

**Minutes of a governing body meeting of Charles Dickens on Thursday,
8th December, 2016 at 6.00 pm**

Governors Present: Claire Maugham (Chair), Shulamit Ambalu, Cassie Buchanan (Headteacher), Michael Eggleton, Carolyn Forsyth, Emma Gleadhill, Matthew Harris, Laura Johnson, Andrew Mayer, David Moore, Jemima Rhys-Evans, Rebecca Kaloo.

Others Present: Nik Nicol (Observer)

Clerk: Carrie Fentum

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and was quorate.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Linda Taylor and Zoe Lillitos

2 Declarations of Interest in the agenda

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

3 Minutes of the last governing body meeting on 14th July 2016 and the minutes of the governors' Strategy day on 14th September 2016

3.1 Approval of the minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2016 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2016 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting with the following amendment:

Apologies were received and accepted from Carolyn Forsyth

3.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda

4 Governing Body

4.1 Register of Business Interests

The Register of Business Interests was circulated at the meeting and signed by all present. It was passed to the Headteacher to be held at the school and published on the school website.

4.2 Information to Publish on School website regarding governance

Governors noted the need to ensure the school website is compliant in respect of governance.

Any governors who wished to submit alternative photos for the website were reminded to do so.

4.3 Governing body membership and vacancies

Elections for two parent governor vacancies are taking place at the beginning of next term.

It was noted that in line with the schools open and inclusive character it has been stressed that no previous experience is required, training will be given and expenses can be reimbursed.

It was noted that Nik Nicol is attending the meeting as an observer as his term of office has ended, he is planning to stand for election in the forthcoming election.

Rebecca Kaloo was appointed as a Partnership Governor

Governors considered the appointment of other partnership governor candidates as associate members.

The chair of governors explained that there had been three applications and that they were all strong candidates who could bring financial and project management skills to the governing body.

A document with their details had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were invited to ask any questions:

Can the role of a associate members be clarified?

An associate member is able to take part in the discussion and the work of the governors but is not entitled to vote. Appointing associate members can be a way of filling a skills gap in the governing body . They may sit on subcommittees.

What is the current balance of governors to associate members in Resources committee?

It is currently 6: 2. The SFVS states that the school should have expertise in financial management. The proposed partnership governors have the required expertise.

Can the governing body increase the number of members?

The numbers and types of governors are set out in the school's instrument of government. This could be changed. The advantage of partnership governors is that they can be bought in for a specific time or task.

Would associate members be inducted into the same values as other governors?

All of the proposed associate members are parents at the school and are supportive of the schools values. They would have the same

induction as other governors and would have access to governors training.

It was **agreed** to appoint Daniel Efunnuga, Simon Gleadhill and Ran Holst as associate members for a term of four years

4.4 **Governing body meeting attendance**

The report on governing body meeting attendance had been circulated by email. It was agreed to change the attendance of Zoe Lillitos from 'no apologies received' to 'apologies consented' on 14/7/16 and 14/9/16

4.5 **Governor training and development**

The report on governor training had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Carolyn Forsyth reported that she had found the training at Southwark and at the school very useful and said that she would be re-booking the training that she had been unable to attend.

The Headteacher said that she was running training with staff at the school looking at the schools values; this will include RULER, the schools ethos and making expectations and values explicit. The results of the training can then be presented to governors.

5 **Committees**

5.1 **Committee membership and link governor roles**

The report on committee membership had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The following changes were made

Remove Anastasia Nyaga from the pay review panel

Remove Emma Gleadhill from Curriculum and Standards committee

5.2 **Link governors**

A proposal was made to end link governor responsibilities, with the exception of Safeguarding.

There was a view that the role of link governors was not strategic or attached to the school development plan and that link governors can encourage a silo approach.

It was suggested that link governor roles would be replaced by

- Governors taking on specific tasks as they arose.
- Sharing action points from among governors for follow up
- Establishing purposeful learning walks from committees

There was a suggestion that without link governor roles governors would not be able to bring their areas of expertise into the school. However it was stated that this could continue and that there is an open invitation for governors to bring support to the school and to initiate interactions with the school.

Should there be an SEN link governor?

SEN is covered in committees, It is important that SEN is considered widely and not left to one person.

It was felt that there needed to be clear mapping of all of the work of the governors to ensure that nothing is missed.

It was **agreed** that there would no longer be link governors. The Headteacher and Chair of governors agreed to undertake a mapping exercise to ensure that all of the work of the governors is covered throughout the committees.

5.3 **Committee meeting attendance**

The report on committee meeting attendance had been circulated prior to the meeting and was received.

5.4 **Committee meeting minutes**

The Chair of Children Families and Communities committee gave a verbal report on the meeting held on 20th October 2016 and the minutes of the meeting were circulated.

Items discussed were:

- Behaviour and attendance report
- Accident report
- Improvements in the system for referrals to ensure that no child slips through the net
- The family liaison officer and the family support services doing good work with early interventions
- The approach being adopted in the launch of the ruler programme
- Pastoral work including Ruler programme, mindfulness and Therapeutic reading
- Safeguarding
- Mental health accreditation update, there is now a core group of schools working with Charles Dickens with a strategic framework for action

Who would be the accrediting body?

The school is leading in shaping the work. Buckingham University would be the accrediting body.

The Vice Chancellor at Buckingham University, Antony Seldon has said that schools should be benchmarked on the wellbeing of pupils. A meeting is planned with Anthony Seldon in January and there will be

more to report at the next meeting.

The governors thanked that chair of the committee for all of her hard work and time in developing this and the other work of the committee.

Were there any parents who objected to providing the nationality data?

The percentage of returns was high. There were no objections, those who did not provide the data were not chased for it.

The Chair of Curriculum and Standards Committee gave a verbal report on the meeting held on 29th September 2016 and the minutes were circulated.

Most of the meeting had focussed on looking at and sharpening, the targets in the school improvement plan.

The Headteacher said that she had not been at the meeting but that some of the targets were not possible in terms of the minutiae.

The headteacher undertook to write a response to the minutes.

Research and development had also been discussed. It was noted that since the meeting the school has secured £30K from the Education Endowment fund for a countrywide project into teacher workload. The focus for this will be marking and how it can be meaningful without being burdensome. It will be led by Jemima Rhys-Evans.

The chair of Resources Committee gave a verbal report on the meeting held on 1st November 2016 and the minutes were circulated.

- The scheme of delegation and the terms of reference had been agreed
- The lettings policy and lettings rate would be reviewed at a future meeting but that research / benchmarking of lettings fees was being undertaken
- Nursery full time places fees had been considered
- There were a large number of action points
- The SFVS will need to be completed at the start of 2017, a requirement is that independent advice has been sought on the Headteachers salary.

It was confirmed that this has happened and that the information will be included in the SFVS

6 **Headteacher's Written Report**

The Headteacher's written report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The headteacher explained that the report had been compiled by the leadership team with different members of the team taking responsibility for different areas. This makes the report meaningful in terms of triangulation.

Governors were invited to ask questions.

What is the reason for the increase in the number of children with SEN?

This is due to the recent identification of more children with SEN. The previous SENCO did not identify all of the children. There is now a new SENCO in the school who has identified more.

There is more pupil premium spending higher up the school. Why is this?

There are more pupil premium pupils higher up the school.

Have the forms for people applying for FSM been adapted to include universal credit?

Yes

How is the impact of the spending on speech and language therapy measured?

It is reviewed termly.

It was agreed that it should be monitored by curriculum and standards committee.

What is the top slice taken by Local authorities? Is additional support given?

The school does not feel that it gets anything for this; it would rather have the money to spend on the pupils.

Is it likely that the build will be completed by September 2017 (note 2 pg 19 typo should read 2017)?

It should be noted that the phasing is now different from the previous report. The target has moved, this is the new target and the work is on target.

Will the work definitely be finished by then? Will fines be imposed if it is not finished?

It is due to finish in July; any slip will be until September. If it is not completed there will be significant contract fines.

Does the target of a small surplus (p.19) rely on funds being recouped from Southwark?

The cash flow is dependant on that. The school bursar has been attempting to recoup the money. If it is not received the next step will be a legal letter.

When does the pupil premium year run?

It is the same as the financial year; April to April

Have Parents workshops been well attended?

A survey was done in order to find out what workshops parents would like. Some of them have already happened and all of them will be run. The workshop on Maths was very well attended. No-one came to the session on young carers. The session on e-safety was well attended and the materials from this will be on the school website.

Governors expressed that they were impressed by the range of workshops available.

What is the school doing to attract parents who have not previously been engaged?

For some of the future sessions there is a plan to approach parents individually. Each session is being run twice, at two different times to ensure that as many parents as possible are able to attend.

It was noted that there is a 73% click rate on the newsletter indicating a very high level of parental engagement.

What happens to the next steps that are not met?

All of the next steps that are not fully met will carry on into subsequent years. Sometimes they will need more evidence that they are met, some things will always remain as next steps. They could be flagged as when they should be reviewed e.g. autumn, summer.

On page 40 behaviour is described as good, on page 43 it is outstanding, which is it?

It is on the cusp, slightly erring to good but it will quickly move to outstanding. There has been some disruption across the school. Work is being done to improve behaviour for learning. The school is developing learners who are not just well behaved but who are curious, resilient etc.

How are peer lesson observations done (p42)?

Senior management observations done separately as a part of the appraisal process. These sessions are arranged between teachers and are a way of sharing good practice. 3 or 4 teachers undertake a lesson study. They plan closely together and then observe each other and observe what the children are doing. This gives teachers the opportunity to be constantly taking responsibility for their own professional development.

Should governors be concerned about the numbers of Early Years children who are below expectation (p55), the figures look alarming?

This is the level at which the children enter the school. It is based on what we see and what parents tell us. The children's strengths are mapped against what a typical child should be able to do. The children who are below expectation are usually 1 or 2 steps below. The figures are normal for this school; these figures are the baseline and not the outcome.

Governors expressed that they were impressed with the report. An improvement for future reports would be the inclusion of a list of contents with page numbers

Governors thanked the headteacher and the leadership team for the report and commented on how smoothly the Headteacher's maternity leave had been managed by the whole team.

7 Statutory Responsibilities

7.1 Headteacher's Performance Management outcome

See confidential items.

7.2 Policy Review

Governors considered the updated safeguarding policy

A number of small changes have been made to the policy in view of the changes in the advice from government in the document Keeping Children Safe in Education. Governors who have not already read that document were asked to do so. The Chair of Governors undertook to circulate the link. Governors were also asked to undertake the NSPCC safe recruitment training. The Chair of governors undertook to send a link to this

There were no questions about the policy

The revised Safeguarding Policy was adopted.

It was noted that there have been a number of changes to the Local Authority Pay Policy. It was felt that governors needed more time to consider the changes and it was therefore agreed to scrutinise the Pay Policy at the next meeting of Resources committee The policy will be circulated in advance of that meeting.

It was noted that there have been a number of changes to the Local Authority Teacher Appraisal Policy. It was felt that governors needed more time to consider the changes and it was therefore agreed to scrutinise the Teacher Appraisal Policy at the next meeting of Resources committee The policy will be circulated in advance of that meeting.

The Financial Scheme of Delegation was agreed

The Disciplinary Policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was agreed

The Parental Leave Policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was agreed

The Accessibility Policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was agreed

The Bereavement Policy had been circulated in advance of the

meeting and was agreed

The Flexible working policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was agreed

Governors discussed the Smoke free policy. It was suggested that there could be a specified distance from the school where staff could be allowed to smoke. Governors felt that it was not unreasonable for smokers to be far enough away from the school that they are not visible from the school but that it should be possible for them to travel that distance in their breaks.

It was pointed out that policies should not conflict with peoples rights. It was important to balance the requirement for professional standards with rights

The policy was agreed in principle. Matthew Harris undertook to check the legality of setting a distance from the school.

It was felt that the Single Equalities scheme should be considered in more detail by the Children, Families and Community committee who will ensure that the elements are being followed.

What does the school do to guard against unconscious bias?

We are careful on gendered language and any bias that is noticed, is challenged. The children at this school are good at challenging gender stereotypes. There is one year group which has a high proportion of boys and work is done there to ensure that the girls are not dominated.

The school is very accepting of all children, for example boys who do not fit the sporty model. It is cool for the boys at this school to be arty, creative and interested in drama.

Global history is studied looking for example at migration from different perspectives.

Visible and non visible differences between people are considered

8 RULER: agree the outcome of our workshop session

Governors considered the outcomes from the workshop session
It was noted that not every element of the stacking cups needed to be achieved in every meeting. There might be moments of inspiration in meetings by this may be more likely to be felt during learning walks.
The whole experience would come through the total of the work as a governor

It was agreed to discuss the first element of the stacking cup infographic; Safe

It was noted that this referred to felling safe to express views and for staff feeling safe from being ambushed by aggressive or personal questions.

Governors discussed potential tangible actions that could be taken to ensure that everyone felt safe.

Having clear rules of engagement for meetings and an agreed set of protocols was identified. These would include:

- Being respectful of one another
- Reading in advance of meetings, coming well prepared and airing views in advance of meetings
- Where governors have ongoing or lingering concerns, to address them outside of meetings
- Expressing where a situation does not feel safe
- Chairs being aware of giving everyone an opportunity to speak, trusting the chairs to do this
- Giving chairs the power to say when the atmosphere has ceased to be safe.
- Allowing challenge and scrutiny without conflict
- Governors trusting the executive to manage the operational elements of the school

The following actions were agreed:

Action:

Chairs of committees and Chair of Governors to undertake 360' appraisal

Action :

Headteacher and Chair of Governors to work on a set of protocols for meetings which allow everyone to feel safe and allow for challenge.

9 **Academy Taskforce: update from the HT and Chair**

It was noted that the taskforce is open for everyone to attend
The chair and headteacher reported that they have been looking at the options available which would allow the school to continue the work that it does. The main point to note were

- The Headteacher has had conversations with the DFE about the available options which currently appear to be setting up a MAT or joining an existing MAT. The DFE is unlikely to allow the school to become a stand alone academy or to set up an empty MAT. The headteacher said that she has explained that the school is very connected to other schools and has a framework in place. Other local schools are good or better and so would be unlikely to join another MAT.
- The original plan for the Local authority has lost some impetus now that the government policy of forced academisation has changed.
- The headteacher remains connected and engaged with other schools. She has joined the Local Authority working party which is considering the options.
- It feels as though the school gets very little from the Local Authority. Most of the services it gets are bought into.

- The headteacher would prefer the school to be part of an evolving group rather than to impose something.
- The status quo cannot continue

Governors said that the school was working on becoming a centre of excellence in and that ideally a network would be built over time. Governors felt that as the school is good at developing leaders and doing research they would like to pursue the option to become an empty MAT

Andy Mayer and Nik Nikol left the meeting at 8.35

Have other schools been identified who might be suitable partners, is there any potential with local school?

Most local schools are faith schools and so would not be suitable. Schools with which Charles Dickens would work well with would be interested in establishing a flat Mat but this is not an option

It was felt that before any decisions or plans are made it was important to carefully consider the options

The next steps were identified as more governors to get involved in the task force in order to consider the risks and the opportunities.

10 **Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

The dates and times of future meeting were confirmed as

Curriculum and Standards	Wednesday 25 th January 2017
Children, Families, Community	Wednesday 1 st February 2017
Resources	Tuesday 21 st February 2017
Full Governors	Tuesday 28 February 2017
Curriculum and Standards	Wednesday 10 th May 2017
Resources	Tuesday 13 th June 2017
Children, Families, Community	Thursday 29 th June 2017
Curriculum and Standards	Thursday 6 th July 2017
Full Governors	Monday 17 th July 2017

11 **Any other Business**

There was no further business

Cassie Buchannan, Michael Eggleton and Jemima Rhys-Evans left the meeting.

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

Part Two

