

**Minutes of a governing body meeting of Charles Dickens Primary
School on Tuesday, 25th March, 2014 at 6.00 pm**

Governors Present: Claire Maugham (Chair), Cassie Buchanan (Headteacher), Emma Gleadhill, Catherine Greenwood, Matthew Harris, Mel Mackinnon, Andrew Mayer, Cerian Morgan, Nik Nicol, Annastazia Nyaga, Perrine Summers, Zoe Sumner, Linda Taylor, Amos Emoike, Michelle Avison, Robert Loader

Others present: Malcolm Booth (Associate Member)

Clerk: John Finch

The meeting started at 6.05 pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Vijay Luthra, and consent was given for his absence.

2. Declarations of Interest in the agenda

There were no declarations of interest in the agenda.

3. Minutes of the governing body meeting on Tuesday, 26th November, 2013

3.1 Approval of the minutes

Governors received the minutes of the governing body meeting on Tuesday, 26th November, 2013, as circulated with the agenda, and they were approved as a correct record.

3.2 Matters arising from the minutes

The following matters were raised:

- The Chair wrote to Southwark Council setting out the cash-flow difficulties caused by late payments to the school, and asked for these to be brought up-to-date.
- The Attendance & Punctuality Policy (pupils) has not yet been further reviewed, and will be discussed at the next Resources committee meeting on Tuesday, 17th June, 2014.

Action: Resources committee

5. Committees

5.2 Link governor Reports

Governors received a document titled “Creative arts report” as circulated at the meeting, and Catherine Greenwood gave the following verbal report:

- Arts and creativity continue to be deeply embedded in the work of children and teachers at the school.
- In September 2013, the school was awarded the Arts Mark Gold for the fourth time.
- To get the Arts Mark Gold, the school is required to devote 12 % of curriculum time to the arts, with time dedicated to the four key art forms of Art, craft and design, dance, and drama and music.
- The school is also required to provide a minimum of three extra-curricular arts opportunities for each year group over the year.
- The creative curriculum operates across all years, and continues to develop a rich range of learning opportunities that incorporate the arts and creativity across the curriculum.
- The school believes in the role of the arts and creative curriculum to engage children in their learning, and that this contributes to the high level of academic achievement, as well as to the broader development of the child.
- The school has artists in residence who support the topic work, meaning that real expertise in art forms can be applied to the needs of the creative curriculum and support teacher’s priorities and curriculum planning.
- Last year a musician in residence worked with Nursery and Reception classes to offer music lessons, whereas this year a combination of music lessons and project work is in place.
- Drama is used throughout the school, in particular to support Literacy lessons, and is developed in a number of performances.
- This year staff continued to integrate drama within the curriculum.
- The Head of Creative Arts works in partnership with the Heads of Education in order to discuss, evaluate and influence further large scale projects.
- Last year, in addition to the extra-curricular open access clubs, the school also ran a number of clubs and events for specially selected children who displayed an aptitude.
- The school also engages with the wider community through participation in community events.
- A record of staff training in the creative arts is kept by the Head of Creative Arts, in order to ensure that as many staff as possible receive training throughout the year.
- Two members of staff attended full day training sessions with the Unicorn Theatre to learn how to approach the teaching of English through drama.

Amos Emoike arrived at 6.14 pm.

- The Headteacher suggested that a shorter version of the link governor report could be included in the newsletter or blogged on the school website.
- The Headteacher undertook to edit the report for inclusion in the newsletter or school website. **Action: Headteacher**

The Headteacher gave the following answer to a question from a governor:

- *Is Pupil Premium funding spent on interventions that utilise the Arts?* Pupil Premium funding is spent on play therapy for children that are more socially challenged. Pupil Premium funding is used on projects where evidence can be shown that the funding is having an impact in reducing the gap.

3. Minutes of the governing body meeting on Tuesday, 26th November, 2013

3.2 Matters arising from the minutes

The following matters were raised:

- A Nursery working party reviewed the Nursery provision with regards to the attainment gap, as it was clear that full-time children were performing better than part-time children.
- There are currently 30 children in the Nursery, compared to 25 full-time children 2 years ago.
- There are currently 82 applicants for Nursery places, 27 of which have a sibling in the school.
- Of the 82 applicants, 46 are applying for a full-time place, with 19 of these having a sibling in the school, and 36 are applying for a part-time place, 8 of which have a sibling in the school.
- It was noted that offering full-time places for children in the Nursery is better for improved attainment.
- Offering part-time places is better financially as the school is funded for 0.6 per child, whether a child is part-time or full-time.
- It was noted that offering 64 part-time places would guarantee an extra £20,000 funding, but there are not enough applicants to fill these spaces.
- Full-time places are offered for half the week for free, and parents are charged £50 a week for the other half a weeks' provision, with a number of parents claiming this back as a tax credit.
- The Headteacher proposed that the Nursery should offer 22 full-time places, and 20 part-time places, for the following reasons:
 - Operating a model that offers full-time and part-time places is flexible enough to meet the needs of the community, and to encourage new families into the Nursery;

- This model will allow all children with a sibling in the school to be admitted to the Nursery, filling 19 full-time places and 8 part-time places;
- The school can then offer 3 full-time places and 12 part-time places to other children.

The Headteacher gave the following answer to a question from a governor:

- *Will places be offered to 2 year olds?* There is only one in the Nursery at the moment, and they are there for safeguarding reasons. The Headteacher would like to offer provision for 2-year olds, but the Nursery is not physically big enough at present to accommodate them. There is capital expenditure available from Southwark Council for the expansion of the Nursery. Parents are only entitled to 15 hours free provision in the term after their child turns 3.

Michelle Avison arrived at 6.26 pm.

Agreed – That governors approve the Headteacher’s proposal that the Nursery offers 22 full-time and 20 part-time places from September 2014.

Andrew Mayer gave the following update:

- A working party considered whether the school should become a Foundation school or not.
- It was stated that by obtaining Foundation school status, the governing body would have control of the land, which would offer more security and would be beneficial for planning future building works.
- As a Foundation school, the governing body would be responsible for the maintenance of the school premises, and as such would not be eligible for funding.
- It was stated that Southwark Council have not been forthcoming in providing the funding for the maintenance of the school premises that it is currently eligible for.
- The governing body would not gain control of the land if the school were to become an Academy.
- As a Foundation school, the governing body would become the employer, allowing greater flexibility to increase salaries for staff, and to pay higher than recommended rates to attract and recruit better staff.
- The conversion process would cost £3,500 in solicitor’s fees, and would include an 8 week consultation period with stakeholders including parents, staff and the local community.
- The whole process would take six months from start to finish.
- There are not thought to be any negative aspects of the school becoming a Foundation school, and it was noted that there are a few other local schools that are Foundation schools.

Robert Loader arrived at 6.31 pm.

- The only issue that may be raised during the consultation period would be parental concerns regarding the school's Admissions Policy.
- The clerk stated that the school's Instrument of Government would change if it becomes a Foundation school, as the governing body would be required to have Partnership governors.

The Headteacher and Malcolm Booth gave the following answers to questions from governors:

- *Will the school have to pay for services from Southwark Council if it becomes a Foundation school?* The school currently pays for services from Southwark Council such as HR, training and clerking support, and would continue to do so as a Foundation school.
- *Will there be any pension liability implications if the school becomes a Foundation school?* The school is already liable for making pension contributions, so this wouldn't change. The only increase would be as a result of an increase in a member of staff's salary, but again this would happen whether the school was a Foundation school or not.
- *Have staff been consulted on whether the school should become a Foundation school?* No, but they would be as part of the consultation process, and it is not anticipated that any objections would be raised.
- *Will the school change its name if it becomes a Foundation school?* Not necessarily, as the school's status could be referred to in small letters next to the school's name on the school sign.

Agreed – That governors approve the proposal to enter a consultation period, with a view to becoming a Foundation school.

The working party resolved to meet again to discuss developing the proposal to become a foundation school further.

4. Governing Body

4.1 Governing body membership and vacancies

Governors received the report as circulated with the agenda, and the following points were raised:

- Linda Taylor has been reappointed as a Staff governor.
- Mel Mackinnon's term of office as Staff governor will end on 23/7/14 when he leaves the school.
- Emma Gleadhill was proposed as a Community governor.

Agreed – That governors appoint Emma Gleadhill as a Community governor.

4.2 Governing body meeting attendance

Governors received the report as circulated with the agenda.

4.3 Governing Training & Development

Governors received the reports as circulated with the agenda, and the following points were raised:

- The Chair and Headteacher attended the “Leading in partnership – a workshop for Heads and Chairs of Governors” training session and it was excellent.
- Mel Mackinnon attended the “Introduction for new governors M6: school finance” training session and stated that it was very helpful.
- Andrew Mayer attended the “Employment law training” and stated that it was good.
- Matthew Harris has also carried out safeguarding recruitment training online.

5. **Committees**

5.1 Committee membership and link governor roles

Governors received the reports, as well as a paper on the new Children, Families and Community committee as circulated with the agenda, and the following changes to committees were made:

- Children, Families & Community committee – The Headteacher, Amos Emoike, Emma Gleadhill, Mel Mackinnon, Nik Nicol, Annastazia Nyaga and Linda Taylor to form the committee. Amos Emoike was appointed as Chair of the committee.
- Curriculum & Standards – Emma Gleadhill to join the committee.
- First/Second committee – Emma Gleadhill and Matthew Harris to join the First and Second committees, in the event that they need to meet.
- Resources – Matthew Harris to join the committee.

The following points were raised:

- The remit of the Children, Families and Community committee will be to review safeguarding and the behaviour and safety of pupils in the school, as well as engagement with parents on wider issues in the school community.
- The committee will also focus on the social and moral education of children.

5.3 Committee meeting attendance

Governors received the report as circulated with the agenda.

5.4 Committee meeting minutes

Governors received the following committee meeting minutes as circulated with the agenda:

- Resources - Tuesday, 8th October, 2013
- Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 12th November, 2013
- Resources - Tuesday, 19th November, 2013

The Chair undertook to e-mail the clerk the minutes of the Curriculum & Standards committee meeting on Tuesday, 11th March, 2014.

Action: Chair

Curriculum & Standards committee – Tuesday, 11th March, 2014

Catherine Greenwood gave the following verbal report:

- The committee discussed RAISEOnline data, particularly how children's attainment compared against national averages, and whether there were any areas for improvement.
- The committee learned how teachers track pupil progress against expected attainment, and how RAISEOnline data underpins the School Development Plan.
- The committee were also given an overview of teaching and learning, including the results of lesson observations and the level of support in place for teachers that require improvement.

Resources committee – Tuesday, 4th March, 2014

Malcolm Booth gave the following verbal report:

- The committee discussed virements, which is reallocating money from one budget where it is not required to another where it is.
- All virements up to and including £20,000 were agreed by the committee, and the following virements above £20,000 were recommended for agreement to the governing body:
 - £23,000 to be moved to the SEN budget as information on top-up funding was not available when the budget was being set;
 - £26,000 to be moved into the Nursery budget as a result of full-time Nursery places being offered;

Catherine Greenwood left at 7.01 pm.

- £58,000 to be moved into the Pupil Premium budget. Any child that has received FSM in the last six years is eligible for Pupil Premium funding, but the budget was set lower than expected due to lack of available data from

Southwark Council. It was noted that £157,000 of Pupil Premium funding was spent mainly on Teaching Assistants;

- £188,000 to be moved into the Extra Government Grants budget. This is because Southwark Council have instructed that reimbursements for expenses have to be put in income, rather against expenses;
- £56,000 to be moved into the Property Grants budget from the project fund. This was as a result of Southwark Council not paying £250,000 that was owed to the school. It was noted that this money has since been received, and needs to be spent to avoid it being recouped by Southwark Council;
- £71,000 to be moved into the Teachers Staff budget;
- £22,000 to be moved into the Premises Staff budget due to a redundancy payment being made to a member of the premises staff;
- £110,000 to be moved into the Building Maintenance budget;
- £21,000 to be moved into the IT budget to cover extra expenditure.

Agreed – That governors approve the virements as recommended by the Resources committee.

- It was noted that the committee also reviewed and approved the the following policies:
 - Financial Scheme of Delegation
 - Non-Teacher Appraisal Policy
 - Safeguarding Children Policy
 - Statement of Internal Control
 - Teacher Appraisal Policy
 - Terms of Reference – Resources committee
- An internal audit was carried out, and the school is now graded as green/amber, which is an improvement on the grade of amber which the school was graded in the last Southwark Council inspection.

7. Budget 2013/14

Malcolm Booth gave the following update:

- A cautious outlook on income was kept when setting the budget.
- A surplus of £73,000 is expected due to the increase in pupils in the school, as the school receives funding per pupil.
- The Resources committee also reviewed and approved the SFVS, which needs to be signed and sent to Southwark Council by 31st March, 2014.

Agreed – That governors approve the budget and the SFVS as recommended by the Resources committee.

5. Committees

5.2 Link governor Reports

Governors received a document titled “Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support” as circulated at the meeting, and Amos Emoike gave the following verbal report:

- Amos visited the school twice, and noted that the number of SEN children in the school has decreased.
- There is a lot of support in the school for SEN children, including weekly support from an Educational Psychologist who offers the following support:
 - Works closely with staff to ensure the early identification of additional needs;
 - Works with groups of targeted children each week to develop self-esteem, social skills, and positive behaviours for learning and self-regulation for children with anger management difficulties;
 - Works closely with teachers and provides advice on how to support specific children in class, and is available to address teacher’s concerns on a weekly basis;
 - Meets with parents to provide advice on how to support children at home;
 - This term, the EP has provided training for Teaching Assistants about how to effectively support children in class with Literacy skills, as well as running a separate training session for the Early Years Practitioners about developing pre-Literacy skills;
 - Holds two coffee mornings with parents of children with additional needs, together with the Assistant Headteacher and the Family Liaison Officer.
- The school also receives support from a Family Liaison Officer, who offers the following support:
 - Works closely with the Education Welfare Officer to support families with attendance issues, including collecting children from home and bringing them to school when family situations have been particularly turbulent;
 - Provides support to targeted children with challenging behaviour at lunchtime, including leading games activities which help develop social skills, turn-taking, and enable children to negotiate more peaceful playtimes;
 - Provides support in class in the afternoons to help develop positive behaviours for learning;
 - Liaises with the school nurse who provides advice to targeted families regarding health issues, toileting and diet;

- Works closely with CCHF All About Kids to ensure that disadvantaged children have the opportunity to have time away with other children. It was noted that these breaks impact positively in self-confidence and self-esteem.
- There has been a great improvement in behaviour and attendance in the school.
- The school will try to make parents aware of the work being done to support SEN children in the school.
- There will be a change in SEN legislation in September 2014, and the school will need to decide how it manages SEN needs in the future, and any financial implications of that change.
- The Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) is currently working with SEN children as well as their current workload, and they will be working on SEN full-time from September 2014.

The Headteacher gave the following answer to a question from a governor:

- *Are SEN children allowed to have time out of class?* Yes, the school ensures that any additional needs, such as behavioural, social and emotional needs, are met as well as educational needs. Links have been made with Summerhouse PRU, who support children in and out of school and share best practice.

6. Headteacher's Written Report

Governors received the Headteacher's written report as circulated via e-mail prior to the meeting, and the Headteacher gave the following verbal report:

- A Reception teacher is on maternity leave earlier than planned, and her position is being covered by existing staff members.
- Two Teaching Assistants are leaving to pursue teacher training, and two teachers are leaving in the summer term.
- The Pupil Premium expenditure statement is on the school website.
- Pupil Premium money was spent on extending more able pupils, and increasing targeted provision for FSM pupils who were identified as more able.
- This expenditure wasn't having as big an impact as was hoped, so Pupil Premium money will now be directed towards closing the gap between FSM and non-FSM children.
- The new curriculum will be introduced in the school in September 2014.
- The school will be in a strong position as new expectations in English and Maths have already been adopted.
- INSET days were held in January and February 2014, which focussed on updating teachers' subject knowledge in English and reviewing two year cycles of topics and associated learning foci.

- INSET days also focussed on grammar and punctuation, and on the review of the School Improvement Plan and the new curriculum.
- There have been a large number of events and projects in the school this term, and a large amount of staff development.
- The school is moving towards becoming two form entry across the school.
- The school will be given approximately £2.6 million from Southwark Council to develop three additional classrooms plus specialist teaching spaces, larger halls, and the rationalisation of the entrance and play spaces.
- A design brief was written and the school received 7 responses to tender.
- The school is the only one to interview the architect firms that responded to tender, with one firm standing out as they concentrated specifically on realising the design brief.
- It was noted that Southwark Council will only appoint one architect to work with all schools in the design group, and the school may not have its desired architect appointed.
- The Headteacher has met with other Headteachers in the design group, and will try and persuade them to choose the school's preferred architect.
- The latest attainment data will be available soon, and will be presented to the next Curriculum & Standards committee meeting on Tuesday, 10th June, 2014.
- Data is also available for the school at [School Data Dashboard](#).
- The school does not compare well to other similar schools in Reading, and this is due to 11 children not making two levels of progress, which is unusual for the school.
- It was noted that attainment figures for Reading would improve, and this represented a dip and not a trend.
- Large numbers of children made 2 sub-levels of progress in one term in Years 1, 2 and 3, when it would usually take a year to make 2 sub-levels of progress.
- For those children that appear not to be making the expected progress, it was noted that they may have already made the progress in previous years and they are now consolidating.
- Children in Year 1 do not usually achieve a Level 1a or above until they reach the end of the year, as they enter the school in Reception with low levels of attainment and it takes time for them to make progress.
- 2 children were given one day fixed-term exclusions in the Autumn term, and one child was given a one day fixed term exclusion this term.
- It was stated that exclusions are used as a last resort, but are sometimes necessary for serious breaches of school rules.
- There was one racist incident compared to four last year, and there was one bullying incident compared to one last year.

- The school's attendance has gone up from 94.5 % to 96.01 %, which is above the national average.
- The number of children with attendance of less than 85 % has gone down from 5.8 % to 1.8 %.
- Lesson observations have been discussed by the Curriculum & Standards committee, and it was noted that NQT's are teaching Good lessons.
- All experienced teachers are teaching Outstanding lessons, apart from that is judged as Requires Improvement and is receiving support.
- Teacher's performances are assessed and monitored against children's assessment data.
- Books reviews take place every half-term to assess the quality of learning in books, and teachers' learning environments in classrooms are also evaluated.

The Headteacher gave the following answers to questions from governors:

- *How do you know what level children are at when they enter the school?* They are assessed as soon as they enter the school. Sometimes data will be sent if they have arrived from another school, but these children are reassessed to ensure the school has an accurate reading of what level they are at.
- *Are unauthorised absences attributable to long-term illness?* No, they are result of parents taking their children on holiday during term-time. The Headteacher is currently tracking patterns of absence.

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

8.1 Policy schedule

Governors received the report, as well as Complaints Policy and Teacher Capability Policy (ill-health) as circulated with the agenda, and the following points were raised:

- The Teacher Capability Policy (ill-health) should have all references to it being a model policy removed, and replaced with the name of the school. **Action: Headteacher**
- It was stated that Page 1, item 5.1, which states "The Headteacher or Governing Body has overall responsibility for promoting and maintaining standards of work performance and attendance" is unclear, and the clerk undertook to contact HR at Southwark Council to clarify this. **Action: Clerk**

Agreed – That the governing body adopts the following policies:

- Accessibility Plan
- Complaints Policy
- Financial Scheme of Delegation
- Non-Teacher Appraisal Policy

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Statement of Internal Control
- Teacher Appraisal Policy
- Teacher Capability Policy (ill-health) (*subject to the suggested amendments being made, and to the clarification of item 1.5 on Page 1*)
- Terms of Reference – Resources committee

Agreed – That the following policies be reviewed by the relevant committees (where appropriate) and added as an item for adoption to the agenda of the next governing body meeting on Tuesday, 1st July, 2014:

Curriculum & Standards committee – Tuesday, 10th June, 2014

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline, Governors’ Statement on
- Collective Worship Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Pupil Discipline (incl anti-bullying) Policy

Resources committee – Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

- Equality Information and Objectives Statement

Governing Body Responsibility – Tuesday, 1st July, 2014

- Data Protection Policy
- Terms of Reference – Children, Family & Community committee
- Terms of Reference – Curriculum & Standards committee

9. Dates and times of future meetings

Governors received the report as circulated with the agenda, and noted the dates and times of the following meetings:

Summer term

Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 10th June, 2014, 6.00 pm
 Resources - Tuesday, 17th June, 2014, 6.00 pm

Governing Body - Tuesday, 1st July, 2014, 6.00 pm

Governors noted that the date of the next governing body meeting has changed from Tuesday, 24th June, 2014 to Tuesday, 1st July, 2014, still at 6.00 pm.

10. Any Other Business

Governors had their photos taken for the school notice board.

Date..... Signed.....

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – Governing body meeting, Tuesday, 25th March, 2014

11. Confidential minutes of the Resources committee meeting on Tuesday, 8th October, 2013

11.1 Approval of the confidential minutes

Governors received the confidential minutes of the Resources committee meeting on Tuesday, 8th October, 2013, as circulated with the agenda, and they were approved as a correct record.

11.2 Matters Arising (not appearing elsewhere on the agenda)

There were no matters arising.

The meeting finished at 7.55 pm.

Date..... Signed.....