintenance.

Member highlighted that it was important to consider whether the school needed to replace like for like. Information from the Headteacher's report identified the teaching responsibilities of Senior Leaders. The biggest driver for the IEP would be the budget deficit recovery plan as this would highlight 'concrete figures.' It was identified that what was being discussed was the plan for the next three months.

The staffing recovery plan could not begin until the LA were involved from a HR standpoint.

Cuts had already been made to the contracts register but these would not take effect immediately due to the nature of the contracts.

0052 **RESOLVED:** That an indefinite recruitment freeze was approved.

The Chair stated that the school would need to consider the impact of supply coming in and whether there was another way of covering absence whilst maintaining the quality of education.

Sharing the extent of the deficit with Parents and Staff was an issue which the senior leaders and the IEB would need to address. It would allow people to understand why they were being asked to reduce their expenditure. **The Chair proposed that these conversations took place in January**. **A Member highlighted that it was important to carefully consider what information was shared with families.** The Chair had been in conversation with the LA to see if they had any experience of managing that sort of communication but had not had a response. The Headteacher identified that Geroge Craig had had experience of communication. **A Member highlighted that the IEB needed to agree on what was appropriate to share with parents.**

ACTION: (RPS 19) CS to seek advice from George Craig regarding communication with parents.

0053 **REVISED RECOVERY PLAN**

Additional financial documentation (Paper 9) was provided prior to the meeting.

The Headteacher had reviewed the previous recovery plan and identified what would be realistic to achieve before the end of the financial year, factoring in catering and absences. This would be a working document and identified £3,500 to be saved by April 2025. There would be more to come as work continued on the recovery plan, but it was important that it was realistic. School

would be looking at the premiums and utilities to see if there were any saving that could be made.

A Member highlighted that there were some items on the list which had been on the list for some time. The utilities bill was large, and conversations were taking place with other schools in the consortium to see which suppliers were being used.

DB suggested approaching a broker who would provide the benchmarking for free. DB shared information from a recent conference, a company called E-energy could put LED lighting across the school to reduce the school budget at no cost to the school.

ACTION: (RPS 20) DB to investigate E-energy providing LED lighting

ACTION: (RPS 21) DB to share information regarding energy benchmarking companies to Phil Evans.

DB shared that in his reported he had stated that £8,714 devolved capital would be spent, highlighting that this could not be transferred to revenue, but it could be used in other areas.

Pieces of ICT equipment would need replacing; this could come out of capital. Devolved capital could be carried forward into the next financial year.

The Headteacher and DB had met to discuss reducing the cost of staffing.

ACTION: (RPS 22) For DB to produce an overview of staffing costs

The LA had been approached as the employer to discuss reduction in staffing and the Chair was waiting to hear back. This would be taken to the Project Board.

A virement form was shared with Members before the meeting. DB shared that because the school was using FMS, when setting the budget, restrictions should be made on the overspends and the only way it would be possible to go over those budgets would be to go through virement. Reporting would then take place on why the money had been moved.

If the IEB agreed to use virements values would need to be agreed, this could be done as part of the budget setting report.

It was agreed that at the start of the next financial year (after budget approval) a virement form was to be signed. **The Chair stated that it would be difficult as an IEB to know exactly what the virement values could be in 12 months' time.**

A Member asked why the virement form was necessary. This would allow for reports to be made to the board about why overspends had taken place and would help the IEB to be aware of monies which were being moved.

A Member asked if there were any expected virements between the time of the meeting and the end of the financial year. DB highlighted that there were already cost centres which were overspent, DB needed to investigate the reports to see what the variables were.

ACTION: (RPS 23) DB to create a report identifying variables within reporting

ACTION: (RPS 24) For a finance subgroup meeting to take place at the start of the next term.

GOVERNING FINANCIAL ASSURANCE CHECKLIST

This had been reviewed and amended in the finance sub-group meeting.

A Member highlighted that maximising income should be included in the recovery plan. There was a need for a marketing strategy which ensured the school was at PAN.

ACTION: (RPS 25) For the Headteacher to add the marketing strategy to the recovery plan.

A Member asked for clarification about debtors as of March, whether this was in relation to companies or parents. This was for parent pay for music lessons, and for Stans Café. All of which had been chased. For the checklist to be accurate the answer to the question highlighted had to be noted.

0054 **RESOLVED:** That the Governing Financial assurance checklist be approved.

ACTION: (RPS 26) For the Headteacher to complete the necessary sections and send financial assurance checklist documentation to the LA.

[DAVE BAGLEY LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT]

0055 **APOLOGIES AND WELCOME**

Governors were welcomed to this Meeting of the Interim Executive Board.

A Member queried whether the Board would be looking to elect another member with a strong financial background. Contacts had been approached across BCC, unfortunately no one had availability. Further networks were being explored.

0056 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY/CODE OF CONDUCT**

There were no new declarations of interest.

Governors were reminded that care should be taken to ensure that they were aware of agenda items of a confidential nature. In addition, they were advised to ensure that minutes of their meetings did not include information of a confidential nature as once approved, these became public documents.

0057 **IEB: REMIT AND REMINDERS**

Although some conversation might be operational the focus of the IEB was to look at the school from a strategic perspective.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

0058 **RESOLVED**: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 8 November and Monday 18 November 2024 be approved as a correct record subject to the agreed amendments.

The Chair highlighted that these had been a verbatim set of minutes which contained personal information which needed to be altered. Amendments had been made, and a copy had been shared via email prior to the meeting.

ACTION: (RPS 27) For the Chair to upload the amended minutes to GovernorHub.

0059 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

IEB Strategic Plan Minute No. 0042

ACTION: (RPS 13) For the Chair to send the clerk the finalised strategic plan that would be shared with all for updating.

0060 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

There were no actions to be reported.

0061 **REPORT OF THE HEADTEACHER**

Governors had received the Headteacher's Report in advance of the meeting. Attention was drawn to the following matters:

The Headteacher and Chair had been working together to find an appropriate format for the Headteacher's report. This was an opportunity for the IEB to ensure that the Headteacher's report was in a robust format before handing back to a Full Governing Board.

The Headteacher highlighted that a data drop was due to take place on Thursday 19 December and so current in-house data wasn't included in the report.

Members were asked about the new format of the report and all identified that it was clear and well laid out. **A Member highlighted that it would be useful to have a further break down of data into groups, such as boy/girl, disadvantaged/ non-disadvantaged.** The new format of the report would allow information and data to be shared in a clear way and allow Members to get an understanding of the story of the school across meetings.

The Chair highlighted that she had a lot of non-strategic questions (i.e. in terms of wording) that she would address with the Headteacher at a subsequent meeting on Thursday 19 December.

The Chair asked for data to include a comparison to 12 months ago to allow the IEB to understand whether levels were increasing or decreasing.

A Member highlighted that it would be useful to know how many vacancies there were in relation of PAN and to consider where the dips were in the year groups.

The Headteacher highlighted that due to the location of the school there could be pupils who arrived and departed in the same week.

0061(a) Attendance

The school had 95% attendance, members identified that this was positive and in line with NA, work had been carried out with the LA around Persistent Absences (PA). **A Member again asked for this information to be broken down into groups so that comparisons could be made. More clarity was sort as to whether PA was in relation to genuine illness or holiday. Clarity was also sort as to whether the 95% was year to date,** it was confirmed that it was. **Termly breakdowns were also requested.**

The Chair asked how many families had been fined this year. The Headteacher shared that this was about three, one family had been fined multiple times before. **It was requested that this information was also included in the report.**

ACTION: (RPS 28) For the Headteacher's report to break down data and attendance by groups, including how many fines had been issued.

0061(b) Safeguarding

A Member asked about pupils with mental health concerns, stating that it would be useful to include this information within the report. It was identified that the number reported appeared high and **the Chair queried how these cases were triaged.** Some were low level concerns, however mental health was a priority across the school.

ACTION: (RPS 29) For the Headteacher's report to break down mental health concerns into, high, medium and low levels.

A Member asked whether the workload for safeguarding was manageable and whether it was increasing or decreasing. The Learning Mentor had recently undertaken DSL training. The workload was manageable with multiple members of staff having a DSL role, the Headteacher highlighted that whilst she had oversight, she was taking more of a SEND role.

The Chair asked if LADO referrals had been made for the two allegations made against staff. One had been and one had not, the second had not been raised with LADO because it was a low-level concern.

The Chair asked how much of the My Happy Mind programme had been DLP funded. All of it had been DLP funded to the value of approximately £5,500.

The Chair requested some further information or a presentation on My Happy Mind. A Member shared her experience of My Happy Mind explaining that there was not additional work involved in the programme as all of the planning was already there. A trial had taken place with parents and feedback had been positive.

Tea and Talk sessions had taken place. **A Member suggested that the programme was trailed with a whole year group.** Y5-6 parents had been involved with the process and so it would be these year groups who would trial the programme first.

ACTION: (RPS 30) For the safeguarding Member visit to take place in spring two to discuss the My Happy Mind Programme with staff and pupils.

0061(c) <u>SEND</u>

The number of pupils with an SSPP was queried. It was highlighted that although 49 were listed in the report only two of these were funded.

ACTION: (RPS 31) For the number of SSPP pupils to be broken down, in relation to what support was being received.

A Member highlighted the workload involved in having 49 pupils with an SSPP.

An LA SEND audit was due to take place in Spring one.

The Chair commented that the school's implementation of the SEND system was positive but queried the impact.

There had been many positive emails from parents highlighting the positives of SEND provision and SEND tea and talk sessions.

A Member highlighted the funding implication of the SENDCo being released for a day a week

ACTION: (RPS 32) For the Headteacher to provide a further breakdown as to how the SEND funding was being spent.

0061(d) Staff development

A Member asked about the support, training and CPD available for the newly appointed of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. The Headteacher highlighted that regular meetings were taking place. Monthly leadership meetings had begun, these meetings also included middle leaders. The Deputy Headteacher was attending consortium meetings. The school had not yet investigated external CPD available to the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. **A Member asked for clarity on targeted training which was being provided to middle leaders.** A conversation had taken place between a Member and staff where it was shared that middle leaders were not always clear on their roles. This was why monthly leadership meetings were now in place.

The Chair identified that a lot of staff training was taking place and would like in future meetings to get an understanding of the impact that this was having.

[See Confidential Appendix A]

It had been challenging to get support for pupils with complex physical needs. SENAR had been approached about training, but they were unable to help. **A Member asked if special schools had been approached.** Victoria School had been approached, and a member of staff had been into school to support. **The Chair asked for clarity on what support was needed, querying whether this was for safeguarding or health and safety reasons.** This was in relation to mobility, equipment was needed for the pupil, and lifting training was required. **The Chair asked whether the school should formalise a partnership with a special school to ensure that annual training could take place.** The Headteacher was confident with the links which had been made with Victoria School.

0061(e) PPG

It was confirmed that Opal was having a positive impact and that now it was purchased further funding would not be needed.

PPG information was available on the school website

0061(f) Outcomes

There was discussion around complex student needs, provision and impact on outcomes. Whilst it looked like there had been a reduction in the data it was cohort specific. **Again, it was requested that this data was broken down by group. The Chair highlighted that from the data it appeared that**

expectations had dropped and so a narrative was needed to explain the needs of the cohort.

ACTION: (RPS 33) For the IDSR to be shared with Members.

0061(g) Health and Safety

The Chair asked if a cost had been received for the replacement of a broken heater. The school were waiting for a quote from 3D, this was not a major concern as the system could function without the heater.

0061(h) Staffing information – changes over the term

A Member asked if exit interviews were carried out when staff left. These used to take place, staff were now given the option. The recent audit had looked at resignation letters and no concerns were raised.

ACTION: (RPS 34) For the Headteacher to reinstate the use of exit interviews.

It was asked if the school was being supported with the attendance monitoring process. It was confirmed that support was provided for HR and ER.

The Chair reminded the Headteacher of the importance of ensuring confidentiality throughout the Headteacher's report.

A Pay Committee meeting had taken place, and this should be highlighted as such in the Headteacher's report.

0061(i) CPD

A lot of CPD was taking place which tallied with the information in the SDP. **The Chair asked that the impact of this CPD be noted in the next Headteachers report.**

0061(j) Parental engagement

It was highlighted that the parental survey would help to give the IEB a better understanding of parental engagement. Slips were to be provided to parents when attending events in school to help gather feedback

ACTION: (RPS 35) For the Headteacher to share parental engagement summary via email.

The Chair highlighted that thanks could be given to parents for completing feedback in the newsletter, this may then encourage more parents to engage in the future.

0061(k) Future Proofing

It was shared that the BBC had previously recorded some programmes at the school for which funding was received. The BBC had recently been in touch regarding filming Silent Witness on the school site. This had been brought to the IEB as the storyline involved criminal activity, this scene would not be recorded on the school premises. **A Member shared concerns about the content and asked how identifiable the school would be in the filming.** It was raised that Silent Witness aired after the watershed and that therefore children would not have sight of the programme. It was highlighted that parents would be able to understand that school was just being used as a set. Filming would take place over February half term.

ACTION: (RPS 36) For the Headteacher to seek clarification on how much funding would be received and that no filming relating to the crime would take place on school grounds.

One formal complaint had been received. Advice had been sort and letters had been sent to the family.

ACTION: (RPS 37) For the number of formal complaints received by the school to be recorded in the next Headteacher's report.

The Headteacher had arranged a meeting to have a discussion with a Union representative. The Union Rep also met with the staff union representative who presented feedback from policy. A survey had been carried out with this unions members in June. The representative indicated that concerns were typical of the national picture. It was highlighted that 60% of the NEU members had considered leaving in the past 12 months. The Union representative identified that if the survey was carried out again the results would be different.

The Chair asked if there would be a repeat of that survey. The survey would be completed again in the summer term. Half termly meetings would be taking place between the Union and the Union's rep, and staff were invited to Union meetings.

A Member praised the Headteacher for the work carried out on the Headteacher's report stating that it was transformed from previous reports.

The Chair shared that when moving back to having a Full Governing Board it would be important to have a regularity and consistency within the Headteacher's report.

0062 **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The updated impact report for Autumn term was shared.

The Chair highlighted the importance of moving this information onto the SDP itself.

ACTION: (RPS 38) For the impact report to be RAG rated in future.

POLICIES

Governors had received copies of the following policies in advance of the meeting:

- Pay Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Anti-fraud & corruption policy
- Gifts & Hospitality Policy
- Third Party Whistleblowing policy

A Member asked for clarity as to whether the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher's Pay range needed to be included in the policy. The Headteacher had been advised to include that this information was available on request, this was included on page 27.

0063 **RESOLVED**: That the policies detailed above be approved.

0064 **GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY REGISTER**

There was a nil return.

0065 **PARENTS FEEDBACK**

RESOLVED: That Parent's feedback be discussed in a future meeting.

It was the school's and IEB's intention to create a 'you said, we did' culture with parental feedback so that when a survey was undertaken changes would be made if relevant.

The Meeting ended at 4:30pm.

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date: 10 February 2025