

Dog Kennel Hill Primary School Governing Body

**Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held at the school
on Monday 16 June 2014.**

PRESENT

GOVERNORS:

	Mr Martin Finn (Chair)	
Ms Galiema Amien		Dr Zahid Malik
Mr Wayne Cooper		Mr Patrick Pierre-Powell
Ms Marion Cranmer		Ms Gillian Reeve
Ms Claire Dubarbier		Ms Alison Reupke
Ms Sue Farrington		Miss Isabelle Spordis
Ms Amanda Freshwater		Ms Jenny Turner
Ms Yvonne Golds		

OBSERVERS: Four parents observed the meeting from 7.00pm.

CLERK (Acting): Mr Michael Johnson

PART I

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Mr Peter Bibby, Mr Jonathan Morris and Cllr Michael Situ.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest in matters under consideration were received.

3. Schedule of Business

The Chair commented that this was the first meeting since Galiema was appointed as Executive Headteacher of the school. The school was undergoing a period of change and this would include the way the Governing Body worked. The Governing Body spends more time in meetings than other governing bodies and there were historical reasons for this which it would not be useful to go over. The Governing Body needs to focus on the strategic and this will mean thinking and working differently. The Chair explained that later in the meeting the reconstitution of the Governing Body and the committee structure would be reviewed.

The Chair announced a parent had made a request to attend the meeting from 7.00pm. It was possible that other parents may also arrive to observe the meeting. It was pointed out that the minutes of the meeting of 17 March recorded the decision that in future any requests from parents to observe meetings of the Governing Body should be received and discussed in advance. It was agreed to allow parents to observe this meeting from 7.00pm.

Governors discussed the amount of notice it would be reasonable to expect parents to give when making a request to observe a meeting and how this might be communicated to parents. It was agreed that the dates of meetings should be published in the newsletter and on the website and this should include the process for making requests to attend meetings. It should also be explained that the status of parents attending meetings is one of observer and not as a participant in the discussions or decision making.

Resolved –

- (1) That the requests from parents to attend this meeting be accepted and the meeting be open to observers from 7.00pm.**
- (2) That for future meetings requests to observe meetings should be given at least seven days in advance of the meeting to the Chair. This is to provide time for the Chair and Head to discuss any changes to the format of the agenda to take account of any matters they determine with advice from the Clerk should not be considered with observers present.**
- (3) The dates and times of meetings of the Governing Body should be published in the school's newsletter and on the school's website with an explanation that requests to attend meetings should be made to the Chair at least seven days in advance of the meeting. It should also be explained that attendees other than governors have observer status only and therefore are not participants in the discussions or decision making.**

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 17 March, 1 April and 28 April 2014 had been sent to governors prior to the meeting.

4.1 Approval

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meetings held on 17 March, 1 April and 28 April 2014 be signed as correct records.

4.2 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. **Executive Headteacher and Head of Schools' Written Report**

The Executive Headteacher and Head of Schools' written report had been sent to governors before the meeting.

In speaking to her report the Executive Head highlighted the following:

Pupil Roll

The number of pupils on roll are:

Year	Girls	Boys	Total
Reception	47	41	88
Year 1	25	33	58
Year 2	29	31	60
Year 3	32	28	60
Year 4	28	28	56
Year 5	34	25	59
Year 6	31	25	56
Total	226	211	437

Nursery Children: 54 part timers (Option 1 Monday to Wednesday pm and Option 2 Wednesday pm to Friday pm).

Attendance

Overall attendance is currently 95.9 which is consider to be broadly average in terms of national averages. The persistent absence figures (those pupils whose attendance is less than 85%) was very high at the start of the spring term. There has been a significant improvement this term with a decrease from 6% to 4.6%. In response to questions it was explained that the improvement followed advice from the local authority education welfare officer and absence meetings between the Head of School and parents. In common with other schools, and as a result of legislative changes, term time holidays will no longer be authorised.

Safeguarding/Child Protection

The Executive Head reported that the Head of School, safeguarding officer and nursery nurse will complete the local authority training for designated safeguarding at training sessions on 10th and 11th of July. Currently the Executive Head and the Deputy Head are the safeguarding designated persons and Robyn Harrison (SENCO) and Denise South are the deputy designated persons.

Looked After Children (LAC)

There are currently no children looked after by the local authority on the school roll.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

Racial Incidents

There have been no racial comments or incidents recorded since the last report. The Chair asked if incidents of homophobic bullying could also be reported in the next report and the Executive Head agreed to include such information.

Staffing

The Head drew attention to the current staffing structure and a proposed structure for September 2014 which were set out in her report. Governors consider the proposed structure and asked a number of questions. It was confirmed that the post of PE Coordinator was mistakenly omitted from the proposed staffing structure and it was amended to include the post. Governors agreed to adopt the proposed structure with the amendment. In response to questions about when the structure would be announced to parents the Executive Head said this would be when staffing for September was finalised at the beginning of July.

There were ten teaching staff resignations. It was recognised that this was a significant number. There were a range of reasons for the resignations including retirement, relocation and family commitments. Governors wished those who were leaving the best for the future. The staff changes had created opportunities for staff progression and development and this was reflected in the staffing structure for September. In answer to questions about staff costs it was reported that there would be a saving.

Summary of Standards and Achievement

The Head of School took governors through the attainment and progress data for the summer 1 period. It was acknowledged that the data showed improvements since the spring term and further improvements would be made in the remaining part of this academic year. Governors asked what the improvements were attributed to. The Executive Head reported that one reason for the improvement was the focus on marking and another was rigorous tracking of pupil progress. Interventions were in place to help those Year 6 pupils on track for a level 3a to raise this to a level 4. Interventions were also in place in earlier years so that interventions are needed less in the later years.

Governors asked whether the intervention had been evaluated and the Head of School reported that they had. Some interventions had an immediate impact and they were over quickly, others required more prolonged intervention to bring about sustained improvement and some were found not to work and were removed. The number of interventions for each child were also being monitored with a view to streamline the interventions. The Executive Head added that the first priority was the quality of teaching in the classroom and as this improved there would be less need for interventions.

Governors asked about the gaps in attainment and progress for different

groups of pupils. It was explained that there is still an attainment gap for Pupil Premium, Black African and Black Caribbean pupils compared with other pupils although the gap is generally less than one point in rates of progress. However accelerated progress is needed for these groups in order to close the attainment gap. The support underachieving children are receiving has been mapped. The next step is for senior leaders to scrutinise even more carefully the impact of all support.

A governor asked how the data was used with teachers. The Head of School explained all teachers are involved in the tracking of children in their class. Another governor asked if everyone had embraced the use of data. The Executive Head replied that once staff realise how data can be used to improve performance they embrace it and this was the case at Dog Kennel Hill.

Quality of Teaching and Learning

The Executive Head referred governors to a table in her report which set out the number and percentage of lessons judged on a four point scale of outstanding, good or better, requires improvement (formerly termed satisfactory) and inadequate. The Head of School explained that at the end of the spring term the local authority monitored the quality of teaching. This was followed up by a learning walk by the Head of School and a learning environment walk by the Executive Head. The teaching was graded mainly on the class teacher observations from the latest LA review with some adjustments and 53.8% was judged to be good or better of which 7.6% was outstanding, 30.4% requires improvement and 7.6% was inadequate.

Since the observations were carried out at the end of the spring term a programme of support has been provided to improve the quality of teaching. There is still work to do but there are signs of improvement. Governors asked about the impact of new staff in September. The Executive Head said she did not anticipate any inadequate teaching by September but staff new to the school may take time to settle in and require improvement to start with but should soon move to good.

Behaviour

It was reported that behaviour is generally good across the school. Individual behaviour plans are in place for a small number of children. As reported earlier there have been no exclusions since the last report.

School Development Plan Update

Governors went through the headlines for each of the three priorities set out at pages 11 and 12 of the report. The priorities are:

1. To improve the achievement of pupils
2. To improve the quality of teaching
3. To improve the impact of leadership at all levels

Parents and the Community

The Head of School has met twice with the Chair of the Friends of Dog

Kennel Hill to discuss arrangements for the summer fair. There has also been a meeting with a parent who is a wildlife enthusiast with a view to developing Lettsom Gardens as a Forest School.

Premises and the Environment

A list of work completed since the last report was noted.

Health and Safety

A local authority Health and Safety audit was due on 26 June. Two successful fire drills were held last term. The last drill was on 6 May and the time recorded to evacuate the school was three minutes.

Pupil Survey

In response to pupil feedback more colourful flowers have been provided in the school flowerbeds in the playground and nets will be purchased for the football goals.

The Chair thanked the Executive Head and Head of School for their comprehensive report and for the clear data on pupil progress and attainment.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Executive Headteacher and Head of Schools' report be received with thanks.**
- (2) That in addition to reporting on racial incidents a report on homophobic bullying be included in future reports.**
- (3) That the proposed staffing structure for September 2014 as set out at page 6 of the report and as amended at this meeting be adopted.**

6. Federation Agreement

Governors were reminded that the proposal to enter into a soft federation with Rotherhithe Primary School had been endorsed by the Governing Body at its meeting on 28 April. The soft federation took effect from 6 May 2014 with the Head of Rotherhithe as Executive Head of the two schools and Wayne Cooper becoming Head of School at Dog Kennel Hill. The Executive Head's salary was split between the two schools and the Head of School's salary was met in full from the budget of Dog Kennel Hill.

Resolved –

That the arrangements for the soft federation with Rotherhithe Primary School be agreed.

7. Department for Education (DfE) & Local Authority (LA) Items

7.1 Governor Development Survey

The Clerk reported that the Governor Development Survey had been emailed to governors.

7.2 Reconstitution of Governing Bodies

The Chair invited the Clerk to report on the latest DfE guidance on the role of governing bodies and the requirement that all governing bodies of maintained schools must reconstitute by 1 September 2015.

The Clerk reported that the DfE published a Governors' Handbook and the latest version was May 2014. In a foreword to the handbook Lord Nash the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools wrote:

"The education system is changing rapidly and school governance needs to change too to play its part. My ambition is that every school has a dynamic governing body. That means one that understands its responsibilities and is focused tightly on its core strategic functions. One that is no bigger than it needs to be with all governors actively contributing relevant skills and experience. One that operates efficiently and effectively through appropriate structures and procedures. The government's role is to put in place the framework to enable this to happen. Our reforms set high expectations, based on the principles of accountability and transparency."

The Clerk explained that in law (Section 21 (2) of the Education Act 2002) the purpose of maintained school governing bodies is to *'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school'*. The Clerk also explained that there were three core strategic functions and these are:

- *Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;*
- *Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and*
- *Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.*

The Clerk added that these functions are reflected in the regulations for maintained schools that came into force in September 2013 (The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013) and in the criteria Ofsted inspectors use to judge the effectiveness of governance in maintained schools and academies.

The Clerk spoke of the difference between governance and management and referred to guidance in the DfE Governors' Handbook which stated *'Governing bodies should play a strategic role, and avoid routine involvement*

in operational matters’.

The Clerk reported that the DfE has also produced statutory guidance on the constitution of governing bodies and two of the main points listed in the guidance are:

- *Governing bodies should be no bigger than necessary to secure the range of skills they need. Smaller governing bodies are likely to be more cohesive and dynamic.*
- *A key consideration in the appointment and election of all new governors should be the skills and experience the governing body needs to be effective.*

The Clerk commented that there was a move away from the previous stakeholder model of governance to a skills based model.

In response to questions about how a smaller governing body could carrying out its functions the Clerk explained that this was possible if the governing body focused on the strategic and not the operational. It also needed to delegate functions to the Head and to committees.

The Executive Head spoke of the need to streamline the number of committees and working parties. She commented that if the Governing Body was confident with the school’s leadership it should delegate responsibility, monitor delivery and hold the leadership to account for the outcomes.

The Chair suggested that the reconstitution of the Governing Body be decided at the first meeting of the autumn term and this was accepted. It was also agreed that the first meeting of the autumn term should decide what to do about arrangements for filling vacancies on the Governing Body between now and agreement of the new Governing Body constitution.

Governors then discussed the suggestion to streamline the committee and working party structure. There was agreement to discuss the Executive Head's proposals, and any other proposals for restructuring committees that might arise, at the autumn term meeting. With regard to the SEN Working Party the Chair proposed that a decision on whether it should continue should be deferred and that he and the Executive Head would meet with Peter Bibby, the Chair of the Working Party, to discuss the matter. This was accepted.

Resolved -

- (1) That the reconstitution of the Governing Body be an agenda item for the first meeting of the autumn term 2014**
- (2) That the case for restructuring committees, along the lines suggested by the Executive Headteacher and/or any other suggestions that arise, be an agenda item for the first meeting of the autumn term 2014.**

(3) That a decision on whether to continue with a SEN Working Party be deferred to the next meeting to allow time for a meeting between the Chair, Executive Head and the Chair of the SEN Working Group to be arranged to discuss the matter.

8. Governing Body

8.1 Membership

The Clerk reported that there were vacancies for a local authority governor, a community governor and a staff governor. The following terms of office were due to end before the end of 2014:

Ms Sue Farrington (Community Governor) term ends on 14/11/2014
Ms Gillian Reeve (Community Governor) term ends on 27/6/2014
Ms Jenny Turner (Parent Governor) term ends on 3/12/2014
Ms Marion Cranmer (Staff Governor) term ends on 15/11/2014

As Gillian's term ended before the next meeting the Chair thanked Gillian for her service to the school over many years.

8.2 Governor Reports

It was reported that Peter Bibby had visited the school on a number of occasions to join his class (4J) on school visits and also as a member of the Wildlife Working Party, the Buildings Working Party and to meet informally with the Head of School and the Executive Head.

It was also reported that Jenny Turner had visited the school as data governor to meet with the Head of School and a data expert.

8.3 Governor Training and Development

The Clerk reported that the local authority's Governor Training Programme for the next school year would be sent to governors in September.

8.4 Governor Development Service Bulletin

The Governors' Bulletin from Southwark Governor Services had been sent to governors before the meeting.

Resolved -

That the Governors' Bulletin be noted.

9. Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Resources Committee held on 16 May 2014 had been sent to governors before the meeting. The committee minutes were presented for information and as an efficient way of formally reporting to the Governing Body the committee's use of their delegated powers.

Resolved –

That the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 16 May 2014 be received and accepted as a report on the committee's use of their delegated powers.

10. Dates and Times of Future Meetings

The dates and times of meetings would be emailed to governors once they were finalised.

11. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

PART II

CONFIDENTIAL

There was no confidential business.

Chair _____ **Date** _____