

**Minutes of a Governing Body Meeting of Charles Dickens Primary School
held on Tuesday, 2nd December 2014 at 6.00pm**

Governors Present: Mr Nik Nicol (Chair), Mrs Cassie Buchanan (Headteacher), Ms Emma Gleadhill, Ms Catherine Greenwood, Mr Matthew Harris, Mr Robert Loader, Ms Cerian Morgan, Ms Anastazia Nyaga, Mrs Perrine Summers, Ms Zoe Sumner.

Others present: Mr Malcolm Booth (Associate Member)

Clerk: Mr Angus Huck

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ms Claire Maugham, Mr Andrew Mayer and Ms Linda Taylor. Governors **AGREED** to consent to these absences.

Additionally, an apology was received from Ms Emma Gleadhill for her anticipated departure from the meeting at 7.00pm, and from Ms Catherine Greenwood for her impending late arrival.

2. Declarations of Interest in the Agenda

There were no declarations of interest in the Agenda.

3. Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday, 1st July 2014

3.1 Approval of the minutes

Governors received the minutes of the Governing Body meeting that was held on Tuesday, 1st July 2014, as circulated with the Agenda.

It was **AGREED** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record, and they were signed by the Chair.

3.2 Matters arising from the minutes

Item 2 (Presentation by McCreanor Lavington)

The Headteacher reported on progress since the July meeting as follows:

- A planning application had been submitted to the Council. Some objections had been lodged with the Council, but not as many as had been expected. She thanked Governors for their emails in support.

- She had spoken to Susan Fuller (Project Manager, London Borough of Southwark), who had confirmed that there was no “Plan B” in the event of the works not having been completed by September 2016, as projected.
- The Ground-Floor work had to be completed by September 2016, and the Nursery Block had to be built by September 2015.
- The Year 1 Block could house Reception children in the interim while works were being completed on the Reception classrooms. If reconfigured, the First- and Second-Floors could accommodate all the children.
- If the Council finished the interim works on the First- and Second-Floor this coming summer, there would be capacity for every child in the appropriate classroom.

In response to a question raised, the Headteacher confirmed that there would be no disabled access, as this was not in the Contingency Plan. However, there would still be appropriately sized classrooms.

4. Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on Thursday, 4th September 2014

4.1 Approval of the minutes

Governors received the minutes of the Governing Body meeting that was held on Thursday, 4th September 2014, as circulated with the Agenda.

It was **AGREED** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record, and they were signed by the Chair.

4.2 Matters arising from the minutes (not elsewhere on the Agenda)

There were no matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda.

5. Foundation School Status

Malcolm Booth (School Bursar) circulated a bundle of emails entitled “Re Foundation Status, Statutory Notice and Submission”.

Mr Booth reported that:

(1) The outcome of the consultation of stakeholders was as follows:

- 1,500 stakeholders had been contacted;
- There were 27 responses;
- Five of these were in favour;
- Three voiced an opinion but did not state whether they were in favour or not;

- Four said “no” but gave no reason; and
- 15 said “no” and stated a reason.

(2) Email correspondence had been received as follows:

- From Mr Jim Ottaway and Ms Joan O’Mahony, who contend *inter alia* that the correct procedure has not been followed and that the Statutory Notice is defective; and
- From Ms Rebekka Wedell, who requested the minutes of the Parents’ Meeting that had taken place in July 2014.

Governors took time to read these emails and to consider their contents. Having done so, and following a brief discussion, Governors took the view that the procedure had been followed correctly, and that the wording of the Statutory Notice could not be so bad as to vitiate the process.

Given that the deadline for receipt of objections was Thursday, 4th December 2014 (two days hence), it was not possible for Governors to make a decision at the meeting.

Catherine Greenwood entered the meeting at 6.24pm.

It was **AGREED** that:

- (1) The meeting would be adjourned once business was concluded, and would be reconvened by email on Thursday, 4th December 2014;
- (2) Mr Booth would notify Governors of any further correspondence received, and would do so on Thursday, 4th December 2014; and
- (3) A final decision would be made by Governors by means of email on Thursday, 4th December 2014.

Cerian Morgan entered the meeting at 6.39pm.

6. Governing Body

6.1 Instrument of Government

Governors received the draft Instrument of Government, as circulated with the Agenda, and the Clerk advised Governors as to the following:

- All Governing Bodies of maintained schools have to be reconstituted under the new Regulations by September 2015, and the following rules will apply:
 - All Governing Bodies must have one and only one Authority Governor;
 - All Governing Bodies must have one and only one Staff Governor, aside from the Headteacher;
 - All Governing Bodies must have at least two Parent Governors;
 - All Governing Bodies can have as many Co-opted

- (formerly Community) Governors as they wish; and
- If the school becomes a Foundation School, the Governing Body also has to have two Partnership Governors.

It was **AGREED** that the draft Instrument of Government be adopted.

6.2 Governing Body Membership and Vacancies

Governors received the list of current Governors and vacancies, as circulated with the Agenda, and the following points were raised:

- Amos Emoike's term of office as Parent Governor would come to an end on 7th February 2015. The Headteacher undertook to carry out the consequent Parent Governor Election during the Spring Term.

Action: Headteacher

- Following reconstitution, Matthew Harris and Cerian Morgan resigned as Authority Governors, and Zoe Sumner resigned as Staff Governor.

It was **AGREED** that Governors make the following appointments:

- Matthew Harris and Cerian Morgan as Partnership Governors, and Zoe Sumner as Co-opted Governor.

6.3 Register of Business Interests

The Clerk circulated the Register of Business Interests for Governors to complete and sign, along with the Attendance Sheet. The Clerk stated that the Register of Business Interests would be held in the school by the Headteacher and would not be made public.

Mr Harris reported that at the last meeting of the Finance Committee he had offered the school the services of the firm of solicitors of which he was a partner on a *pro bono* basis. Governors took the view that this would not amount to a business interest.

6.4 Governing Body Meeting Attendance

Governors received the report entitled "Governors' Attendance - Ordinary", as circulated with the Agenda, that listed attendance by Governors of the previous seven meetings of the Full Governing Body.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

6.5 Governing Body Training

Governors received the reports entitled “Governors’ Training Courses for Charles Dickens Primary School” as circulated with the Agenda, that listed the LEA training courses that Governors had attended.

Ms Gleadhill reported that she had attended a Safeguarding training course that had not been provided by the LEA, and asked if attendance at training courses not provided by the London Borough of Southwark should be reported to the Governing Body and recorded in the minutes.

The Chair expressed the view that they should be, as it was important to keep track of Governors’ expertise.

Ms Gleadhill confirmed that she had sent a copy of her certificate to the Headteacher.

Mr Harris stated that he had reported to the previous meeting that he had attended a Safeguarding course, but this had not been recorded in the minutes.

The Headteacher expressed concern about the accessibility of online training.

It was **AGREED** that the reports be noted.

7. Committees

7.1 Committee Membership and Link Governor Roles

Governors received a report, as circulated with the Agenda, that set out current committee membership and Link Governor roles.

It was **AGREED** that:

- (1) Emma Gleadhill be appointed to the Pay Review Appeals Committee;
- (2) The remaining current membership be noted; and
- (3) The following Link Governors be appointed:
 - Annastazia Nyaga, as Link Governor for Inclusion and EAL, in addition to Amos Emoike; and
 - Emma Gleadhill, as Link Governor for Safeguarding, in addition to Claire Maugham.

The Headteacher stated that the Parents’ Questionnaire would be ending this week.

The Chair expressed concern that the Children, Families & Community Committee was not currently active. He asked if anyone was willing to be Chair alongside Mr Emoike, and suggested that a meeting be held in order to get the Committee going once again. Ms Gleadhill agreed to

do so and to arrange a meeting. **Note:** *This has now been arranged for Tuesday, 13th January 2015.*

7.2 Link Governor Reports

Ms Nyaga stated that she had submitted her report as PE Link Governor to the July meeting, and that although this fact had been recorded in the minutes, her summary had not been.

Ms Nyaga also reported that she had in her possession Cerian Morgan's report on Phonics that she had drafted in her capacity as Link Governor for English/Literacy. The Headteacher undertook to circulate it to Governors.

Action: Ms Nyaga & Headteacher

It was **AGREED** that the Link Governor Reports be noted.

7.3 Committee Meeting Attendance

Governors received reports, as circulated with the Agenda, that listed the attendance of Governors at committee meetings.

It was **AGREED** that the reports be noted.

7.4 Committee Meeting Minutes

None were received.

Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 16th September 2014

It was confirmed that the Committee had met on that date, and that the minutes were in preparation but had not yet been circulated.

Emma Gleadhill left the meeting at 7.04pm.

Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 4th November 2014

A document entitled "Sample of Teaching" was circulated.

It was confirmed that the Committee had met on that date.

Mr Booth reported that the school has received the first six months' Pupil Premium payment in September, but had not yet received the £21 per each extra pupil taken on. He stated that, by contrast, all the academies in the Borough had received their payments in April. He advised Governors that he had written a letter to Kerry Crichlow (Director of Strategy & Commissioning, Children's Services, London Borough of Southwark) on this subject, but had not yet received a reply.

The Chair reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Southwark Governors' Association, and had used that opportunity to raise this issue with Councillor Victoria Mills, the Cabinet Member for Children & Schools at Southwark Council.

Mr Booth reported that he had given the Committee a presentation on performance-related pay for all staff.

The Headteacher advised Governors that one of the questions that OFSTED asks is how involved Governors are in deciding performance related pay.

Mrs Summers said that she had requested a schedule listing all staff and their Performance Appraisals, along with the Appraisal documents with the names redacted, in order to ascertain if the Appraisals matched the pay awards, which she was satisfied they did.

Some concern was expressed that Governors might not have the specialist knowledge to scrutinise the Performance Appraisal process. However, the Headteacher assured Governors that the role of Governors in Performance Appraisal was a strategic one. They would need to satisfy themselves that the process was being carried out properly and fairly. The individual Appraisals would be undertaken by the Headteacher with HR support.

8. Headteacher's Written Report

Governors received the Headteacher's written report, as tabled at the meeting.

The Chair requested that in future the report should be circulated to Governors at least a week in advance.

The Headteacher highlighted the following points for particular attention:

Basic Characteristics of the School

- The number of FSM children (those receiving free school meals) had dropped, which would have budget implications due to the loss of Pupil Premium funding; and
- The other characteristics were more or less stable, apart from the number of pupils with additional special needs, which had fallen in relative and actual terms. She had spoken to Nicola Metcalfe, the Inclusion Manager, who had advised her that pupils' needs had been reclassified so that those in long-term but not continuous interventions were no longer on the SEND Register.

Pupil Premium Expenditure

- The total amount allocated for 2014-2015 was expected to be £214,000;
- More was being spent on increasing learning time and individualising support;
- An extra class had been created in Years 5 and 6 to allow for pupils to be taught in single year groups;
- The school still spent a large chunk of this money on the arts;
- An increasing number of children had obtained scholarships to independent schools, including Haberdasher's Aske's;
- There had been an increase in the number of pupils applying for scholarships according to specialisms, such as languages and the creative arts;
- There were additional art lessons for pupils with a flair for art;
- There was a Dancer in Residence and an Artist in Residence;
- The school had undertaken a project with the Shakespeare Schools Festival;
- The children had studied the autobiography of Floella Benjamin and had recreated her life story in song and dance; and
- There would be a big carnival at the end of term.

Surveys

- The Home Learning Survey had elicited a response of over 50 parents. The majority were very positive, but keen to focus on reinforcing skills and a more traditional approach; and
- The Annual Parent Survey had been launched on the 21st of November and would close at the end of this week.

Staffing

- The staffing situation was satisfactory;
- Two teachers were going on maternity leave from February 2015;
- There was an Australian teacher whose qualifications were preventing him from taking a permanent role;
- The process of appointing maternity cover had begun in October 2014; and
- The school had a "Plan B", which was the appointment of additional PPA cover and an Interventions teacher.

Quality of Teaching & Learning

- Two lessons required improvement. (One of the teachers concerned has since left the school and the other is an NQT); and
- All teachers in their first and second year were given one-to-one support to get them to "good".

The Headteacher pointed Governors to the architect's impression of the school with its new buildings.

The School Development Plan – Priorities for the Areas of Leadership and Management

- Manage the physical and educational transition of the school from one-and-a-half-form entry to two-form entry;
- Strengthen the depth and distribution of leadership through the development of new middle and senior leaders;
- Improve opportunities for parental involvement and engagement in pupils' learning and the school's development journey; and
- Embed performance-related pay.

The Headteacher pointed out that:

- The school was on target for the first, third and fourth, and partially on target for the second of these;
- The school was still “outstanding”; and
- There had to be a focus on getting the Children, Families & Community Committee up and running.

Achievement

- All the data contained within this section of the report could be found on RAISE Online;
- Children were doing well last year;
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds did close that gap at the end of their time at Charles Dickens;
- SEN children had struggled last year. The school was still focusing on closing that gap;
- The emphasis this year is on writing;
- There was a healthy improvement in Phonics last year. The number of pupils passing the Phonics Screening Check had increased by 16% over 2013. This was because of Zoe Sumner's work. The national average was rising every year. The school hoped to build on the 86% of pupils who had passed the Year 2 retake. Those who did not pass got one-to-one support;
- At KS1, Level 2 were above the national average;
- Level 2B reading was very strong;
- Writing was good, but not as good as it could be;
- The focus was on writing, the strength was reading;
- At KS2, by Level 4, the figures were 100% for maths and reading. These were our strongest figures. FSM children did really well. All other groups were very strong;
- At KS2 Level 5, reading was exceptionally high. The numbers were 77% for reading, 72% for grammar, punctuation and spelling, 64% for maths. Writing was high, but not so high, which was why the school would focus on writing this year;
- The RAISE Online “value-added” (VA) score was in the ninth percentile for the whole country, while reading was in the 11th percentile for the whole country. Writing, however, was in the 25th

percentile, which was why the school was not in the “Sunday Telegraph” “Top 200 Schools”;

- FSM children exceeded non-FSM children at reading;
- In writing, a number of children had not got to Level 6;
- Generally, in terms of achievement, the school was “outstanding”. However, writing was only “good”; and
- Teachers were being given expert support in how to plan lessons. There was lots and lots of marking support.

The Headteacher reminded Governors that their role was to see that the priorities meshed with the data.

Behaviour

- No pupils had been excluded this term;
- There had been no racist incidents this term;
- There had been one bullying incident this term, which was one child in Year 5 bullying another child in Year 5. This was currently being dealt with; and
- The Self-Evaluation indicated that behaviour was “outstanding” overall, but only “good” in Years 3 and 4 on account of a number of children with additional needs.

Attendance

The school was doing really well, with a non-attendance rate that was below the national average. No fines had been issued. Even though the school had not been draconian on poor attendance, the absence rate continued to fall.

Safeguarding

- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) continued to ensure that the school was compliant with all safeguarding and safety procedures and standards; and
- Emma Gleadhill was currently carrying out a review of safeguarding and would present it to the Children, Families & Community Committee.

In response to the following questions asked by Governors, the following answers were given:

Why had the number of FSM children fallen?

The local demographics had changed. This had affected Charles Dickens more than Charlotte Sharman School but less than Cathedral School.

What was the maximum distance from the school that one could reside and still fall within the catchment area?

700 metres, depending on the number of siblings.

The Chair noted that children living in Leathermarket Gardens could not get places at the school.

Children admitted in the year after Reception may live further away, depending on the waiting-list, and some families have moved away from the area but still came in on the train from Bromley and Kent.

Did the school advertise for pupils?

No. The fact that local parents were choosing the school in preference to others was a reflection of the fact that the area had changed. The baseline of children coming into the school had previously been low. Parents now were working rather than not working. This had long-term budget implications.

Would it be possible to hold an open day to encourage more pupil diversity?

The school had an open day. However, it was mostly middle-class working professional parents who visited the school. The school showed everyone round if they wanted to look around. Last year, a quarter of new parents never visited the school. The number of ethnic children had not changed, though their composition had changed. There were now more children who were East European and fewer from Africa. The school was more multicultural, but visually less diverse.

How did one get from “good” to “outstanding”?

Lots and lots of lesson observations. Teachers want to be really good at Charles Dickens. They get to be recognised by parents and children alike. There was a group of experienced teachers who were all “outstanding”. She thought it took three years to be “outstanding”. Seven teachers had been teachers for more than seven years.

Governors commented on the strength and quality of art, dance and drama teaching at the school, the links with arts institutions, and the number of school trips that were not available at other schools.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for her written report.

Catherine Greenwood left the meeting at 7.50pm.

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

9.1 Arrangements to Review Headteacher’s Performance

The Chair reported that a review of the Headteachers’ performance had been carried out by a panel comprised of Andrew Mayer and himself

from the Governing Body and Peter Nathan from the Council. He advised Governors that the group had reviewed the Appraisal for the previous year and had set targets for the current year.

Governors asked the Chair what the outcome was.

The Chair responded that all the targets had been met, and all but one had been exceeded, and that all these met the School Improvement Plan.

The Headteacher added that the “progress” target had been ramped up.

It was noted that the Resources Committee would have to meet to confirm the recommendation.

Action: School Bursar

9.2 Policy Schedule

Governors received a report, circulated with the Agenda, entitled “Policy Schedule”. The following draft policies were circulated to Governors by email prior to the meeting:

- Pay Policy
- Teacher Appraisal Policy

And the following statutory guidance was also circulated:

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

The Headteacher reported that she had tasked Jenny, the HR and Finance Officer, with looking through the new draft Pay Policy to see if there were any differences between it and the existing Pay Policy, and she undertook to report back to the Governing Body if that proved to be the case.

It was **AGREED** that the school:

- (1) Defer making a decision on the adoption of the draft Pay Policy until it had been matched with the existing Pay Policy;
- (2) Adopt the draft Teacher Appraisal Policy; and
- (3) Re-adopt the Special Educational Needs Policy.

The Headteacher undertook to put the school’s Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy on the school website.

Action: Headteacher

10. Dates and times of future meetings

Governors received a report, as circulated with the Agenda, that set out the dates and times of the following meetings:

Spring Term

Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 20th January, 2015, 6.00 pm
Children, Families & Community
- Tuesday, 3rd February, 2015, 6.00 pm
Resources - Tuesday, 10th February, 2015, 6.00 pm

Governing Body - Tuesday, 10th March, 2015, 6.00 pm

Summer Term

1st Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 28th April, 2015, 6.00 pm
Children, Families & Community
- Tuesday, 9th June, 2015, 6.00 pm
2nd Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 16th June, 2015, 6.00 pm
Resources - Tuesday, 23rd June, 2015, 6.00 pm

Governing Body - Tuesday, 14th July, 2015, 6.00 pm

Governors were of the view that meetings should continue to be held on the first Tuesday of each month, as Thursdays were not convenient.

The Headteacher undertook to issue a round robin email to elicit from Governors the most convenient dates.

Action: Headteacher

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.13 pm.

On Thursday, 4th December 2014, the meeting was reconvened by email.

The Chair made the following statement:

“Dear Fellow Governors of Charles Dickens Primary School,

We have to make a decision as to whether to change the school’s status from Community to Foundation. The most recent Governor’s meeting on 2nd December 2014 agreed to adjourn so that this decision could be made, by e-mail, after 4th December 2014, being the date specified in the Statutory Notice for the expiry of the consultation period. According to our lawyers, although they did not give a reason why and we have not been able to check it, the decision must be made today. It is also my understanding that we may take the decision by e-mail.

Malcolm informs me that there was a further submission in which the only new issue raised was that the Statutory Notice had not been placed on our school website (Malcolm gave the instruction to do so but it was somehow overlooked). As far as Malcolm and I are aware, there is no requirement that it be so placed although it would obviously be preferable. Both as a governor and as a lawyer, I cannot see that this omission can vitiate the process by itself.

As I understand it, the decision is to be notified in the form attached, save that one date needs to be changed (it refers to the decision being made on 7th December but I don't think anyone would expect us to do it on a Sunday) and the date of implementation needs to be inserted (being the date of decision).

Please reply as soon as you possibly can stating:-

1. Whether you have any questions or concerns, which I will try to address; and
2. If not, whether you vote for or against the proposal to change the school's status to Foundation."

It was **AGREED** that the school would move to Foundation Status.

The following Governors voted in favour:

Mr Nik Nicol (Chair), Mrs Cassie Buchanan (Headteacher), Mr Amos Emoike, Mr Matthew Harris, Mr Robert Loader, Ms Claire Maugham, Mr Andrew Mayer, Mrs Perrine Summers, Ms Zoe Sumner, Ms Linda Taylor.

No Governors voted against.

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