

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting on 22 March 2023

Absent

Jack Tinley

In attendance:

Parent Governors

Gonzalo Coello de Portugal

Christophe Frèrebeau

Sei-Kee Maturine

Nanouche Umeadi

Charlie Condou

Christophe Frerebeau

Staff

Natalie Stevenson - Co-Head

Sally Hill- Co-Head

Rosie Thomson - Associate Governor

Lacey Cousins – staff governor

Co-opted Governors

Jennifer Allan – Chair of Governors

Boris Telyatnikov

Shanti Fricker

Tim Peake

LA Governor

Also present:

Tania Voaden, Clerk

MATTERS ARISING

1.00 Corrections

Charlie Condou shown in both apologies and attendance. Apologies had been sent.

1.1 Actions from February 2023 minutes

Item 5 rolled over from November 2022 minutes. Done. Termly Governor Safeguarding Minutes shared with March meeting minutes.

All other actions completed.

It was agreed that Nanouche Umeadi would be Diversity Advocate in addition to Pupil Premium Advocate.

2.00 CO-HEADS REPORT

The Spring 2 report was shared ahead of the meeting.

The Heads invited comments and questions on their report.

2.1 Admissions

Update in the table of Year 7 destination schools shared in the report. Two, as opposed to three girls will join Camden School for Girls, as one has accepted a place at Channing. Another child has been offered a place at Parliament Hill School, so eight girls will join their Year 7 cohort. Table corrected to note that Wren Academy is in the borough of Barnet rather than Haringey.

2.2 The Heads had attended Camden Heads Conference which had included some useful discussions and empowering speeches. Sally Hill reported that Baroness Floella Benjamin was inspirational, a true children's champion and committed to improving lives.

Staffing

2.3 Governors spoke positively about the decision of Danny Ansley to continue as site services officer.

2.4 The Co-Heads expressed their intention to recruit an experienced Key Stage 2 teacher for one year maternity cover. Charlie Condou commented that there had been previous discussions around diversity and asked how best to attract a diverse applicant pool. Nanouche Umeadi added that applicants might review the website to gain insight into diversity within the staff team. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Natalie Stevenson stressed that the recruitment was for an experienced Key Stage 2 teacher, with knowledge of children with special needs and ideally with SEMH (social, emotional mental health) experience, given the profile of needs in some Junior classes. Gonzalo Coello De Portugal asked whether Sara Stokes might move to Key Stage 2. Sally Hill responded that Sara was qualified to teach across all year groups, but had specialist experience in Early Years and Year 1. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Co-Heads responded that they would very much like her to stay in the role if possible. Charlie Condou challenged why the recruitment was targeted at someone experienced in Key Stage 2. Natalie Stevenson replied that the position was to cover Rosie Thomson during her maternity leave. In addition to needing to cover an excellent and experienced teacher teaching, the job might also have potential to cover the roles of literacy lead and history lead. There is not the capacity to support another ECT through mentoring and in recruiting an experienced teacher the individual would not need support in day to day teaching and would bring to the team other experience such as supporting children with additional needs. Christophe Frerebeau added that with Rosie Thomson leaving on maternity leave, the school would advertise the role of acting deputy head and the potential to step up to SLT.

2.5 EEF Research School

Gonzalo Coello De Portugal asked for an update on the process. Natalie Stevenson said that the partnership had got through to the final round of the process and that it had gone well. She said that much seemed to focus not just on the quality, but on the need for coverage in London. In seeking a research school there hadn't been a specification of phase. There were already Early Years and Primary research schools so, with an apparent gap of secondary and Parliament Hill School also in the running, her sense was the choice would ultimately be Parliament Hill. She expressed some disappointment that there had not been greater clarity on the desired phase ahead when embarking on the process. However if Parliament Hill became the lead research school, then it would still be a Camden research school and require support from Eleanor Palmer and also Torriano and Brecknock schools. The schools would hear the outcome in a week. The Chair commended the school for the work and progress in the process. Natalie Stevenson noted working with Torriano had been very positive and may lead to future collaboration. Tim Peake enquired about the funding. Natalie Stevenson responded that it lasted 3 years and the research programme was worth £70,000 a year, shared across partnership schools.

2.6 Governors agreed to move the July Governing Body meeting to 12th July. The change of date was necessitated by the national delay in publishing SATs results due to the addition of the coronation bank holiday. Assessment review will be the key agenda item in the July meeting, so the date has been moved post results publication.

SPECIAL ITEM

3.0 Attendance

The Co-Heads shared analysis slides on attendance.

In summary of presentation and discussion

- The school's attendance is the best within Camden, but is below its own historic trend. (The Chair commented, however, that Camden's performance is low compared to national.)
- Historically the school's attendance percentage is around 97% but sits at 95.44% YTD.
- The year group comparison shows that Year 4 has the strongest attendance at 97.54% and Year 6 attendance is poor at 95.83%.
- The whole school percentage is generally buoyed by strong attendance in upper Juniors where children are less prone to minor illness. Historically Year 6 attendance sits close to 98%. Poor attendance in Year 6 and relatively low attendance in Year 5 affects the overall school percentage.
- In recent Year 6 parent meetings for SATs the teachers stressed the importance of good attendance.
- In reviewing the details of children with lowest attendance, there are 25 children with attendance below 90%. 3 of these have EHCPs, with complex needs affecting attendance. 3 others had extended periods of absence due to medical conditions/treatment.
- The trend that seems to be impacting the overall attendance most negatively is the number of children with attendance between 90-95%. There has been a creep towards more children at around 90%. YTD 43 more children have attendance below 93% than in 2019-20.
- Discussion was had around the impact on attendance of more parents working from home and flexible working.
- There is a notable increase in holidays taken during term-time, these are unauthorised but parents take them anyway - either through a sense of entitlement or due to the significant travel savings to be had during term-time and the cost of living crisis adding pressure to take advantage of these.
- The Heads shared a proposed document for parents and carers giving clear illustration on what attendance percentages below 100% represent in terms of days missed and lost learning.
- The document also summarised the cumulative impact of arriving late for lessons eg. 10 minutes late each day= 50 minutes a week and 1.5 weeks a year.
- The Heads outlined the strengths that help give the school the borough's highest attendance figures.
- They expressed intent for a renewed focus on attendance, raising awareness and encouragement and praise for improved attendance.
- Ideas include effusive teacher praise and recognition of good attendance and punctuality, this can be very powerful.
- 100% attendance awards will be resumed (stopped during Covid). These will be not just half termly, but weekly in classrooms.
- Discussion was had around the benefit of the soft start to the day with classrooms open from 8:45am.
- A governor suggested the resurrection of the popular Wake Up, Shake Up exercise sessions. Enjoyed by many, however the Heads commented that it was not a calm start to the day and made it hard for some children to settle into learning.
- The new progress reports shared with parents mid-year will contain attendance percentages as usual, but wording has been added alongside to indicate whether the attendance is good, needs improvement or is unsatisfactory. A clearer, more overt message to parents and carers on their child's attendance.
- These progress reports are shared at parent meetings and attendance will therefore be part of the discussion rather than an addendum.

ACTION The Chair asked for attendance breakdown by pupil group. Done.

3.1 Oracy

Rosie Thomson shared a presentation on oracy. This included-

- An explanation of oracy - the ability to express well orally with a wide range of vocabulary and the ability to structure thoughts to make good sense to others.
- Oracy is not new to the school which has always valued talk and talk-based strategies of teaching.
- The school has always used rich vocabulary and talk strategies eg. pick sticks, talk partners, group discussions.
- The school has used Talk Boost for a number of years. This is a targeted intervention in early years to support children with talking and understanding words.
- During the Challenge Partners review earlier in the year the strength of oracy in the school was highlighted. Amongst the EBIs (even better ifs) however, came the suggestion that there should be a toolkit for oracy, a consistent, coherent pedagogy with whole class involvement.
- Oracy is a tool for equity and feeds into the priorities in the school for supporting disadvantaged children.
- The school has been working with Voice 21 an organisation supporting oracy in schools.
- An overview of the oracy framework was shared to understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, informing speech and effective communication.
- Nationally 50% of children lack oracy skills. The school has a lower percentage than this, but there is a significant minority.
- The ability to communicate effectively is a life skill and can impact directly on a child's future success and life chances.
- Rosie Thomson shared some examples of planning for teaching and learning for oracy and recommendations on how to up-level oracy in school.
- The school had audited its current oracy practice and the results were shared with governors. It was noted that the area with the lowest score in the audit was appraisal of progress in oracy and using this to inform teaching.
- Rosie Thomson has led two sessions for teaching staff and one for support staff on oracy. This also helped promote consistent expectations. She shared staff feedback from these discussions.
- Explanation was given of active and inclusive questioning strategies.
- Detail was shared on talk behaviours and talk guidelines.
- Sei-Kee Maturine asked why the school was focussing on oracy now. Rosie Thomson responded that oracy impacts all learning. Oracy also ties into a greater focus in school on disadvantaged children. Natalie Stevenson added that adopting the framework and the focus on oracy also came from the school team learning more about it.
- Boris Telyatnikov commented that oracy crossed all subjects. He noted that work around oracy had been done previously as part of 'bridging the gap' SDP targets but without the same detail and focus. Rosie Thomson added that it was now actively taught.
- Rosie Thomson said that the school would continue the cycle of oracy CPD with focus on skills progression, assessment and disadvantaged focus.
- Boris Telyatnikov said there would be monitoring and review of impact, especially for disadvantaged children.

Action - oracy presentation shared with governors. Done.

4.0 Resources Committee

Minutes shared ahead of the meeting.

An extraordinary meeting to discuss finance strategy had been held and minutes of the meeting shared. Natalie Stevenson added that this meeting had been very useful and that the heads appreciated the governors' commitment to investment in teaching and learning.

It was confirmed that use of the credit card was audited by the Chair.

The budget needs to be returned to Camden by 17th May.

5.00 Staffing Committee

Minutes were shared ahead of the meeting.

No additions to minutes and Shanti Fricker referenced the termly safeguarding report shared ahead of the meeting.

6.00 Curriculum Committee

Minutes were shared ahead of the meeting. No additions to minutes.

7.00 PPC

Minutes shared ahead of the meeting.

Christophe Frerebeau spoke of the ongoing need to promote Keep it EP and noted that the big uptake in donations came after the parental Keep it Ep event. The school receives £27k annually from 40 families.

8.00 AOB

There was no AOB.