

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 30 January 2019 at 6.00pm

Apologies received:

Josh Franks
Flora Cornish

LB Camden

Boris Telyatnikov

Parent

Christophe Frèrebeau
Shanti Fricker
Rifca Le Dieu
Victoria Starmer

Staff

Kate Froom, Head teacher
Rosie Thomson

Co-opted

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

Associate members

Natalie Stevenson
Sally Hill

Also present:

Vicky Green Business Manager
Tania Voaden, Clerk

1.0 There were no declarations of interest.

2.00 Corrections: Safer Recruitment training will be attended by Flora Cornish not Rifca Le Dieu.

2.1 Actions

Item 5.0 Impact Statements redacted and added onto website – **ROLLOVER ACTION.**

Item 3.7 Governors to complete online NSPCC Governor Safeguarding Training.

- **ACTION** Governors to complete in advance of the safeguarding audit on 19th March.

Item 4

- **ROLLOVER ACTION** Chair to inform families about the school's priorities in the Easter newsletter.

The Chair thanked Rifca Le Dieu and Christophe Frèrebeau for attending the Spring Parents' Evening. Due to the cold weather the Governors were based inside rather than at a table in the entrance. Rifca Le Dieu reported that this worked well as she was able to approach parents as they reviewed children's work in advance of the meetings. This 'how are things going?' approach resulted in good parental engagement. Reduced homework was raised by some parents concerned that this ill-prepared children for the volume of homework

in secondary school. There was some discussion on whether homework should be increased in Year 6 in preparation for this.

3.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Head's report for 30th January was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting. The Head noted that the planned speaker at this meeting - Owen Rees, Schools Information and Governance Consultant, had postponed attending the meeting as work was needed on the new complaints procedure. He would attend the March meeting instead.

3.1 Staffing

As noted in her report the Head mentioned the departure of Year 1 teacher Nancy Cumming as she leaves London with her family. She commented on how beneficial the good notice and communication from Nancy around this had been. Mark Lawrence challenged the Head around how this change of teacher would be managed. He noted that some of the concerns around the current Year 6 had been linked to several changes of class teacher in Year 1. The Head explained that Year 1 currently had two class teachers on a job share and the other teacher would work a fourth day in class, the remaining day covered by an existing teacher. This would provide good consistency and stability for the class. She commended Mark Lawrence on his governance in challenging this.

6.25pm Natalie Stevenson joined the meeting.

3.2 Curriculum Development

The Head had shared the report from Challenge Partners in advance of the meeting. The outcome of the review was that the school was evaluated as outstanding.

The Head reported that the school had requested an assessor who had not visited previously in order to gain new insights and perspectives. She said that she thought the lead assessor was very good, insightful and with interesting challenges. The Head drew attention to some comments in the report that she felt reflected a good understanding of the school. This included section 2.2 '*Outside the box' thinking by senior leaders propels the culture of innovation in this school.* The Head said that the team challenged well and were not looking simply looking at evidence and data. They asked about assessment in Foundation subjects and the school responded that children were *assessed* in all subjects, but not *tracked*. The team said that inspectors would check that the school had given consideration to how progress was best monitored and that they could provide robust answers when challenged. Vicky Starmer noted the positive comments with regard to how the school supported Pupil Premium children. The Head stated that the review was very valuable and that the Challenge Partner inspection was done 'with' rather than 'to' the school.

The Head made reference to the exciting science projects taking place in school with Year 4 making CCTV cameras and a week's residency from Dan Plane from The Royal Institution for science week.

3.3 Special Needs

The Head had shared the report of SEND review completed by David Bartram in advance of the meeting. She told Governors that David Bartram had been very impressed with SENCO Sally Hill and how she was leading SEN support. Rifca Le Dieu challenged how recommendations in the report would be taken forward and Vicky Starmer responded that they would be mapped out and monitored within the PPC Committee. Vicky Starmer said that it was a very positive report and that parents had expressed how well Sally led SEN support. Sally Hill stressed that support came from good practice in the classroom and from collaborative work.

As the PPC Committee meeting had focussed on the recommendations within the SEND report, the review of PPC minutes was brought forward on the agenda. Minutes of committee meeting on 16TH January 2019 were shared in advance of the meeting.

Amongst the SEND report recommendations:

- Create a one-page strategic overview – Sally Hill has completed this, but does not have Camden figures for comparison.
- Create a provision map linking provision on offer and progress. Sally Hill will have an update for next committee meeting. She noted that this was a big piece of work, but would be a useful tool.
- Widening the pool of assessments and how best to measure progress in those without an EHCP or My Plan.

Vicky Starmer noted that some of the suggestions from the review are harder to implement in smaller schools. Rifca Le Dieu commented that as a small school, staff all knew children so well.

Sally Hill spoke about the recent introduction of the One O'clock Club in lunchtimes to help support children who found playtimes tricky. This was going well. She informed governors that over the next few weeks staff would be completing a lesson study in the playground. Teachers and teaching assistants would be observing a list of the more vulnerable children over playtime to see how they coped and evaluating their interactions.

The Head noted that Camden have informed her that the school has not been named as a chosen school by any parents of children with an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan). This is the first time in 10 years that the school has not been named. Sally Hill noted that EHCPs are much harder to obtain now and there is no longer the same level of funding. The Head explained that the Government has decided that children with EHCP funding no longer receive basic pupil funding. Funding received by a school for a child with an EHCP does not fully afford teaching assistant support and the current model of a full-time teaching assistant in class is unsustainable.

Rifca Le Dieu asked whether the school has a Special Needs Policy. Sally Hill said that the school works with Camden's Local Offer and with the guidance and guidelines set out within it rather than create a separate policy. Rifca Le Dieu challenged that this was not clear on the website.

- **ACTION** The Local Offer is cross referenced on the policies page of the website.
Done.

4.00 Special item – Finance Review

The Head said that there was a 'perfect storm' of financial challenges for the school and summarised.

- There is a drop in income for schools nationally.
- The school needs to finance the support staff statutory back-pay in pensions.
- Staff will receive a statutory pay rise this year.
- With 10 children on roll with EHCPs, there had been a growth in the SEN staffing team and a subsequent increase in staffing costs. These costs were not met by the funding allocated to the school to support the EHCPs.
- The number of Pupil Premium children in the school was decreasing year on year with a subsequent loss of deprivation funding to the school. There has been a delay in effect as pupil premium has a six-year retention.
- Camden has reported a drop in pupils of 18% and there is concern across the borough about schools filling places.

The Head reported that looking at the draft 2019-20 budget, assuming a zero carry forward, the school will be ██████ in deficit as detailed in Resources Committee minutes. there is a significant income from Teaching School, this is shared amongst partner schools and there are salary costs associated with operating Teaching School which are also deducted. Each year historically the school has transferred ██████ from Teaching School into the schools delegated budget to cover any shortfall. The Head noted that

income from Teaching School could not be consistently guaranteed. There are increasing challenges in recruiting students onto the School Direct programme and fewer students will mean reduced income. There are also changes in Government funding for courses for teachers, which is likely to reduce the demand and uptake for Teaching School courses.

The Head informed Governors that since Teaching School was established the school has built up a Teaching School reserve school also has the School Fund account that is consistently around [REDACTED].

Boris Telyatnikov said that the school has increased expenditure since establishing Teaching School as the associated salary costs have increased. The salary increases are justified as these staff generate money for the school. This justified the transfer of money between Teaching School and Delegated accounts. Whilst the shortfall may be [REDACTED] this year with money in the accounts to cover, this shortfall will increase year on year. Using the 'pot' of Teaching School and School Fund accounts to cover costs is unsustainable in the longer term. He noted that should the school lose its Teaching School status due to de-designation then this key income source would be lost.

The Head said that essentially the school is living beyond its means in the delegated budget and needs to consider how to manage this. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There is a teaching assistant role in Year 6 to support a special needs child. With no new special needs children joining the school, this role would no longer be required.

The Head stated that teachers were essential in adding value to the school and therefore it would remain a priority to protect and support teaching staff.

The Head also noted that teaching unions had proposed a 5% pay rise.

The Chair asked Governors for their thoughts on the points raised. In discussion:

- Christophe Frèrebeau said that there should be a review of the major costs and a plan to reduce expenditure in the longer term incorporating different scenarios.
- Tim Peake informed Governors that Camden funding for repairs is unlikely to be as comprehensive as it has been. A recent audit listed all works required, and Camden is only covering the costs of essential maintenance. The school must monitor maintenance work closely in future and factor costs into budget planning.
- Tim Peake commented that as the Head approaches retirement, consideration should be given to the possibility that a new Head may not want to run a Teaching School and that this income stream could be lost. The Chair noted that succession planning was part of ongoing discussions in the Staffing Committee.
- Governors discussed the options of lettings – hiring out space to external contractors and companies around the school day and terms. The Head expressed concerns about the management of this and also about the possible mess and disruption for the school.
- Governors questioned whether it was now time to look at asking for covenants from parents. There were a number of affluent parents in every year group, some of whom had expressed a willingness to give money to the school.
- Flora Cornish and Vicky Starmer said that they had concerns around inclusivity and requests for donations and covenants. Flora Cornish expressed unease about any ideas of entitlement that may sit alongside covenants.
- Time Peake said that covenants were a good way of giving money and that people liked the idea of a legacy.
- The Head said that there had been thought given to asking for donations using the wording 'Keep it EP'. Any donations not going on salaries or core expenditure, but allowing the school to continue to spend money on trips, experiences and resources that enhance the curriculum.

- Christophe Frèrebeau said that lettings and covenants should be considered but that lettings were less predictable. He said that some parents would be very willing to donate every year and noted that there were tax benefits for higher income tax payers who made charitable donations.
- Mark Pemberton said that the reality was that there was a deficit of £[REDACTED] and that this masked by the usual carry forward of [REDACTED].
- Matthew Lawrence said that the school needed a method of donation for parents who had the means to do so.
- Rifca Le Dieu said that adhoc donations should also be considered and parents given the opportunity to donate small sums regularly. She also expressed concerns that parents didn't feel pressure to donate and that there was no sense of entitlement or advantage attached to any donation. The school should stress the value of non-financial contributions made by families through joining trips, PTA involvement, cake sales etc.
- Vicky Starmer asked Governors to consider the feelings of families unable to donate money.
- Tim Peake said that the school should consider crowdfunding. He referenced the success of the campaign to raise funds for solar panels. Having a clear target for fundraising each year, publicising progress and celebrating targets can create a strong sense of community.
- The Chair proposed a vote on whether the school should investigate setting up covenants. There was majority agreement on this.
- [REDACTED].
- **ACTION** Research options for setting up a covenants scheme for discussion in March meeting. Christophe Frèrebeau offered to assist in exploring options.

5.00 Staffing Committee

Committee minutes and policies were shared in advance of the meeting.

5.1 Shanti Fricker summarised minutes in brief noting that there was a long discussion at committee around staffing costs and budgeting.

5.2 Josh Franks, Rifca Le Dieu and Shanti Fricker had met with six members of staff regarding their experience of working at the school. The purpose was to triangulate the data obtained from the staff survey and explore in greater depth. A summary report of findings had been shared with Governors in advance of the meeting. The Head said that staff went 'above and beyond' when communicating with parents and in responding to parental emails. There was some discussion around expectation to attend evening events in school and whether this was an expectation.

- **ACTION** Josh Franks to write up results of staff interviews and share with staff.

6.11 Curriculum Committee

Minutes of committee to follow.

Boris Telyatnikov referenced the monitoring on writing completed by the Chair and Rosie Thomson. He stated that whilst there is consistency, there could be greater consistency and this would be a focus and point of discussion at staff meetings. He said that consistency of results across the school was a standing item at committee. Rosie Thomson said that the recent Challenge Partners review did not highlight consistency within their 'even better ifs' summary.

The Early Years Foundation Stage policy as discussed at committee.

- **ACTION** EYFS policy completion and added to the website.

There was no AOB.

The Chair thanked governors for the constructive discussion around finance. She said that the reports from David Bartram and Challenge Partners were very positive and that everyone should be very proud of the school.

The meeting ended at 8pm.

ADVOCATES

Boys	Tim Peake and Christophe Frèrebeau
EAL (English as an additional language)	Boris Telyatnikov
Girls	Shanti Fricker
High achievers	Rosie Thomson and Mark Pemberton
LAC (Looked After/ previously Looked After children)	Flora Cornish
Prior lower attainers	Josh Franks
Pupil Premium	Vicky Starmer
Summer born	Matthew Lawrence
SEND (special educational needs and disability)	Rifca Le Dieu