

## LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

### Minutes of the Governing Body of Southern Road Primary School

#### Meeting held on Tuesday 31st January 2017

Present: Mrs Bronwen Stuckey (Chair)  
Ms Stephanie Lachowycz (Headteacher)  
Ms Sonia Flores  
Mr Amirul Haque  
Mrs Karina Karamfilova  
Miss Bethany Watson

In attendance: Miss Dena Lawrence (Deputy Headteacher)  
Ms Helen Yearnshire (Deputy Headteacher)  
Ms Lisa Jensen (Clerk, NPW)

*Governors' questions are in italics*

The meeting started at 6.30pm

#### **1400. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Sarah Tomlinson and Shakil Rahman. These apologies were accepted but not condoned.

#### **1401. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **1402. Governors' DBS Checks**

All Governors' DBS checks have been completed. The certificate for Shakil Rahman has not yet been received. All governors DBS records have been inspected by the safeguarding link governor and have been included on the school's website.

#### **1403. Constitution**

##### **Appointment of Co-opted Governors**

The Chair informed governors that there were three vacancies for co-opted governors but so far there were no candidates.

**ACTION: The Chair will enquire if NPW can recommend any suitable candidates**

#### **1404. Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2016 were agreed.

#### **1405. Reports of Committees**

##### **Curriculum Committee**

The RE lead had delivered a presentation to the committee outlining details of the many religions represented in the school. Governors noted that teachers plan RE lessons weekly with KS1 receiving 50-minute lessons and KS2 receiving one hour. 'World Love' attitudes and qualities were being focussed on in every classroom and children were producing work based on self-awareness, curiosity, open-mindedness, appreciation and warmth.

The Chair of the Curriculum Committee informed governors that twelve KS2 pupils were part of a 'gifted and talented' group. They had taken part in the Brilliant Club and had visited Cambridge University for their graduation ceremony. They also went to Sussex University and completed a 1,000 word essay, marked using university grades, they achieved three 1sts, three 2:1s and six 2:2s.

### **Finance Committee**

#### **a. Building Works**

The Chair informed governors that the finance committee meeting focussed mostly on premises and an update about the new-build. Work was slightly behind schedule, but the school was due to take partial possession of the new building on 13<sup>th</sup> February. Snagging work would be taking place next week and the full handover will happen in half term. Pupils will be moving in after half term. Tables and chairs had been ordered and landscaping will happen after the move. After children move out of the old building, a budget is in place for converting existing classrooms into offices for the support officer, the attendance officer and the deputy headteacher. Soundproofing and sliding doors will also be put in place to stop noise travelling down the corridor. The Chair reported that artificial grass installed in the outside play area was more expensive than expected, but was extremely good quality.

#### **b. Staffing Budget**

Two NQTs have recently left and have been replaced with agency staff. There is not sufficient funding to cover these posts in the agency staff budget.

Governors **agreed** the virement of £50,000 from the staffing budget to the agency budget to cover the posts.

#### **c. Replacement Items**

Governors noted that a £91,000 insurance claim (for articles stolen in 2014) had been paid to the school. The expenditure will mitigate the cost of what was taken. Finance is required for the refurbishment of the ICT space so it can accommodate 30 children. The learning resources manager has advised the committee that the 'School Care' company who would charge £123,000 for the ICT refurbishment.

### **1406. Report of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher delivered a report to governors and highlighted the following data:

- Pupil numbers were reasonably steady in comparison to previous years.
- The Year 2 cohort had 14 vacancies. Year 2 pupil numbers had been low on arrival and had remained low.
- The school census listed 608 pupils aged 5 and above.
- The FSM ratio had gone up.
- There had been significant changes in the ethnic make-up of the school.

#### **Support Staff Training**

The school had asked support staff which areas of training they would like to focus on. Training had been very popular and support staff indicated that Handwriting, Microsoft Word and Phonics were the most popular areas of training.

### Ability Sets

There were currently four ability sets in Years 5 and 6. A support teacher supports the less able in maths in smaller groups, booster sessions and one to two sessions.

**ACTION: The deputy headteacher will present a full report on assessments at the next Governing Body meeting.**

### Memorable Events

The deputy headteacher had worked with Year 6 children in relation to 'memorable events'. Children had remembered significant key points from their years at the school and had focused on amazing memories to take with them.

### Mobile Swimming Pool

The headteacher described the enormous success of the mobile swimming pool and its significant positive impact on the children. Governors noted that a complaint had been received from a neighbour about the noise of the generators which run 24 hours a day.

*Why does the generator have to run for 24 hours?*

Because of the filters and the heating system.

*Do teachers and pupils also hear the hum?*

No, nobody in school has complained and the humming noise is no louder than a fridge.

*Does the complainant realise that the mobile pool will be gone at Easter?*

The complainant is now aware that the pool is going. The school was not able to deal with the complaint immediately, so the complainant contacted the LA. The school is now dealing with the complaint and is in discussion with the company who set up the marquee about various ways to lessen the hum.

*Does the pool get much use out of school hours?*

Yes, out of hours usage is building and the school is getting lots of enquiries for use.

*Would this be a valuable project to repeat in the future?*

The mobile pool project was a Mayor of London initiative. The current Mayor is not continuing the support for the initiative. Also, there is a concern that there has been a considerable increase in recent fuel bills, all directly linked to the pool. The SBM is monitoring the bills.

*Could the pool be shared with another local school?*

There have been some enquiries and there is a possibility of a visit from a representative of Curwen school in the future.

Governors requested that staff should be **thanked** for getting into the water and providing excellent support for the children and for their amazing attitude to the mobile pool project.

Governors **thanked** the deputy head teachers and the SBM for their incredible support of the mobile pool project.

## Staffing

Four staff vacancies had not been filled despite advertising. There were very few applicants and those who had applied had dropped out before interview. Agency staff and one phase leader are currently filling the vacancies.

*Will more advertisements be placed for staff in the summer?*

Yes, this is a priority as agency staff are often not sufficient quality and are not seeking a long-term commitment.

Governors **thanked** the headteacher for her report.

## 1407. Awayday Planning

Governors **agreed** that Awayday planning will be postponed until a later date.

## 1408. Policies

### 1. Attendance Policy

Governors noted that the attendance policy had been updated. There was now a set procedure in place for family support and a flow chart had been included at the back of the report which clarified procedures and steps of the attendance policy. Letters had been sent out to all parents at the beginning of the year outlining the school's attendance policy.

*What percentage is attendance currently running at?*

96.4%.

*What is causing it not to be any higher?*

The majority of absences at the moment are caused by sickness.

*What is percentage of persistent absences?*

6 – 9%. One case has been referred to the LA and will be going to court on Monday. The school holds regular meetings with any family who are persistently absent.

*How many families have required the support officer's help with attendance?*

3 or 4 have been referred.

### 2. Anti-Bullying Policy

Governors noted that the anti-bullying policy had been generated from work that the SENCOs had done. There had been anti-bullying staff training and all pupils had participated in an anti-bullying week, focussing on and clarifying the issue. The headteacher informed governors that the school had held an anti-bullying poster competition; first prize of a Kindle had been won by a Year 6 child. The laminated anti-bullying posters were displayed all around the school to keep up awareness of the issue. New additions to the policy were:

P2 - 'Possible signs that might point to a bullying problem'

P5 – The flow chart for reporting and responding to bullying.

*Is the anti-bullying policy included on the school's website?*

Yes

### 3. Safeguarding Policy Update

Governors studied the Safeguarding Update November 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017 document which was distributed at the meeting. The deputy headteacher highlighted that there had only been one referral in the period. Governors studied the bulleted list of changes in the policy since the last update on 15<sup>th</sup> November and noted the following:

- All referrals had recently been dealt with by the same social worker who was very helpful and approachable and it was beneficial for the school to have continuity of communication with the same person.
- There were fewer assessments meeting the child protection threshold because more cases were being handed back to the school.
- Claire Chaplain, the new allocated school nurse had completed care plan reviews.

Governors noted the following upcoming events:

- The 'Early Help' file on Newham Contact launch was 9<sup>th</sup> February.
- There will be a safeguarding conference in October 2017

**ACTION: Safeguard Software training modules are to be completed by staff before May half term.**

**ACTION: A date will be announced for the 'Seen and Heard' one-hour video training for all staff. To be scheduled during a whole school staff meeting.**

### 1409. School Self-Evaluation Update

Governors studied the updated Self Evaluation Form tabled at the meeting. They noted that 'Leadership and Management' and 'Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare' were this term's focus. The headteacher informed governors that the school was working with the document layout from the Ofsted handbook. The areas that were not highlighted in yellow were areas that the school had not yet attained and was actively working on.

The headteacher outlined the following points in the Leadership and Management section of the SEF plan:

- Southern Road is a good school that is moving towards becoming outstanding.
- In the 2016 questionnaire, 96% of parents thought pupils were making progress.
- All staff had received training covering radicalisation.
- The Evaluation section contained statements that clearly reflected the direction the school was taking.
- An important point of focus was that governors, parents, pupils and all school staff were involved in the process of school improvement planning.

The headteacher highlighted the following points in the Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare Section of the SEF plan:

- Visitors always reported that pupils are good, polite and respectful.
- 96% of parents thought that behaviour in the school is good
- 97% of parents felt that their children were safe in the school.

### 1410. Governor Education and Training

The Chair recommended the training courses listed to governors. The Chair informed governors that she will be attending the Statutory Responsibilities of Governing Boards training on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

**1411. Meeting dates in academic year 2017**

The dates agreed are as follows:

**Spring Term**

*Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February (Governor's Away Day)      Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017*

**Summer Term**

*Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016      Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016*

**1412. Agenda items for the next meeting**

- Appointment of Co-opted Governors.
- Deputy headteacher is to present a full report on assessments.

*This part of the meeting closed at 7.40pm*

Bethany Watson (staff governor), Dena Lawrence (deputy headteacher) and Helen Yearnshire (deputy headteacher) left the meeting.

### 1413. Confidential Item

The Chair informed the remaining governors that the Headteacher had been due to retire at Easter 2018. Due to recent ill health, the headteacher wanted to retire earlier, however she will remain in the position until a suitable replacement headteacher has been found.

The Chair informed governors that the headteacher would like governors to advertise for the position as soon as possible and also to set up a recruitment panel and begin the process of recruiting a new headteacher. It would be ideal if a candidate could be in position by September 2017 and if that is not possible by next Christmas at the latest. Staff will be informed of the headteachers retirement on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February.

The Chair informed governors that the school also required an assistant deputy headteacher, as the a position had never been filled after Helen Yearnshire moved to the position of deputy headteacher.

*Will the assistant deputy headteacher position be advertised simultaneously? Yes, it has already been advertised.*

The Chair outlined the following actions necessary for recruitment of a headteacher:

- The position needs to be advertised as soon as possible.
- A full national advertisement costs in the region of £12,000.
- An interview pack needs to be produced.
- Dates for interviews need to be set.
- NPW will help with the process and provide HR support.

Governors discussed the qualities required for the role and noted that candidates should have the following qualities:

- To be a good strategic thinker with a creative vision.
- To put the children first.
- To have strategies for coping with financial challenges that lie ahead.
- To have a long term vision of the school's direction over the next 5 years.
- To have had experience of a larger school, at least a two-form entry.
- To have a good sense of humour
- To prioritise creativity.

The Chair asked the governors present to state which part of the recruitment and interview process they were able to be involved with.

**ACTION: Sonia Flores and Amirul Haque are available to be involved with all aspects of the recruitment process. Karina Karamfilova will be involved as much as she is able taking into account other commitments.**

**ACTION: The Chair will call NPW to enquire about HR support.**

*The meeting closed at 7.50pm*