

ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 20 May 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 Frood, Head teacher
Rosie Thomson

Co-opted

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

Associate members

Sally Hill

Also present:

Vicky Green – School Business Manager
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

No corrections were made.

1.3 Actions –

- **Carryover action - Item 8.1** CBC Evening added to PPC Committee agenda. Item will return to the committee agenda when school returns and resumes event planning.
- All other actions completed and noted as 'Done' in the March minutes.

2.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Head's report 20 May 2020 was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting.

2.1 Admissions

The Head referenced the details regarding Reception admissions in her report. She noted that the balance of children admitted under each of the admissions criteria was fairly typical of the usual entry pattern. The distance cut-off this year was smaller than in most recent years at [REDACTED]. The school anticipated that there would be only two Free School Meal (FSM) children in the new intake.

2.2 STAFFING

The Head has shared the staff sickness report in her minutes. She reminded Governors that this report from Camden looks retrospectively and therefore will include extended periods of absence for two members of staff, one for bereavement and one for illness. These two staff absences take the school unusually above the national average and show as a spike on the graph. Both members of staff are now back in work and the Head anticipates that the absence level will return to the usual low levels.

2.3 Curriculum Development and School Development Plan (SDP)

The Head acknowledged the significant impact of Covid and physical closure on the SDP. In her report, she reviewed elements of the SDP with notes and targets to take into 20-21.

The Head had selected SDP points for discussion and highlighted in her report - red for whether it was possible to meet targets this term, yellow for partially achieved and green for completed goals. Governors discussed these.

2.4 SDP targets shown as 'red' that have not been achieved and therefore remain as targets for 20-21

- *Tracking disadvantaged high learning potential students as they enter Key Stage 2(KS2) to ensure they reach full potential.*

The Head said that the school was specifically tracking three children and one of these was in school. The other two were at home with differing levels of engagement. School closure will have affected their progress.

- *Develop clarity and consistency in our teaching of early reading and phonics. As a result, phonics results improve.*

This could not be meaningfully completed, but the Head noted that Year 1 teacher Sara Stokes had managed phonics very well online.

- *Tracking Key Stage 1 (KS1) writing to ensure progress sustained and accelerated.*

The school is unable to effectively measure or accelerate until children return to school so this remains as an SDP target.

- *Monitor science in light of reduction in lead teacher time.*

Given current circumstances, the school and Governors have been unable to complete this monitoring.

- *Staff are supported in taking on new curriculum leadership roles, that identified training, and additional expertise is provided in areas of need.*

This was planned for the summer term and therefore could not be achieved.

2.5 SDP targets shown as 'orange' for discussion on completion and carryover.

- *Monitor pupil attitudes to behaviour.*

Flora Cornish responded that this was happening in focus groups in PPC Committee.

ACTION – change to green on SDP.

2.6 SDP targets shown as 'green.'

- *Encourage early parental feedback re behaviour.*

The Head said that the Parent Survey had been adapted this year so that if a parent 'disagrees' with any question, a drop box is triggered so that parents can give reason for disagreement. In previous years it had been hard to act upon a 'disagree' response as no detail was provided. More feedback will better inform on issues of behaviour and enable the school to address accordingly.

Rifca Le Dieu asked whether there had been more feedback on behaviour through the year. The Head said that most concerns were raised at Parents' Evenings, but that there were no specific issues flagged.

- *Review SEND Local Offer involving all stakeholders.*

Sally Hill said that this had not yet been completed and should roll on to the next term.

ACTION Amend from green on SDP as only partially completed.

- *Monitor reduction in staff capacity in light of 2019 reductions.*

Charlie Condou and Rifca Le Dieu spoke of the importance of giving teachers and support staff the opportunity to speak to Governors even if they could not meet in person.

ACTION Head to set up a zoom meeting for Charlie Condou and Shanti Fricker in the Staffing Committee to speak with school staff about impact of staff reduction.

The Head spoke of how different the school felt even with a number of children currently attending and more planned to attend. Without the occasions when the school comes together for assemblies, concerts, Sports Day etc. the energy in school was not the same.

Matthew Lawrence commented that France has reopened some schools and then shut a number again as infection levels rose. The Head noted that this was a regional surge. Rifca Le Dieu said that there would likely be a second surge in the autumn.

2.7 Teaching School

The Head referred to her report regarding the loss of income over the next year with changes in the partnership with UCL and with Natalie Stevenson on maternity leave. She noted that this was a significant loss of income approximating £100,000. Vicky Green updated the number of School Direct students to 8 from 6 in the Heads report.

2.8 Premises

The Head commented how fortunate the school was to have a building that enabled easy traffic flow and with classroom access to the playground. She commended the support of the local authority, the school staff and community in enabling plans to move towards phased opening.

2.9 Finance and budget

Vicky Green presented the budget for 2020-21 and shared graphs for year on year comparison. There has been steady incremental income year on year with the spike in income in 2017-18 representing the science lab contribution from Camden. PTA contributions have remained healthy but there will be future impact from the lack of Summer Fair and Cake Sales. The budget however has only factored in monies promised.

Expenditure has gradually increased over 5 years in the year on year comparison. When the 2019-2020 budget was prepared the expenditure was lower than anticipated and the income was higher than anticipated resulting in a better than expected outturn. The 2020-21 budget is balanced.

On the pie charts shared the support staff salaries are skewed by the allocation of office salaries to Teaching School.

ACTION Vicky Green will in future split expenditure on Teaching School admin and other support staff costs to give a clear distinction.

ACTION Vicky Green will create a pie chart that removes staff salaries as they amount to 77% expenditure and prevent clear representation of other costs.

Vicky Green had reviewed the budget with the Resources Committee and had made some adjustments to reflect changes resulting from Covid. This includes loss of income from Breakfast Club and salary savings from clubs.

The Head said that the school is essentially running on savings and must reduce core spending.

[REDACTED]

The Head told Governors that from June 1st schools can claim unforeseen expenditure due to Covid and that the school would be submitting a claim.

Rifca Le Dieu asked about discussion with the PTA about ways to spend money. The Head responded that they had handed over a substantial sum and that there were no savings. Online fundraising options were being explored.

Governors signed off the 2020-2021 budget.

3.00 Update on school reopening plans.

- The Head praised the staff and noted that there had been 6 staff in school daily since the school had closed.
- The Head said that several staff had tested positive under a research programme run by UCL. Rifca Le Dieu commented that the negative test was 75% accurate and that the most important indicator were symptoms.
- No members of school staff were shielding.
- In plans for school opening the less vulnerable staff had more outward facing roles i.e. in the Homezone and at gates.
- 'Small school' would cease in current form as many children attending moved to half days. There would be a much smaller group of children attending a 'small school' bubble in the afternoon. A party was planned on the final Friday to mark the end of this period of 'small school' which has been special experience for many children.
- The Head reported that of children working at home there were only 3 children who had no engagement at all in Google Classroom and had chosen to obtain education elsewhere.
- The school had made red-amber-green notes for each child in school and had followed up where there were concerns about lack of engagement or losing touch.
- The plan immediately after half-term was that the four returning year groups attending on either a morning or afternoon shift. These shifts were fixed and formed groups known as 'bubbles'.
- Tim Peake challenged what the plan was if children did not return to school. The Head said that at the moment this remained a parental choice but that she anticipated that the numbers attending would grow.
- Governors asked about wraparound care and the Head said that as this would mean children from different bubbles would mix, it would not yet be possible to re-establish.
- Tim Peake enquired how well schools were sharing experiences and the Head said that there was a twice weekly Camden Headteacher zoom and a daily update at 5pm. She commended the local authority for their support and guidance. She said that she was liaising in particular with three other small schools.
- The Head said that she was confident that a number of schools would be opening after the half term break and that some schools had greater logistical challenges and needed more time to build staff confidence.
- The head said that nationally 2% children defined as vulnerable were attending school and this figure was 18% in Camden.
- The school would not provide lunch in school and therefore children entitled to Free School Meals would not obtain a meal on site. Nanouche Umeadi suggested switching from vouchers (which would cease as children eligible to attend school) to a take home packed lunch.

ACTION Tania Voaden to contact FSM parents regarding switching to food parcels. Done.

- Rifca Le Dieu thanked the school for the provision of 'small school' over the period of closure and said that families attending were very appreciative.
- Rifca Le Dieu stressed that the school should keep reminding parents of symptoms and stick to the guidelines around possible infections.
- Flora Cornish thanked staff and asked how teachers were feeling about school opening and whether workload would be manageable. Rosie Thomson said that the workload had reduced over this period. The Head concurred saying that whilst it had been stressful and there had been some opportunities to enhance learning, there was less work.

- Rifca Le Dieu asked whether staff who worked over the Easter holidays should have additional pay. The Head said that general workload had been reduced and that staff were not seeking remuneration for these days.
- Governors discussed the daily routines with regard to book bags, water bottles, children wearing masks, parental drop off etc. and the Head said that she would address all these within the parental newsletter.
- Rifca Le Dieu asked about PPE to have in the event of suspected cases of Covid. The Head said that we had stocks in the office.

ACTION Tania Voaden to order goggles to add to existing PPE supplies. Done.

- Flora Cornish asked whether staff had been consulted on the school risk assessment. The Head said that it had been reviewed at the staff meeting and would be shared with all staff. Sally Hill added that staff had been reassured by the risk assessment. The Chair asked governors to sign off the risk assessment and this was agreed.

4.00 Committee minutes were covered in brief.

- Staffing Committee are looking to recruit a new Teaching Assistant.
- PPC Committee will issue the Parent Questionnaire on 4th June via the app and newsletter.
- Resources Committee-Tim Peake confirmed that planned summer works would go ahead.

5.00 AOB

Charlie Condou expressed concern that the Head was sufficiently protected regarding reopening school. Boris Telyatnikov asked whether he had specific concerns. Charlie Condou said that he wanted to make sure that there was adequate support in place around decisions made. The Chair said that it was important that the Governors provided a framework that supports staff in school. The Head said that the school was only able to mitigate risk and not eliminate it, but had a strong plan in place. She stressed that she felt confident that opening the school was the correct decision for the health and wellbeing of children having considered latest Covid infection data.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.