

## ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 8 July 2020

#### Apologies received:

##### **LB Camden**

Boris Telyatnikov

##### **Parent**

Charlie Condou  
Flora Cornish  
Christophe Frèrebeau  
Rifca Le Dieu  
Nanouche Umeadi

##### **Staff**

Kate Frod, Head teacher  
Rosie Thomson

##### **Co-opted**

Jennifer Allan – Chair of Governors  
Shanti Fricker  
Tim Peake  
Matthew Lawrence

##### **Associate members**

Sally Hill  
Natalie Stevenson

##### **Also present:**

Tania Voaden, Clerk

The meeting was held via remote video conference.

**1.00** There were no declarations of interest.

#### **1.2 Corrections and matters arising**

Item 3 – Rifca Le Dieu's comment regarding the accuracy of the Covid-19 test was specific to the antigen test.

#### **1.3 Actions**

All outstanding actions completed.

### **2.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

The Head's report 8 July 2020 was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting.

#### **2.1 Covid update.**

The Head said that the percentage of children who had returned to school for the half day offer was now at 97%, up from 95% stated in her report. This compared to 30% of eligible children returning to school nationally, and 48% in Camden. The Governors recognised the extraordinary work that had gone into enabling children to return to school, and in providing families the reassurance for them to do so. It was noted that the Home Zone and school building supported the ease of return. Natalie Stevenson said that the provision was far greater than simply the facilities, and that the return to school had been managed with courage and creativity. Matthew Lawrence acknowledged the strength of the online provision. The Head said that the half day offer had worked well from the beginning. She

had wanted to mitigate and balance the risk, whilst considering SAGE advice. She was aware that other Heads had subsequently moved to the half day offer. Flora Cornish said that the management of learning online and the return to school was a testament of the strength of the relationship between the school and community. Natalie Stevenson also commended the staff who had presented a united and positive front, and had been very present both online and in school. Rifca Le Dieu and Charlie Condou praised the outstanding leadership of the school

**2.2** The Head said she felt it was a tipping point within education, with so many alternatives being presented to teachers for shortcuts and online alternatives. She felt that for some, education seemed optional. The staff were now planning for September mindful that the amazing residential trips would not take place and that other visits would be limited. Support was targeted for the more vulnerable children, many of whom had been attending school through the lockdown period and had seen the benefits of this. Whilst staff and families had managed learning well, there had been a negative impact in areas such as Key Stage 2 maths, which was very hard to teach when not in a classroom. The Head said that education must not become mediocre and that the challenge for the school was to retain a broad and engaging curriculum.

**2.3** Governors discussed the management of absence in September. Charlie Condou asked about fines for non-attendance and the Head replied that if a family had a medical reason not to attend and were shielding, then they would not be fined. Rifca Le Dieu said that advice to shield was ending. Nanouche Umeadi asked how the school would respond to holidays in August and quarantine rules. The Head said that only one family had approached her to discuss.

#### **2.4 Planning for September**

The Head shared guidance slides for Covid management with Governors and said that the school would be resubmitting another risk assessment before breaking up. The Head noted that the wording used was 'proportionate measures' and that the school's interpretation was to have sufficient safety measures in place but in balance with the risk to education. The Head explained that the school would-

- retain the additional entrance and egress with staff in place;
- No adults would be allowed on site without an appointment;
- Playtimes would be staggered;
- Children would have their own wipe boards and learning equipment stored in pencil cases and trays to limit sharing.
- No whole school events such as assemblies.

The school was awaiting guidance on wraparound care. The Head noted that many secondary schools would have bubbles of 240 and that cross bubbles for wraparound may well be possible. Siblings of course 'broke' bubbles. She welcomed Governors' thoughts on sizes of bubbles. Flora Cornish asked how effective the testing was and the Head said that tests were being processed in 24 hours and that schools would have some testing kits from September. Christophe Frerebeau said that it was sensible to advocate for a single bubble, because if there were two cases in a school it would be closed. The Head said that Public Health are notified as soon as there is a positive test in a school and they then guide all decision making. Rifca Le Dieu challenged that a child may have a positive test but not have contracted Covid at school, and to consider that the school may then need to close for 14 days. The Head said whilst there may be some crossing of bubbles, the school would still not be fully integrated as in the past. Matthew Lawrence said that it was prudent to minimise the risk. Rosie Thomson said that the school needed some flexibility across bubbles for adults in order to provide support across the school.

The Head said that the children had been fantastic about understanding and adhering to the constraints in place.

- **ACTION** The Chair said that the school should plan based on details had been shared at the meeting and then share the risk assessment with governors.

The Head said that the school would also consider a plan in the event that a second wave forced another lockdown.

#### **2.4 Curriculum Development, In Service Training and School Development Plan (SDP)**

The Head reviewed the emerging broad objectives for 20-21 as outlined in her report.

When the Head was questioned about the objective around handwriting, she explained that handwriting standards were not consistent enough, especially in upper Juniors.

The Head explained 'Growing the Top' initiative references. This Challenge Partners programme supports outstanding schools to establish partnerships and share knowledge. The Head said that as part of this she is keen for staff to visit other schools to seek inspiration.

## **2.5 Pupil Progress**

The Head reminded Governors that there was no local or national reporting of data this year. The school had however completed assessments at the usual stages, EYFS, Year 1, Year 2 and 6.

### **EYFS**

Children are assessed across 17 areas and children must reach expected levels across them all. The Head shared the results of the teacher assessment in her report, which showed that 80% children attained 'good' in all areas, 69% boys and 88% girls. The Head said that the lack of school for 4 months had inevitably impacted on results, with learning loss particularly in early reading.

**Phonics test in Year 1-** the school used the 2019 'test' as a measure and 90% of children reached the pass mark. This compares to 83% in 2019. All pupil premium children 'passed'.

### **Suffolk reading tests**

The Head shared the Suffolk reading ability tests across year groups. Reading is assessed across 9 stanines. The positive headline is that these evidence high attainment in reading across the school. Nearly 25% of the children in Year 1 to 6 were in the top stanine compared to 4% nationally. In Year 3 this is close to 40% and the Head credited Rosie Thomson for this reading acceleration.

### **Year 2**

The Head said that the results of these assessments were disappointing, but that there were known factors at play. The class has a group of girls that the school had already identified with specific literacy difficulties. These girls had been receiving additional 1:1 support in literacy prior to school closure and the impact of the loss of daily reading and the additional support that they would have received was evident.

The class has a broad stretch of attainment with 40% of the children achieving greater depth in both reading and maths. Teaching this breadth of attainment and ability is very challenging for the class teacher.

The Head noted that Craig Cairns would move up with the children to Year 3 and this meant that there would be fantastic continuity and no time lost in settling the class in September. Children needing additional support would be targeted and benefit from any tutoring programme for which the school can secure funding.

### **Year 6**

As there were no statutory test results, the Head shared two sets of results – one to represent teacher assessments if SATs had happened on June 1<sup>st</sup> immediately after lockdown and one to show what results would have looked like if there had been the traditional SATS revision period and a 1:1 tutoring programme.

The Head said that she was confident that the 83% children achieving 'expected levels' in reading would have moved to 86% with focussed revision and support that school would have usually provided.

She noted that the 'greater depth' attainment had not been affected by lockdown.

## **2.6 Teaching School**

The Head said that the number of School Direct recruits had moved from the 10 stated in her report up to 14 if all accept their places.

## **2.7 Parents Evening**

The Head reported that the 'live' meetings outside had been well attended and that the evening had unusually ended on time.

## **2.8 Staffing**

The Head congratulated Rosie Thomson in her appointment as acting Deputy Head covering Natalie Stevenson was on maternity leave, and welcomed Lacey Cousins as new teacher governor. Stefan Palejowski will join as a new teacher in Year 4 in September. Stefan had worked in the school as a student during his School Direct training and had re-joined for the last 3 weeks of term, getting to know the class and preparing for September.

The Head commented that the school now had 5 male members of staff, moving towards a long held goal of greater gender representation, and that the next step must be to increase the ethnic diversity of staff.

**2.9** The Staff survey had been discussed by the Staffing Committee and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive with downward trends in a few areas that the committee will review in the year ahead:

- 'Feedback I receive helps me improve my performance' – response had moved from 94% in 2019 to 84% in 2020.
- 'My work give me a sense of personal accomplishment' – response had moved from 100% to 90%
- 'Eleanor Palmer respects individual differences' – response in 2019 was 97% and in 2020 to 90%

The questions round Teaching School provided the lowest % and would also be reviewed by the committee. There was discussion around how the benefits of Teaching School were communicated and whether wording of the questions needed review as they were devised at the start of Teaching School.

Sally Hill said she was pleased that the response around the development of professional practice had improved.

The Head noted that the full cycle of feedback and performance management for teaching assistants had been completed, but that this had not been possible in the usual way.

The Head reported that the staff would have a farewell celebration for Reception Teacher Helen Holgate at the end of term, and would do the same for Annie Fair in the autumn when it is hoped her health will have improved.

### **3.00 STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Minutes dates 18 June were shared in advance of the meeting.

Staffing Committee had reviewed the Staff Survey as already discussed.

**3.1** Charlie Condou and Shanti Fricker had met with support staff and the meeting had been overwhelmingly positive with a real sense of the team pulling together. It was clear that the opportunity to talk was welcomed and valued. Rifca Le Dieu reminded Governors that the monitoring had been driven initially to evaluate the impact of the reduction of support staff. With school closure, full evaluation had not been possible and should therefore be added to the SDP to continue to monitor.

Natalie Stevenson suggested that the meetings should be reframed, sharpened and used to reshape professional development. The staff appreciated that they were treated professionally with plans for their own professional development.

Shanti Fricker said that another monitoring meeting with teachers was planned for the autumn term.

### **4.00 Resources Committee**

Covid and expenditure.

The school had spent £8k on increased costs due to Covid. The school awaited clear guidance on what could be claimed back from the Government. The implication was that cleaning costs, which are substantial, could not be claimed back.

### **Keep it EP**

The goal for 'Keep it EP' fundraising was £13,000 a year but the school had fallen short of this target. The Head noted that the Virtual Summer Fair had been a great success (awaiting final figures) and that families had shown great generosity in their donations. Christophe Frèrebeau said that the school needed to review 'Keep it EP' fundraising in the next school year and consider how to revitalise. The Head said that the actions taken last year regarding staffing structure had protected school finances, coupled with the lack of expenditure from school closure. The school also had Teaching School reserves to use if they were needed.

## **5.00 PPC COMMITTEE**

Minutes dated 17/6/2020 and results of the Governor Survey to Parents were shared in advance of the meeting.

### **5.1 Parent Survey**

The response rate had been high, 153 respondents out of 172 families. The overall response was very positive on the key questions including the provision through lockdown (two additional questions had been added). 99% respondents felt supported in home learning. Flora Cornish said that this was a credit to the leadership and the school. She noted that comments section of the survey also included many effusive and positive comments.

Satisfaction was lower on behaviour - 77% agreed, 7% disagreed and 16% N/A for the school dealing effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The 7% comprised of responses from 11 parents citing different issues. Mathew Lawrence asked whether this was a legacy of prior issues relating to a particular year group. Flora Cornish replied that there was no pattern and the responses had come from across the year groups.

The other area with lower satisfaction was with regard to extra-curricular activities – 77% agree, 16% disagree and 7% N/A. Charlie Condou suggested that there might be parents willing to run clubs. The Head countered that classrooms were busy after school and that Club EP used the hall. The Head said that the school provided enrichment through teaching and that there were many local community clubs that parents could access, in addition to the Club EP offer in school. Charlie Condou suggested that the school could provide more information about what was available locally.

Flora Cornish said that the survey and discussion amongst parents was overwhelmingly strong with acknowledgment of the high quality of teaching and leadership. Rifca Le Dieu agreed that there were many positive comments at Parents' Evening.

- **ACTION** The survey, governor feedback and letter from the Governing Body will be shared with parents and carers in the final newsletter of term. Done.

### **5.2 Black Lives Matter**

Issues of diversity and race had been raised as concerns in the parent survey and Nanouche Umeadi said that parents wanting to discuss this had approached her. Some expressed concerns about racial slurs and the way that children interact, and some about representation of BAME people in the curriculum. Nanouche Umeadi had shared a letter with the Governing Body about race, racial discrimination and conscious and unconscious bias in early July and this had founded the key discussion at the PPC Committee meeting. Nanouche Umeadi said that she had also had a good discussion with the Head. She stressed the importance of children seeing things not just from a white perspective.

Governors discussed the importance of communication, increasing confidence and enabling people to feel that they have a voice. The Head stressed the value the parental confidence in Nanouche Umeadi. Charlie Condou said that as parent governors, parents often approach them wanting to raise concerns and that he always suggests that they speak to the Head. The Head said the survey demonstrates the strength of relationships between home and school and that this is therefore a strong starting point. She suggested that a BAME forum or group comes together to talk, and stressed the importance of the school listening without an agenda. Flora Cornish concurred and said that this should be a safe, supportive space. The Head also suggested forming a BAME pupil group, again without agenda, to start discussions. Rosie Thomson said that she had reviewed books in school and that there was an underrepresentation of BAME authors and characters. The children were passionate about this and keen to write to publishers about representation. It was clear that the children wanted a platform.

Governors talked about the CBC evening and Black History month, but Flora Cornish stressed the importance of looking at the thread of inclusion and representation throughout the year not just around an event.

The Head said that BAME community were under-represented amongst the staff and that there were very few applications from black teachers and teaching assistants. She was aware that the school should therefore seek to find out where to advertise to secure applications from black candidates and that going forward would look to positively discriminate when shortlisting. Flora Cornish said that the school would take advice on where best to advertise and suggested adding commitment to diversity on the person specification in ads. Rifca Le Dieu proposed engaging earlier and attracting more BAME candidates to the School Direct training.

- **ACTION** Committee to explore how best to secure applications from BAME community.

Flora Cornish said the diversity would be a key part of SDP for the PPC committee in the year ahead.

## **6.0 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

Minutes dated 10/06/2020 were shared in advance of the meeting.

**6.1** The committee had reviewed online learning and talked about the planned meeting to consider how to provide virtual and cultural capital should restrictions resume. Jen Allan said that the committee had discussed that there had been some positive aspects to online teaching. It required teachers to sharpen up thinking on how to explain something clearly the first time. Some children also liked doing the work in an order of their choosing.

**6.2** The committee discussed BAME representation in teaching materials and in topics and curriculum.

## **7.0 AOB**

### **Committee Membership.**

Governors discussed interest in changing committees. Rosie Thomson will join the Curriculum Committee, Lacey Cousins Staffing Committee and Nanouche Umeadi will join Staffing Committee in addition to PPC. The Chair reminded Governors that they could visit any other committee meeting.

Chairs of Committees are as follows:

- Rifca Le Dieu – Staffing
- Flora Cornish – PPC
- Boris Telyatnikov – Curriculum
- Tim Peake - Resources
- Shanti Fricker - Safeguarding Governor.

The Head confirmed that Governing Body meetings would be virtual until further notice.

The Head and Chair thanked the Governors for their support across the year.