

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 25 January 2017 at 6.00pm

Apologies received:

Mark Peters
Mark Pemberton
Tim Peake

LB Camden

Boris Telyatnikov

Parent

Julia Hollis, Vice Chair
Kirsten Walton
Shanti Fricker
Vicky Starmer

Staff

Kate Frod, Head teacher
Rosie Thomson

Co-opted

Jennifer Allan
Matthew Lawrence

Associate members

Fiona Crean

Also present:

Sarah Ewins School Business Manager
Tania Voaden, Clerk

1.00 There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair welcome new co-opted Governor Matthew Lawrence to meeting and introductions were made.

2.00 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 23 November 2016.

2.1 Corrections

No corrections of minutes.

2.2 Actions

Rollover reminder - Governor engagement should be an agenda item in the Governing Body meeting.

Rollover reminder - to add school dinners to the PPC agenda.

3.00 SPECIAL ITEM – BUDGET – review and discussion of priorities.

The Head introduced the agenda special item on the budget and spoke about the proposal to introduce a school-level National Funding Formula where the funding each pupil brings to their school is determined nationally. The Head explained that the starting point for the funding was based on what the school already received; as Camden is well funded the cuts would be felt more in schools with a lower funding starting point than in Eleanor Palmer.

The Funding Formula will come into place 2019-2020, but it is still unclear how badly Camden will be affected.

Business Manager Sarah Ewins shared a presentation with governors about school's financial position and the funding challenges.

Key points covered and subsequent discussion points:

3.1: National picture:

- The new funding formula has a minimum funding guarantee of minus 1.5% per pupil year on year. The Head commented that schools gaining additional funding would gain a maximum of 1.5% per pupil.
- Whilst Camden is the 5th best funded borough in Britain, the school has less EAL and Pupil Premium (PP) than at most Camden schools.
- In the context of other increasing costs, the increased cost of pensions and rising NI contributions means there will be a real terms reduction of 8-12% over the next 3 years.
- The Head asserted that Camden has great real estate and is in a good place with regard to potential income. She said that the Labour council had always been very supportive of education.

3.2 The school's position:

- There has been an historic trend in the school of less PP (the increasing affluence locally), but the current Reception class has 11 PP children this year. The school is now 18% PP. The school receives funding of £1300pa each for PP children.
- There is an increased number of EHCP (Educational Health Care Plans /statements) year on year. This brings some additional funding.
- The school has an increasing number of children who have been in local authority care (LAC) for whom the school receives approximately £1900pa each.
- Teachers are moving up pay scales which mean the salary costs are getting more expensive.
- The Teaching School (TS) brings in income [REDACTED] This strengthens the school's position, but the income is reinvested into staffing.
- The staffing model is lean in comparison to other Camden schools.
- Senior staff time is partly covered by TS income

3.3 Benchmarking data 2015-2016 was shared with the governors. These graphs compare Eleanor Palmer with other Camden schools.

- The graphs demonstrate that the school spends 47% of expenditure on teaching staff, a high % in relation to other Camden schools and a conscious investment in the most important asset to the school.
- Only 4.10% income comes from pupil premium funding. Comparatively low % in Camden.
- The school spends very little on teaching supply cover.
- The school receives 1.41% income from parental contributions, a high % compared to other schools.

3.4 Challenges for the school:

- The school will need to revise and restructure the support staff model.
- The Head said that the school needs to look at the cost of additional support for children with EHCP plans in light of reduced SEN funding. The school has traditionally worked with a 1:1 model but is looking at alternatives. Kentish Town school has moved away from this 1:1 structure.
The cost of supporting a child with an EHCP by a 1:1 adult is greater than the funding received and therefore must be reviewed. The Head also spoke of the benefits to the child of not developing a dependency on one named adult. The school is looking at the having specialists in special needs for different age groups, so the children work with different adults as they progress through the school. Rosie Thomson agreed that this change to specialists would be beneficial in enabling the children to become more independent.
- Governors talked about Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and the likelihood of the number of these increasing. The Head commented that if a school is deemed as 'requiring improvement' by Ofsted it will have to join a MAT.
- There was discussion on the changes in Nursery funding and the final plans from Camden. The Head said that Camden was committed to finding the money to enable the 40% most deprived children in the borough to qualify for a free place.

3.5 Governors reviewed the actual expenditure 2016-2017 and planned expenditure 2017-2018.

- Governors noted that the budget was tighter than in previous years.
- The Head stated that the school had not bid for funds from charities recently and should become more proactive in this. It was noted that donations are often given based on % of PP children and that the school did not usually qualify. Matthew Lawrence suggested the John Lyons Trust for grant funding.
- Governors had a broad conversation about securing funding and covenants.
- The Head clarified that Teaching School income and School Fund monies could not be used to pay salaries as they are not secure income streams.
- The Head stressed the need to plan ahead, especially as a lot of the Teaching School income is tied up in what she delivers.

3.6 Governors were asked what defined the school and what they considered non-negotiable in terms of change.

- Shanti Fricker said that one form entry held appeal.
- Julia Hollis said that the school held a reputation based on the quality of teaching. It is great academically, vibrant, encouraged individuality and has a strong community spirit.
- The Chair commended the quality of teaching in the classroom.
- Rosie Thomson said that she enjoyed freedom on what to do in the classroom. Teachers were held to account, but could also explore children's and teachers' interests.
- Kirsten Walton said that the school did not take a prescribed 'going through the motions' adherence to the curriculum, but found creative ways to approach it.
- The Head stated that trips cost £12,000 and several governors commented on the importance of trips. Sarah Ewins said that the residential trips pay for themselves with parental contributions, but that the school heavily funded class trips.
- The Head asked governors what should be spent on making teachers even better teachers and stated that the school should look to spend more on inspirational training. She said that there was a contagious passion for teaching and learning amongst teachers at the school.
- The Chair challenged that the area to look at in terms of economising is within the salary budget. The Head said that the money should not come from the teachers,

having eight fantastic class teachers was essential. The number of support staff should be reviewed.

- Vicky Starmer stressed the importance as an employer to try to offer part-time roles.
- The Chair said that it was evident that there was no slack in the senior leadership team as a lot of time was taken up with Teaching School. She also highlighted the needs for succession planning.
- Boris Telyatnikov said that the goal was to maintain the status quo as much as possible and ensuring the school recruited and maintained great teachers was key. He challenged how much should be cut from spending and how the school could earn more.
- The Chair said that a £40-50k funding gap per annum was probably realistic and Sarah Ewins concurred, but it was noted that this had not yet happened. The Chair stated a preparatory plan was needed.
- Boris Telyatnikov asked whether there was an appetite to federate and the Head said that the school would not seek to do so.
- Discussions followed which included charging for clubs, fundraising, accessing grants, utilising parental expertise and contacts in writing bids.
- Governors were reminded to consider their advocate groups in discussions around reducing expenditure.
 - **ACTION** Resources Committee to revisit modelling covenants.
 - **ACTION** Clerk to resend advocate list to governors.
 - **ACTION** Head to share ISOS report.
 - **ACTION** Clerk to share list of acronyms with new Governor Matthew Lawrence. Done.

4.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Headteacher's report 25/1/17 was shared with governors in advance of the meeting.

The Head summarised the detail of her report in brief.

4.1 Staffing

The Head reported an unusually high level of support staff absence with one member of staff on long term sick requiring agency cover.

There had been a teacher handover in Year 1 with Sara Stokes going on her maternity leave and Susie Yaffe taking the class fulltime until Nancy Cumming returns for a job share in the summer term. Julia Hollis challenged whether the handover had been 'seamless' as stated in the Head's report. Victoria Starmer, a parent in the class, responded that there had been a good handover and that it seemed to be going well. Shanti Fricker, a parent in Year 2 reported that the change in Year 2 with Craig Cairns taking the class fulltime also seemed to be successful.

4.2 Teacher training

Recruitment for 2017-18 is underway and 3 candidates have been appointed. The Head noted the reduced quantity and quality of applicants. The Head explained that there was a reduction in bursaries and that some other providers paid fees. There was however no quality assurance of many of these providers. The school was proud that they had now trained 60 teachers. The Chair stated that the quality and standard of the teachers trained was exceptional and that the programme had an excellent reputation in the borough.

4.3 Safeguarding

Julia Hollis asked how the recent NSPCC training had been received. Rosie Thomson said that it had been a much better session than the previous one and that it was most difficult for upper juniors as more information was provided. The children had engaged well. The Head said that the school had requested a senior trainer to give the session to ensure the quality of delivery.

4.4 Term dates

The Head proposed a variance to the proposed Camden dates with the addition of 2 days in the autumn term taken back off the summer term. The summer dates Camden proposed seemed too early to break for Christmas and too late for summer. Ending the Summer Term on a Friday seemed like the best day to tie up the year end. The change from Camden's plan meant the dates did not align with Acland Burghley School. The Head asked governors to review the proposed changes and to feedback to her.

- **ACTION** Clerk to send around proposed term dates and governors to respond.
Done.

5.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

The document 'Chair's Report January 2017' was shared prior to the meeting.

The Chair asked new Governor Matthew Lawrence which committee he would like to join. Chairs of committees spoke a little about the roles and needs of their respective committees. Matthew Lawrence will join the Curriculum Committee.

The Chair asked governors to share a piece of essential advice on becoming a governor. Vicky Starmer advised to come into the school as much as possible. Kirsten Walton recommended the Camden Governor training. Shanti Fricker suggested reading all papers in advance of meetings and making notes to bring. Julia Hollis advised speaking up in meetings and stressed the value of questioning; not having the history brings fresh perspectives. The Chair said that there was great value in one of the school's own mantras of 'there's no such thing as a stupid question'. The Head concurred that she valued questioning and input as it provided the opportunity to hear a different perspective. Challenging the status quo helped obviate complacency.

6.00 RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes dated 5 January 2017 were shared in advance of the meeting.

6.1 Boris Telyatnikov updated the governors on the progress of the Science Lab project. Three tenders had been obtained from smaller contractors and company called IMS had submitted an acceptable tender. £30K over budget including contingency. Sarah Ewins said that the school felt positive about IMS.



6.2 Governors reviewed the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) shared in advance of the meeting.

The Head highlighted Q7. on a regular review of staffing structure and Q8. on a clear link between budgeting and plans for raising standards. She said that there could be better links between spend and impact. Matthew Lawrence suggested that it would be good to have clearer 'even better ifs' so that there was a clear indicator of which areas to track more closely.

7.00 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

Minutes 12 January 2017, NQT Governors Monitoring Report, Observation Weeks feedback and Termly Safeguarding Report were shared in advance of the meeting.

Julia Hollis reported that the Camden Model Pay Policy, the Safeguarding Policy, and Capability Policy had been approved by committee.

She reported the NQT monitoring meeting had been positive – details in report.

8.00 PPC COMMITTEE REPORT

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

Vicky Starmer updated governors on parent sessions held and planned. The occupational therapist handwriting session had received very positive feedback.

The Head informed governors that the school would buy some time from educational psychologist Claire Collins. She had previously been employed by Camden and had been an invaluable help to children and families.

Vicky Starmer commented that Camden had produced a draft mental health policy.

- o **ACTION** PPC Committee to review Mental Health Policy

9.00 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee minutes dated 4 January 2017 were shared in advance of the meeting.

Boris Telyatnikov shared the Pupil Premium Tracking Report which provides a useful tracking of which children are secure in learning, which children are likely to be secure and which are fragile. The national level of a maths standardised score of '100' indicating 'secure' was deemed too low and the school was working to benchmarking 'secure' at a score of 109+ (top score in scale 130). The teachers were focussing on children who were fragile with scores between 90-109. There do not seem to be a pattern in scores for PP children.

Boris Telyatnikov stressed the need to find an equivalent score for reading and writing testing.

10.00 AOB

There were no items for AOB.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm.

POLICIES APPROVED

- o **Model Capability Policy and procedure**
- o **Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- o **Model Pay Policy**

- o **Schools Financial Values Standard (SFVS) signed off by Chair of Governors**