

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 4 October 2017 at 6.00pm

Apologies received:

Boris Telyatnikov

LB Camden

Parent

Flora Cornish
Shanti Fricker
Rifca Le Dieu
Vicky Starmer
Kirsten Walton

Staff

Kate Frood, Head teacher
Rosie Thomson

Co-opted

Jennifer Allan – Chair of Governors
Josh Franks
Matthew Lawrence
Tim Peake
Mark Pemberton

Associate members

Fiona Crean
Natalie Stevenson

Also present:

Tania Voaden, Clerk

1.00 There were no declarations of interest.

2.00 The Chair welcomed new parent Governors Flora Cornish and Rifca Le Dieu and introductions were made. It was agreed by Governors that Kirsten Walton would become Vice Chair, replacing ex-governor Julia Hollis. There was discussion around committee membership and it was agreed that Flora Cornish would join PPC Committee and Rifca Le Dieu Staffing Committee.

3.00 No corrections of July 2017 minutes.

3.1 Actions

- PPC Committee to review the Mental Health Policy. This is a long policy and will continue to be reviewed by the PPC committee and not remain as a full Governing Body action point. A summary page has been added to the school's website.
- **3.4** Check Year 1 phonics report for the Year 6 cohort to assess added value. The data was reviewed and the Head reported that these phonics results did not predicate future KS2 success.

- **8.1 ACTION** Responses to parental questionnaire in relation to extracurricular activities and food to be added to PPC agenda. Done.

4.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Headteacher's report 4/10/17 was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting.

The Head reviewed her report in brief asking Governors for comment.

4.1 Curriculum Development

Mark Lawrence asked the Head to give greater detail on the new model for Year 1. The Head said that historically learning continued to be play based up to Year 2. In the last 10 years there had been a shift and now Year 1 marks the start of formal education. Lesson Study work in school has indicated that some children found the transition from Reception to Year 1 difficult, with learning whilst sitting still resulting in a dependency on adults in class. Having been independent learners in the play-based Reception environment, children became more dependent in the formal seated Year 1 setting. This year the school had decided to give children a softer start to Year 1 with more integrated learning.

There is a clear goal that all children remain active learners. The class is also trying a new morning focus on reading with 6 adults reading with small groups each day at 9am. This is providing a consistent focus and continuity of reading throughout the week.

Natalie Stevenson said that the class teachers were able to do more focussed teaching and learning with smaller groups and were therefore closer to the teachable moment.

Fiona Crean said that independent learning in the old model was not successful for all, whilst some children actively engaged, some did not and then developed a dependency. Rifca Le Dieu reported that her children found it a big step from Reception to Year 1 and that the model sounded positive. She challenged whether children would still reach the same standard. The Head replied that the school was confident that they would, and that all studies in learning of children up to age 7 show that they learn best when actively engaged by play, fun and plenty of engaging talk. Josh Franks concurred with the Head and said that the groundwork for learning was key. He said that assessment through SATs did not necessarily give a clear indicator of learning progress and there was a difference between understanding and knowing.

The challenge is that children are not providing teachers the evidence of progression in terms of filling books of work, it does seem however that the children have remain switched on to learning. The intent is that Christmas will mark the end of this gentle transition.

Professional partner Marion Hunter is monitoring this change of model and of course the school team are closely tracking.

Mark Lawrence asked about feedback from parents and the Head replied that the response at the Meet the Parents evening was positive and that there would be further opportunity to discuss at Parents' Evening.

- **ACTION** Curriculum Committee will evaluate what success looks like in the new model for Year 1 and determine clear tracking measures. Monitoring the model will be added to the School Development Plan (SDP).

4.2 Special Needs

The Head summarised the comments in her report regarding parents expressing concern about perceived changes in the support provision and asked whether Governors thought that the annual meeting with parents should be revived.

Rifca Le Dieu said that through the process of her recent governor appointment, she realised that there was little knowledge amongst parents as to what a governor did. She thought there would be value in the meeting and it would be a good forum to discuss ideas.

The Head said that annual meetings were statutory historically, but that there was no longer a requirement to host them. Meetings held previously had poor attendance and whilst the school had tried to be creative by breaking into discussion groups and activities, there was little engagement. The Head noted that the recent PTA meeting had only seven attendees which was discouraging, especially as this small group decided the spending priorities for a substantial sum of money.

There was some discussion about parental understanding of the difference between Governors and the PTA and also around their understanding of expenditure and how PTA funds could not be used for capital items or salaries.

The Head did note the positive engagement with parents in the recent Shed Talk sessions.

It was agreed that there would be value in a meeting of Governors and parents.

- **ACTION** Wednesday 22nd November proposed date of meeting to be confirmed and communicated to parents. *Done.* Committees to discuss what format the meeting should take.

4.3 Finance

The Head referenced her report with regard to teachers' pay and pay progression. There has been a national pay rise of 1% for all teachers and Headteachers, and a recommendation to uprate the minima and maxima of the main pay scale by 2%.

Historically there was a stepped advancement through a salary range and what is known as 'threshold' to cross into an upper pay range. This progression was supported by Camden and many local authorities.

The NUT have proposed that there should be a 2% uplift on all pay scale spine points.

Camden, whilst supporting in principle, informed schools that this was not within the budget. The Head noted that the deferral of the National Funding Formula was good news, but there was a continued likelihood of significant real terms cuts over the next 3 years. The Head asked Governors to discuss the proposed 2% uplift in consideration of these points.

Teacher Rosie Thomson left the room whilst this discussion was taking place.

[REDACTED]

There was discussion on contingency and the Chair then asked whether governors supported the 2% proposal. There was consensus of agreement to offer the 2% pay rise. Rosie Thomson was invited back into the meeting.

4.4 Premises

The Head updated Governors on the progression of the Science Lab, finally seeing real development. She highlighted the intended celebratory completion event planned for Wednesday 13th December and asked Governors to attend. The school would also be inviting the 2017 Year 6 leaver families who had made generous donations to support the project.

4.5 Safeguarding

[REDACTED]

The Head flagged her concern around the amount of medication passed on by parents to take on the recent residential trip, with the instruction to routinely administer at bedtimes. Painkillers and stomach medicines given daily for preventative purposes and which the teacher was disinclined to give.

5.00 Special item School Development Plan (SDP) 2017-18

The Head shared the SDP in advance of the meeting. The draft SDP had been reviewed at the July meeting and the Head had used these discussions to inform revisions to the plan.

The Head explained to new Governors that SDP was not a to-do list, but a document that should inform and remind them of the core priorities and principles and enable them to hold the school to account. The Head said that she thought this new style of plan provided greater detail of where the school is at on its journey. It summarised key data and headlines of evaluations.

The Chair said that the Governors had recently looked at The Placemat (P12) and had discussed that this is what they subscribe to and abide by. There was an understanding that The Placemat was the first step and that the detail of how to achieve the vision was discussed at committee.

Governors were asked for thoughts on the SDP and discussion included:

- A positive response to the summary data 2016-17 (P4) as this placed the school's results against the Camden and National results for greater clarity.
- Mark Lawrence said that the Professional Development page (P8) should greater reflect the key role Teaching School plays and its critical financial contribution to the school.

The Head commented that in the Leadership and Governance page (P10) of the plan Teaching School was core as part of the action to refresh the risk matrix. The income stream from Teaching School is linked to certain people and this is strength and a weakness and needs succession planning. Governors discussed the need for mitigation measures.

- **ACTION** Risk matrix review on Resources Committee agenda plan.

Mark Lawrence challenged that the development of Teaching School should be listed as a priority on the SDP. The Head responded that Teaching School was very important, but would always be an add-on to what the school does and not become an industry in itself. Staff key to Teaching School were still teachers and core staff within the school. The discussion widened and it was agreed that the progression of Teaching School should never have a negative impact on the school. The USP of Teaching School has always been that the trainers are also practitioners. It was acknowledged again that without Teaching School the school could not afford the same level of staffing. The Chair commented that Teaching School was also bound up in the relationship between the school and the local authority.

- **ACTION** Discussion on the mission for Teaching School added to the next Governing Body meeting agenda.
- On P10 it had been agreed on the vision document to remove the word 'better' in the box on 'linking core priorities'.
 - **ACTION** Revise SDP to remove this word.
- In discussing P6 on Outcomes for pupils:
 - **ACTION** Add Year 1 phonics marker to actions.
- The Head explained the layout of The Placemat to new Governors, that the colours have no specific significance, but broadly link to each committee. The detail radiates out from the core vision at the centre. The Chair explained that committees look at what success should look like and apply measures to success.

The Head shared some impact statements that Natalie Stevenson and Fiona Crean had completed and asked for feedback. There was some discussion around the purpose of these and how they would be used. The Head said that they were useful

records for accountability. The statements give a clear picture of the thinking behind a plan and detail of the outcomes.

Fiona Crean reported that writing the impact statements crystallised thoughts. In writing about science her initial thoughts were to the delay of the lab, but as she wrote the statement she recognised how much had been accomplished. The Head said that Sally Hill was writing a statement for Year 1 to capture the new model.

6.00 RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 19 September were shared in advance of the meeting. Agendas and Terms of Reference were also shared.

6.1 The Head and Tim Peake updated governors on the progression of the science lab. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Head commended Sarah Ewins on her negotiations and holding the line on expenditure. Tim Peake said that there was a lot of money spent that was outside of the school's control and that some of the trimmings in the plan were not covered by the specification. There were also plans to rescope the playground and budget of £27,000 to do so. Children will be involved in devising these plans. The Chair asked when there would be a clear view of the finances. Tim Peake said that the architects are controlling the payments to the builders and the Head noted that it would depend on the final contribution from Camden. Tim Peake said that the building should hit the updated completion date of 13th December.

6.2 Tim Peake reported that the committee had also updated the SDP aims at the meeting and looked at the Nursery funding model.

6.3 Mark Pemberton highlighted the GDPR new regulations. It was noted that there will be changes in data protection coming into force in May 2018 and very different to the existing data protection directive. The Resources Committee have GDPR as an agenda item for March and will determine the strategy for the school which will be agreed with governors.

7.00 PPC COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 20 September 2017 were shared in advance of the meeting.

7.1 Vicky Starmer welcomed Flora Cornish to the committee.

7.2 The Mental Health policy that the committee were reviewing had a lot of detail most pertinent to secondary schools, but a summary page had been published on the school's website. Vicky Starmer noted the success of the recent Gill Morris parent talk on resilience. This was a repeat of the session held last term with 12 attendees, which was so well received the decision had been made to rerun it. There was a strong turnout of 34 parents and which is extremely positive. Sally Hill was facilitating a Pupil Focus Group and updates would be shared on the outcomes of these meetings.

Homework Club was still going strong in spite of a reduction homework assigned. There is a plan to seek feedback from children and parents about the new style homework later this term.

8.00 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 21 September were shared in advance of the meeting.

8.1 Shanti Fricker said that the committee's main discussion was on the new pay scales already covered in the meeting.

The committee had agreed the Terms of Reference.

9.00 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 13 September were shared in advance of the meeting.

Matthew Lawrence said the committee had updated the Terms of Reference with some changes outlined in the committee minutes. Dates had also been set for some reviews, including Book Look. The Chair challenged the remit of Book Look and the Head explained that a member of the senior leadership team, a governor and children met and the purpose was as much about the conversation with children as the content of the books. It was important that the children could explain what was in their books and demonstrated their understanding and engagement. Rosie Thomson said that children didn't worry about it, it was a chance to talk and these discussions often produced useful insights.

10.00 AOB

No AOB.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.