

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting 12 July 2023

Absent

Boris Telyatnikov
Tim Peake

In attendance:

Parent Governors

Gonzalo Coello de Portugal
Charlie Condou (for part of meeting)
Christophe Frèrebeau
Sei-Kee Maturine
Nanouche Umeadi -
Christophe Frerebeau

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
Shanti Fricker

Also present:

Tania Voaden, Clerk
Andrea Bara Bara - incoming parent governor
Aoife Nolan - incoming parent governor

MATTERS ARISING

1.00 The Chair welcomed newly elected parent governors Andrea Bara Bara and Aoife Nolan who will start in September 2023. She also thanked Charlie Condou and Nanouche Umeadi for their contributions as parent governors as they reach the end of their terms of office. Nanouche Umeadi has been invited to continue as an associate governor with a term of office of 2 years.

1.1 Corrections and actions from May FGB Meeting Minutes

No corrections and no outstanding actions.

2.00 Heads' Report

The Heads invited comments and questions on their report which was shared ahead of the meeting.

2.1 The Heads report included detail of TEPS (Team EP Strategic) day held on June Inset day. The Inset had focussed on reflecting on the year and discussing emerging priorities.

Aoife Nolan asked for greater clarity on the use of 'scripts' as a form of staff communication referenced in the report. The Heads explained that these were used between staff to communicate whether or not they needed assistance when managing a child's behaviour. Rather than another member of staff or SLT stepping in to intervene, the adult supporting the child could indicate whether help was needed. Staff had discussed this and said that it felt empowering as they had ownership of the moment.

Charlie Condou asked about the balance of staffing across classes. Sally Hill said that the staffing was determined by the level of funding and need within each class. Aoife Nolan asked whether the resource matched the need. Sally Hill responded that the SEN funding received supported the costs, but never matched the need. She explained that the school receives different amounts of SEN funding for different children. Charlie Condou asked about 1:1 support for children. Sally Hill explained that provision had changed to a team approach wherever appropriate. Natalie Stevenson added that it was not always practical nor desirable to have a 1:1 provision.

2.2 Attendance

The Heads said that improving attendance remained a focus and that a letter regarding attendance and punctuality had been shared with parents twice. They said that days added onto holidays or term-time breaks persisted and that these were always unauthorised absences.

The Chair drew attention to 23 children with persistent absence.

The Heads that there had been some positive responses to the letters sent and that they would add attendance to the welcome evening talks in the new school year.

2.3 SEN

Camden's SEN consultant Helen McNulty had reviewed provision with Lacey Cousins. Sally Hill commented that this had been very positive. Lacey Cousins said that there was a focus on being Ofsted ready and that the visit had incorporated a learning walk. Helen McNulty was being invited back to school in the autumn term. The Chair commended Lacey Cousins on the positive feedback.

2.4 Safeguarding

Nanouche Umeadi asked about the fixed term suspension mentioned in the Head's report.

[REDACTED]

Sally Hill said that these incidents had not been witnessed and Aoife Nolan responded that they had witnessed on other occasions. Natalie Stevenson said that the impact on other children formed part of the discussion with parents and with Camden's Head of Inclusion. There was ongoing discussion with the SEN team as to whether the provision can meet the needs of all children.

The Chair added that it was important the governors remained neutral in these matters and Sally Hill added that the Chair was always briefed in full regarding serious incidents and ahead of suspension. Shanti Fricker added that as Safeguarding Governor these incidents were discussed in detail at the termly safeguarding meetings.

2.5 Finance

The Summer Fair funds were still being finalised, but had raised approximately £8k and Run Kids Run totals calculated to £14.5K.

2.6 School Direct

There were 8 School Direct students for 2023-24 programme, a smaller cohort reflecting the national picture of declining applications. The 2022-23 cohort size was 19 and the prior year 14 students. Rosie Thomson added that the school remained selective and that whilst applications were still being made, the quality of applicants late in the year was generally not strong. With 13 partner schools, unusually in 2023-24, not all will have a student teacher placement. Lacey Cousins will be the lead mentor whilst Rosie Thomson is on maternity leave. Lacey Cousins noted that of the 19 teachers trained in the present cohort, 13 had jobs in Camden and 2 in Islington. In light of the teacher recruitment crisis, the programme was beneficial beyond the income gained from training.

3.00 Election of Chair of Governors

The Chair Jen Allan had reached the end of her term of office. Governors had been invited to stand as candidates for the position ahead of the meeting. Christophe Frerebeau had put himself forward and there were no other candidates standing. The Chair asked who would second the nomination and Nanouche Umeadi offered support. Christophe Frerebeau was then elected by majority vote.

The Heads thanked Jen Alan for her wisdom and steerage of the governing body. They expressed delight that she would remain as a co-opted governor.

Shanti Fricker continues as Vice -Chair.

6:10pm Charlie Condou left the meeting.

4.00 SPECIAL ITEM - Data and Review of the Year

The Co-heads gave a presentation to governors on the outcomes of the end of year assessments. Graphs and data tables were shared as part of this presentation and the subsequent discussions summarised.

4.1 Foundation Stage

Governors viewed a graph of data to show the % children attaining Good Level of Development in the 6 key areas assessed over the period 2019 to 2023. It was noted that 2020 and 2021 assessments were through Covid and that Ofsted would not review these years. For 2023 87% of the children in Reception achieved the Good Level of Development (GLD) target, a decrease of 3% on 2022 and equal to the 2019 pre-Covid %. 87% GLD compares to 67% Camden and 63% nationally. The school ranked 3rd in Camden (42 primary schools) in 2023. The analysis of Pupil Premium showed that good progress had been made with 100% children reaching GLD. To note that the cohort size was only 3 children, but these children had low starting points, two are EAL and they had been supported by Talk Boost sessions through Nursery.

The school was happy with these results whilst acknowledging that the overall cohort had strong starting points. The Chair concurred that the children had strong starting points, but that the important measure was good progress which the school had achieved and showed the strength of the Early Years provision.

Camden's provision is also strong with the local authority average outcomes sitting above both the London and national results.

4.2 Year 1 Phonics Check

90% of children passed the check - 28 out of the 31 children. Two pupils were exempted from the test due to SEND. The one pupil who did not pass also has SEND and was only 1 mark away. The Co-Heads expressed delight in these results. The cohort has complex needs and includes some children who are systematically disadvantaged. Pupil premium results were strong for the class. Nanouche Umeadi said that teacher Shushan Tewolde-Berhan focussed on the specific needs of each child. The Co-Heads said that the results were excellent and a credit to Shushan and the team. The school thought that the Little Wandle phonics programme was very good and Rosie Thomson added that Helen McNulty, Camden Senior SEN Advisor had suggested exploring other reading strategies outside of phonics for certain children.

4.3 Key Stage 1 Assessment

80% children reached Expected Levels (EXS) or above across all areas and 20% attained Greater Depth (GDS). Whilst these results are good, the school has high ambitions for this cohort. The class has strong learning behaviours and a large group of high attainers. In maths, 80% of children are secure but additional focus is needed to ensure those weaker in the subject maintain progress. Writing was teacher assessed and externally moderated by Camden. 23% children were assessed as GDS and the moderator challenged the assessment for one child. Rosie Thomson explained that teacher Gemma Stansfield provided evidence to support her judgement and the grading was affirmed. Rosie Thomson said that this was good CPD and the process was professional and collegiate.

Natalie Stevenson noted that KS1 SATs for maths and reading would no longer be statutory next academic year, and there would be no requirement to report assessment for maths, reading and writing externally. However there would still be internal assessment at this point, for the school to track progress. Children would continue to be assessed at entry in Reception as a baseline and at the end of Year 6, with a measure of progress between.

4.4 Year 4 Times Table

The Co-Heads shared a graph of the results of this Year 4 test. They explained that there was no formal pass mark, but there was a consensus that a score 20+ was indicative of fluency. Half of the class achieved the full 25 marks, 5 did not reach 20, 3 of these children have SEN. Nanouche Umeadi noted strong scores from children entitled to Pupil Premium. Natalie Stevenson said that secure knowledge of times tables was transformative and the children who scored under 20 would need additional focus to build knowledge and confidence.

4.5 Key Stage 2

The Co-Heads shared the headline percentages from these assessments and said that the school was very happy with these results. The combined total for the school across the three areas assessed was 83%. Natalie Stevenson noted that these results were very positive against the predicted results. A number of children were working at the borderline of the expected standard and Natalie Stevenson suggested that it had been hard to predict how these children would manage at the point of testing. There had been a significant amount of preparatory work for these tests and she praised Rosie Thomson, Lacey Cousins and Taynee Woods for their work with the class. All children who took the test passed Reading and SPAG.

One child had been exempted from the tests as they were working significantly below the required standard. There had been conversations and meetings with the secondary school about supporting their transition and a different secondary flightpath discussed.

The combined results nationally were 59% and Natalie Stevenson commented that this low national attainment % meant 41% children would be starting their secondary education not secure in a key area of learning.

The Heads shared details of Greater Depth (GDS) working on the assumption that a standardised score of 110 would represent GDS. The combined GDS results were 24% combined, 38% Writing, 45% Reading and 38% Maths. The school had appealed one paper with the aim of one child (PP) moving up to GDS. Rosie Thomson said that Reading GDS was driven by a good reading habit and children lacking reading stamina found the challenging Reading paper fairly impenetrable. There had been national acknowledgement that the 2023 Reading paper was hard and the passmark lowered.

Looking at the pupil by pupil breakdown for each subject it was noted-

- Of the 11 children attaining GDS in Maths, none were PP (11 PP in class)
- 2 PP children attained GDS level in Reading
- 4 PP children attained GDS level in SPAG

Rosie Thomson said that the cohort had received a lot of additional support, through tutoring, gap analysis, more individualised teaching and additional writing practice.

Lacey Cousins added that the school had concluded that the loss of schooling in Year 3 and 4 due to Covid closures meant that a great deal of time was spent in Year 5 catching up and recapping.

Natalie Stevenson added that in Year 3 and 4 children missed time spent on multiplicative thinking, so important in the foundational knowledge of maths required at upper key stage 2. Lacey Cousins said that there was greater awareness of possible gaps with the incoming Year 6.

4.6 EEF

The Co-Head shared a graphic from the EEF of a model of evidence-informed school improvement following the process of explore, prepare, deliver, sustain.

Also shared was the EEF summary of recommendations on metacognition and self-regulated learning. Metacognition and self-regulation approaches to teaching support pupils to think about their own learning more explicitly, often by teaching them specific strategies for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. The EEF focusses on behaviour for learning and metacognition and wants teachers involved in their research. The school was engaging in the research and challenging the team to consider how they can most effectively develop children's metacognitive skills.

Gonzalo Coello de Portugal asked whether this EEF work would be done through Torriano and Natalie Stevenson said that Eleanor Palmer would be involved as part of the Research School Alliance. Working with the EEF to identify areas of need, develop ideas in specialist areas e.g. maths or oracy and then put ideas into practice to obtain evidence of success.

Aoife Nolan challenged how much time the feedback to the EEF would take. Natalie Stevenson said that the school was not the lead school and so were well placed to balance what it could commit with what it gained in return. Sally Hill added that this builds on oracy and attention ratios that the school has already been working on.

4.7 Emerging School Improvement Priorities

The Co-Heads summarised the emerging SDP foci for the four governor committees.

For Curriculum-

- Metacognition and self-regulated learning
- Science - renewed focus and greater rigour looking at science progression.
- Mathematical problem solving - looking at the curriculum vision of low threshold and high ceiling and developing brilliant problem solvers. Noting that there are a number of new teachers in the school since this was last focussed on.

For Staffing

- Using evidence and EEF toolkits
- The cogs graphic of building knowledge and motivating teachers- developing teaching techniques and embedding practice.
- Embedding the positive behaviour approach - including 'ready to learn'.

For PPC

- Further development of the SEN provision
- Use an anti-racist lens to audit processes e.g. policies, recruitment etc. Nanouche Umeadi added that the school needed to look at its anti-racism policy and consider the trauma of racism and how this is dealt with.

For Resources

- EYFS environment and how this encourages independence
- The entrance - with safeguarding in mind

5.00 Surveys

Parent Survey

A summary of the results of the annual Parents and Carers survey were shared ahead of the meeting. Alongside % results for responses to the set questions, there was also a summary of parental comments. Christophe Frerebeau had condensed this data and said that it represented a high level of satisfaction from the 105 respondents.

Notable increases in satisfaction were to the questions-

- *My child is making enough progress* with a 6% increase
- *The school takes account of pupils' views* with a 5% increase

The Chair suggested that the mid-year reports may be a factor in the response to making enough progress. Natalie Stevenson said that the school had given teachers guidance on how to talk about progress specifically and also about end points.

The Chair said that there were some free text comments on improving communication with parents, but that otherwise there was no specific trend identified.

Aoife Nolan noted the lower score of 85% to the statement *The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour*. Christophe Frerebeau said that whilst the score was lower, it had increased by 5% on the prior year and was a positive trend.

The Chair challenged governors to consider how the feedback might feed into priorities for the year ahead.

5.1 SEN Survey

This survey was shared with 36 families and there were 19 respondents. Lacey Cousins added that the parents and carers had also been invited to a forum and 7 attended. She said that the survey indicated that families were broadly positive with the provision. The theme for improvement that came from the survey and forum was greater consistency in communication with more established systems in place.

Governors discussed how to celebrate the achievements of SEN children with lower academic attainment. Lacey Cousins said that since work on this in school has historically relied upon children taking this news home, the school should therefore consider how successes are shared and more publicly celebrated. There should be a shift in recognition for some of the school's SEN children with a focus on effort and determination.

Attending the SEN forum, Nanouche Umeadi said that some parents didn't know what a 'My Plan' was. Lacey Cousins said that not all SEN children have these. Nanouche Umeadi challenged that some parents felt they had to ask for information and follow up. Lacey Cousins responded that there was work to be done on developing more rigorous systems of

communication.

Shanti Fricker suggested adding a question on behaviour to the SEN survey.

- **ACTION** Lacey Cousins to add this to the next SEN parent survey. Will be added for 2024.

Lacey Cousins reminded governors that SEN focus was a PPC priority for the year ahead and that feedback from the survey and forum would filter into this work.

5.2 Staff Survey

The summary of the results of the staff survey was shared ahead of the meeting.

The results of the survey were positive. One area for improvement regarded regular feedback on performance. Natalie Stevenson said that this was likely from support staff and that whilst there had been far more CPD opportunities this year, the school needed to think about how to further develop a culture of feedback. She noted that it was positive that staff were wanting more feedback on their work, so important that this is addressed.

The Chair asked what the plans were for Music with music teacher Laura McWilliam entering her final year. Natalie Stevenson said that a succession plan was needed. The school was talking to the Head of Camden Music, but whilst there were some small changes, there was no significant change to the current provision planned.

6.00 Committees

The Chair invited questions and comments arising from committee minutes.

Sally Hill said that there were no candidates for Staff Governor and therefore the position remained open.

- **ACTION** An open invitation to stand as staff governor would be extended at the start of autumn term and discussed at staff meetings. **Done.**

Gonzalo Coello De Portugal said that the resources committee would be focussing on bigger objectives in the works plan in addition to repairs work.

Christophe Frerebeau said that as the new Chair of Governors he would like to step down as Chair of PPC. Sei-Kee Maturine expressed interest in this role.

Christophe Frerebeau said that there needed to be ongoing focus on Keep it EP and there was resultant governor discussion on how to engage new parents. Aoife Nolan questioned how best to encourage donations from parents who, having children starting in school, no longer paid expensive private nurseries and therefore may more readily make payment into Keep it EP as this wouldn't seem to be an additional expenditure.

The Chair said that the curriculum committee would monitor the work of the Research School. She said that the three schools must agree to a Memorandum of Understanding.

- **ACTION** Heads to confirm Memorandum of Understanding with partner schools.

The Chair invited the governors to express committee preference and to consider whether they wanted to sit on more than one committee. This discussion was inconclusive and would be continued.

7.00 AOB

Governor training - Lacey Cousins had completed Designated Safeguarding Lead training. There was no other governor training to record.