

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 25 March 2020

Apologies received:

Natalie Stevenson (Associate member – on maternity leave)

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

Also present:

Tania Voaden, Clerk

The school closed on Friday 20 March due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting was therefore held via remote video conference.

1.00 There were no declarations of interest.

1.2 Corrections and matters arising

No corrections were made.

1.3 Actions –

- Item 4.1 - Continuation of French Club and club charging – cessation of club agreed by committee. ACTION- The Head to give notice to the club organiser. Done.
- Item 3.11 Charlie Condou to link Rosie Thomson with The Childhood Institute. Done and Rosie Thomson will remain in touch.
- **Item 8.1** CBC Evening added to PPC Committee agenda. Item will return to the committee agenda when school returns and resumes event planning.
- **Item 3.4** Christophe Frerebeau to compile Google document to share amongst Governors and Governors to add suggestions. Completed by some Governors.
ACTION Christophe Frerebeau to resend link.

The Head informed governors that Ofsted inspections had been postponed for all schools and a grace period had been extended for a year.

2.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Head's report 25 March 2020 was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting. The Head welcomed comments and feedback on her report and noted that it was written on 17 March 2020, just before the school closed due to covid-19 restrictions.

2.1 Admissions

The Head referenced the details regarding Nursery admissions in her report and noted that all offers for places had been accepted and that due to the high number of siblings, the catchment for September 2020 was small.

The Head noted that three Camden secondary headteachers had resigned, a concerning change of leadership in secondaries in the borough.

Looking at the offers for Year 6 secondary children, children were transitioning to ten different schools, the majority of which were Camden state schools.

The Head reminded governors that the offers to Reception children would be made mid-April so were yet unknown.

2.2 Staffing

The Head noted that the school had a full staff for September, having made one appointment from the School Direct student group. The next step would be to appoint an acting Deputy Head internally to cover Natalie Stevenson's maternity leave.

Reception teacher Helen Holgate will leave the school at the end of the Summer Term. The Head acknowledged her outstanding teaching skills and noted that she would be a huge loss to the school and Governors concurred. The post will be covered by some movement of staff and an increase in some existing part-time teacher hours.

The Head referenced the significant increase in insurance premiums due to extended periods of support staff absence last year and noted that these costs would nullify and staff budget savings.

2.3 Finance

The Resources Committee had previously agreed that the school could draw up to £50,000 a year from Teaching School accounts if necessary. The draft budget from Vicky Green did not include drawing on these reserves at this point in time, with view from the committee that the budget could be balanced in 2020-2021 and the school would be in a stronger financial position. The Head noted that clearly the current closure of school would impact on the budget. She said that the school had committed to paying the small number peripatetic staff over the closure period.

2.4 Teaching School

The Head informed governors about the significant changes in Teaching Schools and that the existing designations for Teaching Schools will end in August 2021. Her report summarised the changed recently announced and the plans for fewer, but larger, hubs. The Department for Education (DfE) have set a high eligibility bar for applications to become one of the proposed 87 Teaching School hubs and the school would not qualify. Neither does the regional lead school Bowes or many of the existing Teaching Schools. The DfE have opened the application process to all schools. The Head shared the eligibility criteria in her report, along with the with the school's performance results against these criteria.

However, the school would continue in partnership with the Institute of Education, with NCETM and within Camden and gain additional income from this.

Governors discussed these changes and the Chair said that it may be difficult to find enough qualifying schools to become hubs. She challenged the Head as to whether the school would want to take this role. The Head said that the school did not pass the current eligibility criteria, but that she would look at further. She thought that increasing scale would mean greater absorption in administration and decrease the direct work that the school so valued.

2.5 Extended Schools

The Head drew attention to the presentation to parents on the new Relationships Education. She said that the meeting was well attended with a broad representation of parents. Nanouche Umeadi said that she had attended and was reassured that the teaching would be about equality and respect. There had not been any negativity regarding the plans for relationship education.

The Head reported that she had a follow up from a parent, not about sex education but about some pupil responses, especially in early years, to differences in colour. It was agreed that the school should be more explicit at the start of school's engagement with families. A letter regarding school values and asking families to support children's emerging understanding of 'difference' had been agreed upon and will be enclosed in future starter packs.

3.00 Provision and plans for supporting home learning

The Head summarised what had been established regarding supporting home learning. This included:

- Setting up virtual classrooms for each year group;
- Supporting families in accessing home learning;
- Loan of ipads and enabling broadband for families with limited IT access
- Plan in place for every child to receive a call home three times a week initially.
- Teachers working remotely and attending school site on a rota basis,

The Head outlined the provision for those attending school as the children of keyworkers, those with EHCP plans or those identified as vulnerable children. There was at least 1 child from each year group in school, the children were completing online learning, coming together for lunch and taking advantage of the good weather for outside learning and play. The Head acknowledged that with a small, mixed age group of children maintaining energy and purpose was more challenging.

The Head commended Camden's leadership and decision making around the closure of schools and supporting learning.

Decisions were still being made in Camden around Easter and whether some schools close and children move to different schools for this period. The Head said that she would prefer to keep the school open and enable children to attend.

Charlie Condou asked if there was detail in place for the Summer Term. Rifca Le Dieu said that there were indicators that the peak was still a few weeks away and that schools would not reopen for the summer term. Boris Telyatnikov said that it would be quite possible if lockdown lifted in the near future that there would be a second lockdown as had occurred in Hong Kong.

Governors commended the school on what had been put in place so far. Charlie Condou asked how Governors could help in the wider sense. The Head said that the next step for the school was to establish who had not engaged with online learning and which families needed more support. This would most likely be best achieved by the phone calls home, but the Head stressed that these phone calls were not about checking up on families, more about staying connected and to support home learning. Shanti Fricker said that she was aware of positive feedback from parent contacts. Charlie Condou suggested children having Zoom meetings and connecting with peers through the online classrooms. The Head said that weekly newsletters would continue.

Christophe Frerebeau challenged what plans were in place if staff became unwell. The Head responded that there were sufficient staff to ensure cover and that Camden were very supportive. The Head made it clear that the school would not be looking for parents to come into school to assist. Plans were in place for children on Free School Meals (FSM) to have food parcels provided if needed.

- **ACTION** FSM families contacted to see if they wanted to take up this offer. Done.

Shanti Fricker said that a thank you should be passed on to staff for their work at this time.

4.00 Committee minutes were not covered in detail at this meeting and just a few key points were referenced. Governors discussed Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments. The school would have been on track for strong results. It was noted that the focus within education on assessment was for GCSE and A Levels. As secondary schools assess children on entry at Year 7 as a standard, there would be some assessment measure for children transitioning to secondary school.

The Resources Committee had looked at tarmac for summer works.