

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 29 November 2017 at 6.00pm

Apologies received:

Kirsten Walton

LB Camden

Boris Telyatnikov

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 Corrections on 4 October minutes

- **4.2** and **5** Matthew Lawrence incorrectly minuted as Mark Lawrence

2.1 Actions from October minutes.

- 4.1 Monitoring new model Y1 added to the SDP (School Development Plan)
- 5.00 Risk matrix added to Resources Committee agenda plan.
- 5.00 Discussion on Teaching School moved to March Governing Body agenda item.
- 5.00 'Better' removed form SDP and Year 1 phonics added as a marker under actions.

The Chair suggested a review of Governor advocates as vacancies had arisen with the change of Parent Governors. In discussion the following advocates were agreed with the addition of two new advocate roles.

- Girls – Shanti Fricker
- Boys- Tim Peake and Kirsten Walton
- Pupil Premium – Vicky Starmer
- EAL (English as an additional language) - Boris Telyatnikov
- LAC (looked after children) Flora Cornish
- SEND (special educational needs and disability) Rifca Le Dieu
- High achievers –Mark Pemberton

New advocate roles

- Prior low attainers – Josh Franks
- Summer born – Matthew Lawrence

The Head proposed that advocate place cards should be used at Governing Body meetings as a prompt to all.

- **ACTION** Advocate place cards printed and in use at next Governing Body meeting.
Done

3.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Head's report 29 November was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting.

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

3.1 Governors asked why there were so few private secondary school applicants this year. The Head responded that it was the profile of the cohort and a reflection of the strength of local state provision.

3.2 The Head's report noted that 30% of the school's 'class of 2012' achieved a grade 9 maths GCSE in 2017 against a national average of 3%. Matthew Lawrence commended the school on this. The Head commented that the school was committed to the teaching and learning of mathematical reasoning at an early age. All research indicated that this makes significant difference to future maths achievement.

3.3 Governors discussed the revised model of school council known as 'The Big School Meeting'. The Head reported that this was going well; the meetings were held once a fortnight in groups of 30 children. She was impressed at how well the older children modelled to the younger children and that there was a benefit in now having the input of 236 children's ideas. Tim Peake challenged how ideas were captured and the Head said that the next step was to take stock of suggestions and ideas and have a plan of feedback.

3.4 SEND

The Head asked Governors whether there should be a Governor panel to review SEND admission applications. She explained that the school had twice the national average of children with special needs. Currently the Head consults with the Chair so doesn't act unilaterally, but welcomed a discussion on changing this process. Vicky Starmer asked whether these admissions should be reviewed by the PPC committee. Governors then discussed the funding for children with SEND and the Head explained the provision of funds and the fund banding. Children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP)

that made provision for 20 hours of support or less are funded through the schools own resources.

Children with EHCPs of over 20hours of support will receive top up funding (element 3) via a banded funding formula. Children defined as those requiring education provisions costing more than banding elements 1 & 2 combined (nationally assumed to be £10,000 per year) will receive additional funding paid in the form of a top-up from the high needs block (element 3).

Shanti Fricker asked for clarity on the process if the school wants to decline a SEND application. The Head said that she did decline an application a year ago but had consulted on this and taken advice. The Chair said that these were tricky decisions, but it was important to be able to explain why an application had been declined.

Governors agreed that the current process worked, but that the Head would consult the PPC committee to consider applications on an as needed basis.

3.5 Premises

The Head updated Governors on the building of the science lab, explaining that there were further delays as the windows had not been received and no confirmation of supply had been obtained. She explained that the contract was between the builders and the supplier. The school was therefore not liable for the additional cost, but the problems meant further delays in completion of the project.

The Head also asked for Governors' views on Camden's plans to create a new small autism (ASD) unit at a mainstream school and a mainstream based pupil referral unit for children at risk of exclusion. Matthew Lawrence asked the Head to quantify the implications of this. The Head explained that there would be a small separate base of specialist teachers and support staff. Additional space would be needed. She noted that the school had a significant number of ASD pupils on role currently, but did not receive additional funding for all of them.

Rifca Le Dieu said that the school did amazing work with children and that the offer for children with additional needs equals that of Kentish Town with their specialist unit. Victoria Starmer reported that she had worked at Kentish Town and some of the children there had significant needs. She noted the fantastic inclusion at Kentish Town and how the unit was greatly beneficial to all the children with or without additional needs.

Governors discussed capacity and the impact of a unit on the existing children and the school community. The Chair suggested a staff discussion to ascertain response and to talk through challenges as well as benefits. Tim Peake said that the school had taken on complex and ambitious building projects before, but would need to proactively make plans and add these to the longer term planning.

This led to discussion about the 'next big idea' which had been raised by parents at the Parent Governor meeting. Natalie Stevenson asked about a nurture room; some schools have a soft furnished area with dimmed lighting as a soothing space to decompress anger or agitation. Josh Franks asked about learning outside and Tim Peake noted that the lab would extend into the playground as a learning space. The Head also noted that there was money from the PTA to reconfigure the playground. Mark Pemberton asked about reviewing the music offer. The Head said that the school is always looking at ways to diversify. Shanti Fricker suggested taking ideas from children at the Big School Meetings.

3.6 Parent Governor Meeting

The preceding discussion led to a review of the Parent Governor Meeting. Minutes of this meeting had been shared in advance. It was agreed that there was not a diverse group of parents present, but that the meeting had been positive. The use of small tables was effective in providing a safe space for discussions. The Head said that these face to face meetings were important and valuable.

Josh Franks said that it had been useful when parents presented questions rather than suggestions eg. What was the next big idea? Matthew Lawrence noted that parents may have been motivated to attend in order to raise a suggestion. Governors agreed that there needed to be clarity of response to suggestions so that there was not an expectation that all would be acted upon. Boris Telyatnikov asked what opportunities parents had to engage directly with Governors outside of this meeting. The Head responded that there would be a table at the entrance at the next Parents' Evening with the senior leadership team on hand to talk with parents. She said that Governors should also attend. It was incumbent on Governors to increase visibility and accountability. Natalie Stevenson noted that having a focus issue to talk about in these discussions with parents was useful.

Boris Telyatnikov commented that the school focuses on teaching, learning and curriculum, but with the exception of modern foreign languages, nothing pedagogical had not been raised at the Parent Governor meeting.

The Head reported that she had received two very positive emails from parents in response to the meeting. The Chair said that a lot had been learnt from the experience; it fulfilled a need and should be repeated annually.

4.00 SPECIAL ITEM

The Head shared the Data Dashboard from 7/11/17 and Governors discussed the highlights.

- Key Stage 2 progress, also known as 'value added' on pages 5,7 and 9. The Head highlighted that reading progress score was +6.65, maths +3.17 and writing -1.16. The Head noted that the reading and maths scores were very strong, but that the writing was average and notably low in contrast to the other two subjects. Writing is teachers assessed and the Head considered that perhaps the school was too harsh in its assessment. Rosie Thomson said that the writing was not externally moderated in 2017, but would be in 2018
- P4 illustrates progress quintiles of trends over time. The Head noted that in reading the school has been in the top 20% and significantly above the national levels for the last 3 years.
- In writing the school had dropped down the progress quintiles across three years and the Head noted that this was missing from the front page highlighted 'areas to investigate'. The Head said that the school had moved to an earlier focus in writing and that it was now much stronger in Key Stage 1. Unpicking any problems was much harder in Key Stage 2, so early intervention was a focus.
- Fiona Crean said that she had completed a Year 1 book look that day and that the children were writing at length, writing narratives and telling stories. She talked about the balance of the freedom of writing and the structure of grammar but also modelling input for the children to hook into. It was noted that lower attainers still see themselves as writers.
- Governors discussed concepts around writing and sentence structure.
- Josh Franks commented on how writing was now assessed and that writing results could be raised, but perhaps to the detriment to the writer. The Head mentioned a very useful visit from Daisy Christadoulou, Director of Education at No More Marking. She had talked to teachers about a move away from the pedantry of grammar and to building cohesion in text. The school is trialling comparative judgement this year, inspired by Ms Christadoulou's visit.
- The Head said that she was anticipating good results in 2018 as there was a strong cohort.
- There was the discussion around the importance of language development and shared reading as the foundation for good writing. Most good writers were good readers and talkers.

- Natalie Stevenson noted that in maths there was a good mix of reasoning and problem solving and that getting a similar balance in writing was important, balancing grammar, writing stamina and creativity.
- The Chair noted that historically the profile of the school was high achieving in maths and reading, with writing the weaker area.
- The Head said that Rosie Thomson will be looking into resources to support oracy and was already very focussed on sharing quality texts. There were two Shed Talks planned around literacy and grammar.
- The school will be moderated on writing in 2018.
- The Head noted that writing would remain a key focus for the school. Staff should be aware that the 2017 writing data could be challenged and have a narrative around this and how the school is monitoring it.
- The Head accessed the link to the Schools Financial Benchmarking data and explained where to review the financial data and compare with other schools.

5.00 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 16 November 2017 shared in advance of the meeting.

Shanti Fricker noted that the Head would be attending an Inspiring Leadership National Conference in June. The Head had led a number of income generating events this term and had not had headship time, so it was important for CPD that she attend.

Fiona Crean updated on the Support Staff Lesson Study meeting. Natalie Stevenson had covered Maths Mastery teaching and they had looked at expectations for the year ahead. The committee had discussed the induction of new Governors and the role of Parent Governors. Shanti Fricker commented that some parents do not want to trouble the Head and prefer to speak to a Parent Governor first.

6.00 RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 9 November were shared in advance of the meeting.

Tim Peake summarised the minutes including reference to the Risk Determination Matrix, the impact of losing Teaching School status and key people leaving the school. This will be a March agenda item to consider succession and a 5 year forecast.

7.00 PPC COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 15 November 2017 were shared in advance of the meeting.

Vicky Starmer commented on the positive response to the Mental Health Shed Talk for parents. Sally Hill had organised a new programme of events for the Spring term which would be promoted through a flyer at the start of term. The content of the talks was led by parental suggestions and feedback. Vicky Starmer said that it was important to still consider how to target the harder to reach parents; not always the ones to come forward for the Shed Talk events.

Feedback on the new style homework would be welcomed at the Spring Parents' Evening, but general response thus far had been positive.

The PPC Committee will lead the International Evening and the school had sourced a dance workshop to support the event.

8.00 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

Boris Telyatnikov reported that minutes would follow.

The committee had updated the Maths Policy.

- **ACTION** to add policy to the website. Done

The Maths Mastery initiative will be reviewed in the January meeting. Boris Telyatnikov said that the committee had been looking at best practice in maths teaching and how to share it. Taking ideas from Shanghai maths, educational programmes and the best of maths teaching, Natalie Stevenson is leading this.

10.00 AOB

Rifca Le Dieu asked for data on how children with SEN and My Plans are progressing.

- **ACTION** The Head to share data.

POLICIES AGREED AT MEETING

- Maths Policy