

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting 17 May 2023

Absent

Charlie Condou

In attendance:

Parent Governors

Gonzalo Coello de Portugal

Christophe Frèrebeau

Sei-Kee Maturine

Nanouche Umeadi - via zoom

LA Governor

Jack Tinley

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 - via zoom

Shanti Fricker

Tim Peake

Also present:

Vicky Green School Business Manager

Tania Voaden, Clerk

MATTERS ARISING

1.00 Corrections

No corrections.

The Chair requested that completion of any Governor training is added to future minutes. There was none to record for March minutes.

1.1 Actions from March 2023 minutes

All actions completed and noted in minutes as 'Done'.

2.00 SPECIAL ITEM - Budget 2023-24 and approval

School Business Manager Vicky Green shared a presentation for Governors on the budget. Points raised and discussions included:

- The 2022-23 out-turn was set pessimistically and income has been higher than anticipated. Outturn was 6% up on projected. Increased playcentre income, SEN funding, Keep it EP/Fun Run and additional Covid-funding had contributed to this.
- Nursery deprivation funding was down on predicted.
- Expenditure was up 1% on budget with significant overspend in support staff costs, plus overspend on recruitment costs, repairs and maintenance and in SPD projects.
- Detailed graphs and charts of income and expenditure breakdown were shared.
- A year on year comparison from 2019-2023 outturn was detailed. Gonzalo Coello De Portugal asked whether Teaching School had stopped. Vicky Green said that it had, but this was in a separate budget account. The funds transferred from the Teaching School account to the school delegated account had increased in recent years and this was shown on the line graphs under partnership income.
- Christophe Frèrebeau asked about the increase in the school budget share shown in the graph, Vicky Green said that the Government had given the school an additional £40k payment as a one-off grant.
- Shanti Fricker challenged whether ¾ expenditure is typically spent on staff costs. Vicky Green affirmed that it was. She added that the school can access data on other schools' expenditures and that the Resource Committee look at schools with a similar profile to compare and monitor this. It is a useful exercise to benchmark against other schools within the local authority and nationally.
- The Chair asked where there was most variability in expenditure and Vicky Green responded that this was within staff costs. Sally Hill added that there was a significant difference between the cost of employment of a new teacher and an experienced one.
- It was noted the funding given for an EHCP or an ENG (Exceptional Needs Grant) to support children with additional needs does not cover the costs of employing an LSA (learning support assistant). Natalie Stevenson added that the school opts where possible to have LSAs on permanent contracts rather than short contracts or using agency staff.
- Governors reviewed the 2023 out-turn and reserves with 3 year projections. The projection shows a deficit [REDACTED]. Vicky Green stressed the need for close monitoring of expenditure and income in the years ahead.
- Jack Tinley noted that budgeting was hard when there was 10% inflation.
- Vicky Green said that she had been advised by Camden to budget based on a 3% pay rise but that teachers were asking for 4% which amounted to a further £19k if granted. Teachers were looking for this funding to come from the Government as opposed to the school budget.
- Vicky Green commented that the school was in a very fortunate position of having Teaching School reserves to call upon. The Chair agreed that the school was fortunate in this, adding that this money should be spent on the children to maintain the quality and enrichment of the educational provision This should be achieved by controlled expenditure, rather than putting it aside for future use.
- Christophe Frerebeau commented that the school could actively recruit less experienced staff with an associated cost saving. Rosie Thomson countered that this would make partnership work unsustainable. Sally Hill added that recruitment was always considered strategically and that the school had chosen to employ an experienced KS2 teacher this year to meet the needs of the children. Natalie Stevenson added that new teachers are supported through mentoring and this was a stretch on capacity as a small school, as this role required a day a week.
- The Chair added that the school considered the totality of staff provision to maintain the quality of offer. This enables it to look at new revenue sources and to look outwards for

3.4 Year 6 SATS

The Heads report was written before completion of the Year 6 SATs and therefore the Heads updated Governors on the experience of the tests. There had been coverage in the news about the difficulty of the SATs reading paper and the Heads acknowledged that it had been hard, but that children at the school had not shown the distress outlined in the media. Lacey Cousins said that some parents had feedback that the intense practice and preparation had increased children's confidence. The Heads thanked Rosie Thomson and Lacey Cousins for all their work preparing and supporting children for these tests. Governors discussed the SATs and the combination of functional tests and teacher assessment. The Chair noted in reflecting on media comments on the level of difficulty of the tests, that it was important that public assessments distinguished between attainment at *all* levels, including the highest. Schools need to help children understand that 'hard' questions are part of the experience and not an indication of 'failure'. Equally, national assessment authorities' responsibility is to ensure the tests are reliable for all relevant levels of attainment.

3.5 Partnership work

As shared in the Heads report, the school has been successful in being appointed part of the EEF North London Research School Alliance. The Alliance will work with schools across North London to bridge the gap between research and practice. Natalie Stevenson had previously suggested that research school status would likely be given to a secondary school, and the appointing board had chosen Parliament Hill School. However, they had been impressed by the proposals from Torriano, Brecknock and Eleanor Palmer schools and had consequently granted them Research School status. Torriano would be acting as the lead school with Eleanor Palmer as an associate school. Natalie Stevenson said that the schools needed a greater understanding of what EEF wanted. Her understanding had been that they wanted professional development based on EEF research, but there was clear indication that they wanted the partnership to go into other schools. There was funding of £70K pa across the partnership for three years. Camden will also provide some funding and will try to incorporate the work of the alliance in their education strategy.

Natalie Stevenson said that at this stage the information and plans were tentative, with more detail to follow on actual funding, how it would work and also on capacity. A visit to an existing research school, Charles Dickens, was planned to gain an understanding of their structures. Natalie Stevenson said that the school needed to take care to ask for what is needed and to make sure that the funding properly remunerates the work done.

Tim Peake asked how many staff would be involved and Natalie Stevenson responded that this is unclear at this stage.

Natalie Stevenson said that EEF were impressed by the schools' experience as Teaching Schools and their networks. The school was not however big enough, or deprived enough, to take the lead.

The Heads were very excited to be part of this alliance, it was prestigious and would be a good thing for the school. The full extent of what was involved was not yet tangible.

Governors congratulated the Heads for the school's appointment to the alliance.

4.00 PPC Committee

The committee have a SEN coffee morning and survey planned.

The Parent Survey will be sent after half term and results analysed for the July FGB.

Nanouche Umeadi had brought up the lack of reference to diversity in the teacher job advertisement. Sally Hill said that she had spoken with Nanouche Umeadi since the committee had met; they had reviewed Brookfield School's teacher advert which actively welcomed diversity amongst applicants. The school will take into account discussions with the anti-racism hub and incorporate suggestions into adverts going forward.

Nanouche Umeadi and Sei-Kee Maturine had also expressed concerns about the Year 4 teacher being a new hire. Lacey Cousins said that there was SEN need across Key Stage 2 and recruitment involved adding skills to the KS2 team.

5.00 Curriculum Committee

The Science Policy is being updated and ongoing.

- **ACTION** Policy completed and agreed at committee.

Jack Tinley, Rosie Thomson and the Chair provided a Pupil Premium monitoring update. Jack Tinley reported that the children they had met had been positive, articulate and engaged. They were able to explain to governors what they were proud of and how teachers had helped them. The Chair positively agreed.

Rosie Thomson spoke of how there had been focus on oracy with disadvantaged children. It is important that all children are able to articulate academic enrichment and talk about trips and tutoring. One EBI was that children could show clearer understanding of teacher book annotations - e.g. yellow meaning sunshine in writing. It had been evident that some younger children did not know this.

Rosie Thomson mentioned that a Year 6 parent was making a film of the class about their experience at EP. She had previously filmed them during lockdown.

Gonzalo Coello De Portugal left the meeting at 7pm.

6.0 Resources Committee

Minutes shared ahead of the meeting.

The focus of the committee was on budget and partnership finances.

Data Breach Response Policy approved at committee.

7.00 Staffing Committee

The committee had discussed the Wellbeing in relation to SDP and recruitment for the KS2 teacher and deputy head maternity cover.

8.00 AOB

There was no governor training to record.

Policies Approved

- Data Breach Policy approved at committee
- Budget approved at FGB
- Children Missing in Education Policy approved at committee