

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 31 January 2018 at 6.00pm

Apologies received:

Mark Pemberton
Matthew Lawrence

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
Tim Peake

Associate members

Fiona Crean
Natalie Stevenson

Also present:

Tania Voaden, Clerk

1.00 There were no declarations of interest.

2.00 Governors completed the online skills audit. This was also sent to Governors absent from the meeting.

2.1 No corrections on minutes dated 29 November 2017.

2.2 Completed actions of the November meeting were noted within the shared minutes.

3.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Head's report 31 January 2018 was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting.

3.1 Admissions

The Head updated Governors on admissions and noted that one child with an EHCP (Educational Health Care Plan) and one adopted child would join Reception class 2018. Two adopted siblings would be joining the school shortly, one in Nursery and one in Year 2. Both classes would therefore have one additional child over standard class size for the Summer term.

3.2 Staffing

The Head noted that the departure of Sarah Ewins to Maria Fidelis School was a huge staffing change. Regarding finding a replacement School Business Manager several people have expressed interest so far. There is likely to be plenty of interest in the job; being term time only. The Chair requested that it was noted that Governors thanked and congratulated Sarah.

3.3 Challenge Partners

The Challenge Partners report from the inspection on 16-17 January 2018 was shared with Governors and the Chair asked for comment.

Flora Cornish asked whether the comments in the report regarding writing were consistent and fair.

The Head said that they were and noted that the success of the school in maths and reading, so far ahead of the national picture, drew writing into stark contrast. She reported that the inspectors had advised the school to be ready for a line of enquiry from OfSTED around why writing progress was so far behind other areas. OfSTED may focus only on writing and that the school should be robustly ready to talk about it. The Head said that this was very useful feedback and that the school would adjust the CPD plan for the year with focus on writing in the Summer term.

The Head informed Governors about an online comparative judgement trial which allows the school to compare writing with other schools nationally. The staff meeting preceding the Governing Body meeting had reviewed and discussed this trial.

Rosie Thomson informed Governors that the school had opted into the trial for a year and that so far Year 1 writing had been reviewed. She explained how writing was compared. Teachers across the country look at two pieces of writing and determine which is better. Different comparisons are repeated with the same set of writing samples so that a curve of attainment is created. This then gives both the child and the school a ranking. A sample of comparative judgment was shared. Rosie Thomson commented that the school's Year 1 writing samples came out well and that all the children had written a page of work. The school will get the class ranked and a view on where the class sit on centiles nationally. Governors challenged how the resultant data would be used. Rosie Thomson said that if the school continues in the scheme then class progress could be measured against national progress. The Head said it helps guide staff to understand whether the school has a good sense of what is average. If the school sits in the top 10%, the school may also conclude that it had previously been too harsh in its own self- assessments. Rosie Thomson said that knowing what Year 1 could achieve from the recent review helped not just their class teacher, but also teachers in Year 2 and Key Stage 2 to gain greater understanding of standards and expectations.

. The judgement is on whether there is a voice and purpose rather than simply judging the correct use of for example, capitalisation and taught grammar. Kirsten Walton said that she would be interested in completing the judgement.

The Chair asked about the controls in place to ensure the standard of judgements made. The Head replied that there was a reliability score. Josh Franks challenged whether there was an evidence base for it and the Head responded that the accuracy was high. Flora Cornish asked whether it would be used as an alternative to other measures of attainment. The Head said it may prove more informative than simply testing. Rosie Thomson said that

the school self-assesses writing, and even when the writing is externally moderated it is done within Camden. This trial gives a national view. Natalie Stevenson said one purpose is to get collective feedback and it was useful to consider how to this judgement could be used to diminish difference in lower attaining writers. The Head said that it was also useful to look at the top pieces of writing nationally in the rankings, accessing these scripts and seeing what they offer. The review is giving a clearer indicator of where the writing levels are at within the school.

Shanti Fricker asked about what feedback was produced. The Head said that data feedback was provided, but not specific feedback on a piece of work. Natalie Stevenson said that it triangulates judgements; the review does not reveal surprises about individual children but further informs judgements. The Head said that the school holds firm that writing linked to topics provides a rich source and that pupil engagement is high. The staff review of the Year 1 writing for these judgements had shown that the pieces or work were well layered and had energy.

The Chair congratulated the school for the outcome of the Challenge Partners review.

3.4 Special Needs

The Head referenced her report and the meeting she had held with the Chair, SLT and Year

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Head said she thought the subsequent meeting had gone well. The Chair said that it was evident from the meeting that the families attending loved the school, supported what the school does and wanted to know how to help the current situation.

The Chair said it was important that the school gave parents the opportunity to express their concerns. She said that it was a significant issue and a substantial number of parents had expressed concern [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Josh Franks said that it was difficult for the school because it can be transparent about a child to their parent, but can't discuss other children involved, only on a need to know basis. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Josh Franks said that it was clearly very emotive subject and asked whether the meeting had served to bring mutual understanding and broken a cycle of concern. The Chair replied that it had been a positive meeting, that there were actions to follow up on - such as investing in a narrative therapy 'Tree of Life' programme for the class.

The Head said that Governor discussion had been around parental concerns, but that there was also significant pressure on the teacher. Josh Franks said that it was important to find resolution for parents, but that Governors also fully supported the staff. The Head said that it was invaluable having the Chair at the parents' meeting. It was hard to appease everyone, but parents could see that the school cared about the children. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Chair said that there was a need to nourish and maintain trust. She said that this was a big issue for the school and praised the dedication of staff in continuing to work towards the best outcomes for all. She said that it was important that the Governing Body was aware of the difficulties within the year group and to continue to monitor and think about how to provide support.

3.4 Premises

The Head said that the final cost of the science lab would be [REDACTED]. Camden had agreed to fund £[REDACTED] initially, leaving a significant shortfall. Sarah Ewins had negotiated with Camden that they meet most of this shortfall, much of which related to the external wall deterioration. The school was left liable for £[REDACTED] and the Head praised Sarah Ewins on her negotiations to claw back the costs to this amount. Tim Peake said for Camden it was a small project, but the school had been proactive in building relationships within Camden and seeking and obtaining help when needed. Sarah Ewins had done this very successfully. He also reminded Governors that the solar panels that Sarah had arranged for the school would save £10,000 a year in perpetuity.

4.00 SPECIAL ITEM – Teaching for Mastery

Natalie Stevenson shared a presentation with Governors on the Teaching for Mastery approach to maths.

Key points covered:

- Since 2014 NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in Teaching in Mathematics) and the maths hubs have been working to develop an approach to teaching maths influenced by the Shanghai and Singapore methods.
- Over the course of a year teachers spend six days steeped in the pedagogy of teaching of maths. In the second year there are specialist work groups. Lessons are observed, reviewed and feedback given.
- The pedagogical thinking is to make maths achievable for all and develop a deep and sustained learning.
- It is not just for the children who have good understanding of maths, but makes sure that the lower attainers are on board with learning. If learning isn't sufficiently sustained the attainment gap widens, so the approach is about diminishing the differences. This sits with the school's existing ethos and thoughts on growth mind set, but also considers how to enhance practice and look at it critically.
- There are five 'big ideas' within the Mastery approach:
 1. Using representation – getting to the heart of the structure of maths. Making connections by using numicon etc.
 2. Mathematical thinking – reasoning for everybody, chains of reasoning and making connections.
 3. Fluency –rote learning is important, learning number facts and freeing up working memory.
 4. Variation – designing the examples and calculations so that the connections are made. Carefully taking the children through the concepts.
 5. Coherence – small steps, taking all children on a journey through.
- The Governors were given an example of folding paper into $\frac{1}{4}$ to try so Natalie Stevenson could demonstrate the practice and talk through how this would be discussed with children.
- The school is part of the London Central and North West Maths Hub and has taken the lead in the Mastery approach. Taking the lead has provided fantastic development for staff. There has been a series of INSETs (including for support staff), some teachers have had Shanghai showcase lessons and there is Lesson Study focus.

So far at Eleanor Palmer:

- The school is seeing impact on the lower attainers.
- Year 2 are further ahead in their understanding of maths concepts than in previous years.
- Teachers are better at using key representation i.e. not putting out all resources for every lesson.
- There is CPD (continuing professional development) as teachers consider the 5 big ideas.
- Teaching Assistants are focussing with certain children to support factual understanding.

- For higher attainers there is different work across the week. The class start together and then some children tackle deeper challenges.
- One challenge is to resist the pressure to move on in the curriculum before the learning has been sufficiently sustained.
- It is important to keep the fun, use games and sustain the love of maths. It can be a difficult balance to attain and sustain the key number facts and not make the subject dry.
- The school wants to consider how the Mastery approach can apply to writing and whether there are parallels to representation and fluency and to consider what small steps in writing look like.

Rifca le Dieu asked how the impact was evaluated. Natalie Stevenson replied that the school would look at the PUMA maths test results, look at how lower attainers were performing in tests, whether fluency was boosted and day to day progress. She said that children's attitude and engagement were harder to measure. Josh Franks said that positive feelings of success and self-esteem could not be measured. Natalie stated that she had started to write an Impact Statement that would also look at whether the higher attainers were also making the same progress. It was transforming the way the school thought about maths, but needed to bear fruit with demonstrable positive impact. Rosie Thomson talked about how Mastery revisited concepts repeatedly until everyone understands them and but how the teachers must still push the high attainers. Boris Telyatnikov said that the role of the Curriculum Committee was to look at impact both on children and teachers. The Head commended Natalie Stevenson in her work on Teaching for Mastery.

The Chair asked committee chairs to cover only key points on minutes having ascertained that Governors had previously read them.

5.00 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes dated 10 January 2018 were shared in advance of the meeting.

Boris Telyatnikov stated that the focus of the meeting was on slimming down certain policies and an agreement that there would be a staff meeting to review policies and ensure policies reflect practice.

6.00 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 18 January 2018 were shared in advance of the meeting.

Shanti Fricker said committee had discussed Sarah Ewins departure and the process of finding a replacement School Business Manager.

There was also positive discussion about the January Teach Meet at the school and a report on Teach Meet from Josh Franks accompanied the minutes.

7.00 RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 11 January 2018 were shared in advance of the meeting.

Tim Peake noted that the Science Lab had already been discussed at the meeting, but progress was now needed on how the playground would need to be reconfigured to work with the lab.

The Schools Financial Values Standard (SFVS) had been shared in advance of the meeting and agreed in principle.

- **ACTION** Governors to sign off to SFVS so that confirmation can be given to Camden.

8.00 PPC COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 17 January 2018 were shared in advance of the meeting.

Vicky Starmer summarised the committees work on parental engagement and the focus on mental health and resilience through the programme of Shed Talks.

The Chair commended the strong work of the committees.

10.00 AOB

Tim Peake is reaching his current term of office as co-opted Governor and was invited to serve for another term. This was agreed, and the Chair acknowledged his work as a Governor for the school for 16 years.

POLICIES AGREED

- Health and Safety Policy agreed at committee with no amendments from the Camden model.
- C&PHSE Policy
- Music statement (reviewed, revised and agreed that it should remain a statement not a policy).
- PE statement (reviewed, revised and agreed that it should remain a statement not a policy).