



BENTHAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE FULL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Date: Tuesday, 20 March 2018
Time: 18:30
Location: Benthal Primary School, Benthal Road, N16 7AU

MINUTES

Present:	Jo Carter	Chair	Chair
	Susannah Barker	Parent Governor	SB
	Matilda Astle	Community Governor	MA
	Louise Drew	Head Teacher	LD
	Henry Greenwood	Community Governor	HG
	Fatima Haffeji	Staff Governor	FH
	Nick Harvey-Jones	Community Governor	NH
	Shabnum Hassan	Parent Governor	SH
	Nathan Waddington	Vice Chair	NW
	Tracey Williams	Staff Governor	TW

Clerk: Kathleen Formosa Clerk

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting at 18:35.
- 1.2 Apologies were received and **accepted** from Sem Moema (SM) and Jeremy Gilpin (JG).
 - 1.2.1 It was noted that JG has offered his resignation as a parent governor and had hoped to attend one final meeting. The Chair stated that JG had acted as a parent governor for two terms of office. The group thanked JG for his contributions to the school.
 - 1.2.2 It was **noted** that Stella Sandford had also sent apologies.
- 1.3 The meeting was **confirmed** quorate and accordingly proceeded to business.

2. Presentations

- 2.1 There were no presentations made.

3. Election of New Governors

- 3.1 The newly elected parent and staff governors were welcomed to the meeting.
 - 3.1.1 HG was welcomed as a prospective community governor, and his appointment was **ratified**.
 - 3.1.2 Stella Sandford was noted as a prospective community governor, but unable to attend the meeting on this occasion. Her appointment was **ratified**.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Actions Taken

- 4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 November 2017 were **reviewed** and **agreed** for signature, subject to updates being made to the list of link governors included at item 4.3.1

ACTION: Clerk to update the minutes and re-submit them for signature.

- 4.2 As a matter arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, it was **noted** that the school is no longer anticipating a shortfall of £30k, as noted at item 7.2.
- 4.2.1 As a matter arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, it was **noted** that the Chair has spoken to NW who is happy to continue as Vice Chair.
- 4.2.2 It was **noted** that all other matters arising would be dealt with as part of the agenda.
- 4.3 Urgent actions since the previous meeting of the Board of Governors were **noted** as follows:
- LD circulated a summary from the school improvement advisor and single evaluation plan; and
 - The school was closed for two days because of snow.

5. Core Business – Headteacher’s Report

- 5.1 The Headteacher’s report was **received**.
- 5.2 LD reported that there are concerns about undersubscription. At present, there are no full cohorts in any year group aside from Year 6.
- 5.2.1 LD recommended, and it was **agreed**, that this is an issue the school should monitor closely, as falling enrollment may affect funding. LD reported that at present, there is a risk that funding will decrease by the equivalent of one teacher’s salary.
- 5.2.2 It was **discussed** that the significant undersubscription of nursery places was the most critical issue for the school. It was **noted** that in due course a decision would need to be made about whether or not nursery provision should continue.
- 5.2.3 It was **noted** that nursery figures are falling across Hackney, and that the Finance & Premises (F&P) Committee had discussed offering a shared nursery provision with a neighbouring school, but this idea was not supported.
- 5.2.4 It was **discussed** that a further challenge with nursery is that most parents are looking for wrap-around care in addition to nursery, and the school is not able to offer the extended provision. It was **discussed** that links with nurseries and childminders that can offer the wrap-around care may help to solve some of the issue.
- 5.2.5 LD reported that opportunities for free advertising of the nursery provision will continue to be sought.
- 5.2.6 LD reported that postponement of the school move has affected enrollment. While the immediate community is aware that the school is staying in place, the wider community may still be under the impression that the school is moving and assume there will be upheaval in the next 2-3 years.
- 5.3 The list of staff training and CPD was **noted**.
- 5.3.1 LD reported that moderation activities with cluster schools have been active and are ongoing.
- 5.3.2 LD reported that all staff have now had safeguarding training, including support staff.
- 5.4 LD reported that the school has signed up to the Governors for Schools service, which has helped the school to find two new community governors. Elections also were organised for new parent and staff governors. The board has now filled 11 of its 12 seats. LD stated that she is now in the process of filling the last seat and will report back.

ACTION: LD to ensure appointment of one additional governor and report back.

- 5.4.1 It was **noted** that the next step would be to ensure that all link governor roles are filled.
- 5.5 LD reported on current staffing issues within the school.
- 5.5.1 LD reported that currently there are two confirmed staff leavers, one to leave the school at Easter, and the other at the end of the academic year. Both are teaching staff.
- 5.5.2 LD reported that the school will need to use an agency to fill the teaching role being vacated at Easter, as only three applications were received for this space and these were not of a suitable standard. The impact on the budget will need to be absorbed by the school.
- 5.5.3 LD reported that the Assistant Head for Inclusion & Safeguarding has been filled by an internal candidate, following the period of recruitment. The interview process involved rigorous questioning by governors, and teaching interaction with a SEN class.
- 5.5.4 LD reported that applications for a learning mentor have been positive, and the plan is to interview six candidates from the applicant pool in the near term.
- 5.5.5 It was **noted** that two new teachers would be recruited for September.
- 5.5.6 **A governor asked if the school is using a formal application form in the process of recruiting teachers.**
- 5.5.7 It was **noted** that in social care, which also struggles with recruitment, efforts have been made to keep application forms short and to accept CVs until the short-listing stage.
- 5.5.8 LD stated that minimizing or eliminating application forms may be difficult in terms of compliance with safeguarding requirements but would be considered. LD stated that she is also looking to see if recruitment might be done through a school's LinkedIn page, which requires signing up to it, or other free outlets for advertising.

ACTION: MA and LD to discuss alternative approaches to recruitment after the meeting.

- 5.6 LD reported that staff sickness absence has improved substantially this term.
- 5.7 Outcomes and attainment figures for the school were **reviewed**.
- 5.7.1 LD reported that the school improvement advisor has advised that the school's mobility numbers and their match with outcomes and attainment figures should be carefully tracked and considered.
- 5.7.2 LD reported that half the cohort in Year 6 are PPG children, and governors should be aware that there may be an impact on outcomes, even though the school has been successful in shortening the attainment gap for PPG children generally.
- 5.7.3 The outcome figures of pupils by year group were **reviewed**. It was **noted** that the figures are generally positive, with phonics a particular success.
- 5.7.4 The whole school group summary (attainment) for March 2018 was circulated at the table.
- 5.7.5 TW reported that there are good continuing rates of progress across all cohorts.
- 5.7.6 It was **noted** that some cohorts are quite small, and for those areas showing as areas of concern, the number of pupils included in the particular cohort are also provided. For example, white British children receiving PPG showing difficulty in Year 3 reading includes only 3 pupils, and in Year 4 only 1 pupil.
- 5.7.7 LD reported that a new whole school assessment programme had been purchased and is now being implemented.
- 5.7.8 **A governor asked how the school's reading programme for KS2 was progressing.**
- 5.7.9 TW stated that the reading programme Destination Reader has been rolled out to Year 2, and teachers are currently receiving training. There is now greater consistency in the approach to reading across the school and this is having a positive impact.
- 5.8 The school's teaching profile was **reviewed**.
- 5.8.1 LD reported that judgements were agreed by the school improvement advisor last week.

- 5.8.2 It was noted that one teacher has been judged as inadequate.
- 5.9 LD reported that all subject leaders have updated their action plans. Positive developments in the development of EYFS curriculum and outdoor areas were **noted**, as were the positive results attached to KS1 support for less able writers and spelling system.
- 5.9.1 LD reported that there is potential for the school to gain an outstanding rating for personal development, behaviour and welfare in the next Ofsted review.
- 5.9.2 LD reported that the school has purchased two terms of a counselling service to work with identified pupils and during lunch time as a drop-in basis, and parents have responded very positively to this.
- 5.9.3 LD reported that turnout for parents attending IEP meeting is increasing. Children are also invited to attend, so that all concerned parties are talking together about their progress.
- 5.9.4 LD reported that a PPG overview would be given in the new financial year so that governors might consider better approaches to spending PPG funds.
- 5.10 The Benthal extra-curricular overview for autumn and spring 2017/18 was circulated at the table. It was **agreed** that this information should be posted to the school's website.
- 5.10.1 The school's current and continuing actions in the community were **noted**, and in particular:
- Benthal Family & Singing club
 - Friends of Benthal cake sale
 - Ocean maths workshops
 - World book day
 - Class assembly
 - Parents meetings for SATs
 - Painted and decorated egg competition
- 5.10.2 A governor asked if the writing and publishing group had been established yet.
- 5.10.3 LD reported that the writing and publishing group had been established and that the group is calling itself "eco-journalists." LD reported that Eco-Active is a free service that runs across the borough, and links have been made with this service for the purposes of the writing and publishing group. LD stated that the writing journey of the children would be charted and integrated into the life of the school by including pupils' work in newsletters and other appropriate outlets.
- 5.11 LD reported that the school's attendance figures are 95.1%, which is below the target of 96.3%. She stated that the low attendance figures are the result of one family with three children in the school, whose attendance is quite poor. It was **noted** that the three children are under child protection plans.
- 5.11.1 LD reported that the school currently has six children on the child protection register, and a further 16 who are known to social services but not yet on the register.
- 5.11.2 LD reported that two children have been excluded since the previous meeting of the governors. One was excluded in the autumn term, and another this term.
- 5.11.3 Of the exclusions reported, one was a one-day exclusion. The other is more complex and involves a pupil now in Year 2 who will require one-on-one support going forward. He is now attending Benthal 1.5 days per week and receiving education and support elsewhere on the other 3.5 days.
- 5.11.4 One minor accident was reported.
- 5.12 LD reported that the school has had two break-ins – one of 9 March, and the other on 12/13 March. Over the course of these two break-ins, approximately 30 laptops were stolen, and it is believed that the culprits damaged a pipe in the hall which resulted in a flood. Parents have been informed.

- 5.12.1 LD reported that the school was closed on 1 and 2 March because of weather. During this period, one of the school's boilers shut down and there was no heating in the school. Following HLT procedures and in discussion with the interim director of education at HLT, a decision was taken to close the school for health and safety reasons. It was noted that the boiler is now working again.
- 5.12.2 LD reported that following a recommendation from the fire risk assessment, the school's evacuation routes were made more difficult so that staff and pupils would have to consider alternative routes out of the building in the event of an emergency. It was noted that the new arrangements have been considered, but a fire drill to test the new arrangements has not yet been held.
- 5.13 The school's single action plan was **discussed**. It was **noted** that the first iteration of the single action plan had been presented to the governors at the November meeting. LD explained that the single action plan is a working document that continues to be confirmed with the school improvement advisor.
- 5.13.1 Updates to be made to the single action plan were **discussed**. LD reported that the school improvement advisor had been happy with the school's progress thus far.
- 5.13.2 It was **noted** that the single action plan is linked to four objectives that will be part of the school's Ofsted assessment. Areas decided from Ofsted in the last review were **reviewed** and **discussed**.
- 5.13.3 It was **noted** that external improvements were a key priority in the school improvement advisor's recommendations following the previous Ofsted review. The governors **confirmed** their support for the external improvements being made around the school, and that these should be prioritised in the budget for next year.
ACTION: F&P Committee to prioritise external improvements as part of budgeting for 2018/19.
- 5.13.4 LD reported that the recruitment of the gardener approved at the previous meeting of the F&P Committee had not yet begun but would be undertaken in the near term.

6. Finance & Premises Feedback Matters

- 6.1 NH reported that the School is on track with its expenditure and income.
- 6.1.1 It was reported that the school is anticipating a very small carryover for the year.
- 6.2 NH reported that the key issue being considered by the committee is the reduction in the school's funding for building repair and improvement over recent years based on the assumption that the school would be moving. Now that the school is staying *in situ*, committee members will undertake a survey of the premises to note and prioritise issues needing to be addressed as a matter of urgency (e.g., new boilers).

7. Curriculum & Standards Feedback Matters

- 7.1 LD reported that the committee met last week, and that most matters discussed had been raised in the Headteacher's Report.
- 7.1.1 It was reported that the school's policies have been reviewed and are in the process of being uploaded to the website.
- 7.2 New governors were encouraged to attend the next meeting of the Curriculum & Standards Committee to gain insight into how teaching works within the school.

8. Link Governor Feedback

- 8.1 SB reported that she had met with LD to discuss the role of the pupil voice link.

- 8.1.1 SB reported that she has met with a few pupils on the School Council and the support staff who assist them. Meetings will be regular and termly going forward, with a goal of bringing the pupil voice onto the governing body via the link governor.
- 8.1.2 SB reported that the meeting was very positive and that pupils are very happy with life within the school.
- 8.1.3 SB reported that she has agreed to research ways of impacting punctuality within the school.
- 8.2 **A governor asked if it could be clarified how the School Council works.**
- 8.2.1 SB stated that two pupils from each year group from year 2 and above are elected to the School Council. The School Council meets weekly and has one key project per term.
- 8.2.2 It was **agreed** that the termly projects should be reported to the governors so they are aware of activities and plans.
- 8.2.3 SB reported that pupils would like to look into having a tuck shop. However, the current project is to design a school baseball cap.
- 8.2.4 LD reported that pupils have previously started an initiative that the kitchen should be stocked with free trade products.
- 8.3 It was suggested that an annual schedule of link governor meetings would be helpful to the link governors and ensure that visits happen in a timely manner.

ACTION: LD to consider an annual schedule and deliver a proposal at the next meeting.

9. Governance Matters

- 9.1 Membership of the committees of the governing body was **reviewed**. LD circulated a proposal for committee membership and link governors at the table.
- 9.1.1 The new committee memberships were **agreed** as presented. The following additions were also **agreed**:
 - SH would serve as the link governor for inclusion
 - SB would attend F&P Committee as well as Curriculum & Standards in her capacity as link governor for pupil/parent voice.
- 9.1.2 It was **noted** that the Chair for Curriculum & Standards would be arranged following the meeting.

ACTION: Chair and LD to confirm the Chair for Curriculum & Standards and report back.
- 9.1.3 **A governor asked which of the governors served as the link to Friends of Benthall.**
- 9.1.4 It was **noted** that SB served as the link to this group in her capacity as link governor for pupil/parent voice. LD clarified that the focus for Friends of Benthall is fundraising, but a Parent Council will be developed in due course to provide stakeholder feedback.
- 9.1.5 **A governor asked whether there are any skills gaps on the board that governors would wish to have addressed as the board continues to develop.**
- 9.1.6 It was **discussed** that expertise in marketing could be useful, and also that there is potentially a need for HR expertise. It was **agreed** that attracting a governor with expertise in marketing should be the priority in the near term.
- 9.1.7 The governors thanked LD for her efforts in organising the committee memberships and link governor roles.
- 9.2 Opportunities for governor training were **noted**. It was **confirmed** that training offered through HLT is free and unlimited.
- 9.2.1 It was clarified that governors are able to book their own training through HLT, but that notification should be sent to the clerk so that a record of training can be kept.
- 9.2.2 It was reported that the Chair's training was cancelled due to snow and has not yet been rescheduled.

- 9.2.3 It was **noted** that the following governors have also completed or booked training, as follows:
- SB has completed the Using Evidence-Based Information & Comparative Data; and the Introduction to Stronger Governance training sessions offered through HLT;
 - SB has booked a place on the Strengthening Governance through Effective Accountability (28 May 2018) and Safeguarding & Child Protection (19 June 2018) training sessions offered through HLT; and
 - NW has booked a place on the Dealing with Complaints about the School (6 June 2018) and Safeguarding & Child Protection (19 June 2018) training sessions offered through HLT.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 It was **noted** that the Personnel Committee had met in advance of the meeting of the governing board, although a report had not been provided. It was **confirmed** that all matters discussed at the meeting were covered on the governing board's meeting agenda.
- 10.2 It was **confirmed** that the Chair would sign the single central register following the meeting.
- 10.3 LD invited the governors to attend the following school events:
- KS2 musical showcase on Thursday at 9:15 a.m. in the large hall;
 - Lunch with the children on a date TBC in the summer term;
 - School visit and walking tour immediately before or after the summer term lunch with the children.
- 10.3.1 It was **discussed** and **agreed** that governors should be paired with a member of the School Council during the school visit.

11. Confidential Business

- 11.1 There was one matter of confidential business discussed. See Confidential Annex A.

The business of the meeting concluded at 20:26.

The date of the next meeting of the Board of Governors was **confirmed** for **Wednesday, 11 July 2018**.