



Dulwich Hamlet Junior School

**Meeting of the Local Governing Body
on 16 July 2018 at 18:30
Dulwich Hamlet Junior School, Dulwich Village, SE21 7AL**

Present:	Karen Robinson (Chair)	Chair
	Sara Azzopardi	SA
	Tom Forster	TF
	Michelle Hobbs	MH
	Bridget Jackson	BJ
	Karen Larcombe Tee	KLT
	Eleanor Parker	EP
	Claire Purcell (Head of School)	CP
	Simon Rowe	SR
	Tom Salomondson	TS
	Victoria Thompson	VT
	Crispin Tuckley	CT
Clerk:	Kathleen Formosa	Clerk

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Apologies & Quorum

- 1.1 The Chair opened the business of the meeting at 18:34.
- 1.2 Apologies were **received** and **accepted** from Lorraine Thomas (LT).
 - 1.2.1 The Chair reported that LT would not be continuing with the LGB next year. She will, however, continue to support the school at the Trust as she can in other capacities.
 - 1.2.2 Thanks were expressed to LT around the table.
- 1.3 A quorum was **confirmed**, and the meeting proceeded to business accordingly.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no interests declared.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the LGB meeting held on Monday, 19 March 2018 (**Paper 1**) were **reviewed**, **approved** for signature and **signed** by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting (**Paper 2**) were **reviewed**.
 - 4.1.1 It was **noted** that most matters arising had been actioned and were now complete.
 - 4.1.2 The matters arising under item 7 in the minutes of the previous meeting – regarding the governor visits policy and template – were **noted** as pending. It was **agreed** that these matters should be kept on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to include governor visits policy and template on the agenda for the

October LGB meeting.

- 4.2 Other matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting were **discussed**.
- 4.2.1 BJ reported that the Business Committee has discussed alternative forms of funding. It was **agreed** that the matter would continue to be discussed at committee level and brought forward to the LGB via the Business Committee in due course.
- 4.2.2 It was **agreed** that as the issue of alternative forms of funding affects both schools within the Trust, it may be appropriate for matters to be referred to the Trustee board.

ACTION: CT to add alternative forms of funding to the Trustee board agenda.

5. Chair's Report

- 5.1 The Chair reported on actions taken since the last LGB meeting, as follows:
- The EHT was asked to update the Equalities Policy, which was subsequently **reviewed** and **approved** by Trustee board at its last meeting.
 - The Chair has invited the chair of the Trust's Audit Committee to attend a meeting of the LGB to lead discussion about the risk register, which has recently been substantially updated. The date of this presentation has not yet been confirmed.
- 5.2 The Hamlet Herald article written for parents about governor visit at the Governor Morning held on 7 June 2018 (**Paper 3**) was **noted**. Developmental points arising from the governor visit were **discussed**.
- 5.2.1 It was **noted** that a parent questionnaire had circulated. It is expected that parent feedback and the developmental points governors have identified will be broadly similar.
- 5.2.2 KLT reported that sports representation came up as a developmental point. There is a broad diversity of opinion on whether the focus should be on winning (i.e., choosing the best pupils to participate in each sport) or giving pupils with interest an opportunity to participate, regardless of ability.
- 5.2.3 KLT reported that questions have also arisen around sport competition with primarily independent schools (as is currently the practice) or whether the school should seek to increase its participation in competitions with state schools. It was **noted** that geography and access to facilities mean that arranging competitions with independent schools is easier than with state schools.
- 5.2.4 Anecdotal parent feedback was **discussed**. It was noted **that** participation in sport, communications to and from the school, and support for parents seemed to be the issues raised most frequently.
- 5.2.5 Useful actions arising from the governor morning were **discussed**. CP stated that governor involvement has helped the school to make significant progress this year, and that the weekly newsletter to parents has been particularly helpful.
- 5.2.6 It was **noted** that parents report receiving most of their information through the Hamlet Herald rather than the website. CP agreed that she would write an article for the first Hamlet Herald newsletter in the autumn setting out how the school will communicate with parents so that expectations around communications are clear.
- ACTION: CP to write an article on communications from the school to parents for the first Hamlet Herald newsletter in the autumn.**
- 5.3 SR joined the meeting at 18:53.
- 5.4 Planning for the 2018/19 academic year, including meeting dates (**Paper 4**) was **noted**.
- 5.4.1 A plan for the LGB and its committees including key business items to be covered at each meeting was circulated at the table and **discussed**.
- 5.4.2 The Chair stated that high-level objectives had been integrated into the plan, and that

progress against these should be used to focus discussion at each meeting, as well as at governor training.

- 5.4.3 A governor asked whether high-level objectives and the general practices of the governing body should be communicated to parents as a way of clarifying the matters dealt with at board level and to support parent governor recruitment efforts.
- 5.4.4 Support for this idea was expressed around that table. It was **agreed** that further thought would be given to communicating LGB practices and objectives in combination with other parent activities, rather than dealing with this as a stand-alone item.
- 5.4.5 A governor asked whether there should be an additional column added to the plan to include other governor activities throughout the year (e.g., strategy sessions, governor visits, training).
- 5.4.6 It was **agreed** that these could be integrated into the plan.
- 5.4.7 It was **noted** that the Business Committee meeting in the spring should include focus on audit issues. Budget monitoring and the development of budgets year to year should also be included in the business of the Business Committee.
- 5.4.8 The Chair invited governors to send additional comments and suggestions to her via email.
- 5.4.9 It was **agreed** that the Chair and CP would meet to develop the next iteration of the plan, and that this would be recirculated with the papers for the October LGB meeting.
ACTION: Chair and CP to update and recirculate the meeting plan.
- 5.4.10 It was suggested and **agreed** that the plan would be used as a tool used meeting to meeting to keep everyone focused, and to ensure that any items needing to be added are added.

6. Head of School's Report

- 6.1 The Head of School's Report (**Paper 5**) was **taken as read**.
- 6.1.1 CP reported that this term has been a term of firsts. The several new initiatives undertaken by the school were **reviewed**. It was **noted** that outcomes for all were positive, including new connections established with the surrounding community and other schools.
- 6.2 CP reported that the school's SATs results were released last Tuesday. The school is pleased with its results for attainment. Progress figures have not yet been released, but it is expected that these will show that pupils have made good progress.
- 6.2.1 CP reported that parents of Year 6 pupils whose results were borderline or below standard have been contacted by telephone. It has been explained that the scores do not indicate failure, but that parents and pupils should reflect on possible areas of weakness and where extra support may be needed.
- 6.2.2 It was **noted** that pupils' individual SATs scores do not show progress achieved. It was **noted** that some pupils had entered the school having very low levels of attainment.
- 6.2.3 CP reported that work to improve the number pupils working at greater depth will be an area of focus for the school. It was **noted** that this year's results show a clear improvement in the number of pupils working at greater depth in most areas.
- 6.2.4 CP reported that SATs results for the school's PPG pupils were improved. She stated that the achievement of these results could not be attributed to Year 6 alone, but indicate a whole school effort over many years.
- 6.2.5 CP stated that more analysis remains to be done on the SATs results and with national comparisons. Findings would be reported to governors in due course.
- 6.2.6 A governor asked whether SATs data would be communicated to parents, and if so how.
- 6.2.7 CP stated that the data would be communicated through the Hamlet Herald. It will also be posted to the school's website.
- 6.3 TF joined the meeting at 19:24.

- 6.4 Issues around the school's admissions were **discussed**.
- 6.4.1 CP reported that admissions this year were full of errors that took two to three weeks to resolve. Lessons learned and problems with communication among parents, the local authority and the school were **reviewed**.
- 6.4.2 CP reported that the school has received an apology from the local authority for systemic failures that led to the many errors around admissions.
- 6.4.3 CP stated that she is pleased with the school's swift and professional handling of the issues. Parents have stated they were appreciative of the support they received from the school when support was not forthcoming from the local authority.
- 6.4.4 The governors expressed thanks for CP for the work she put into handling problems around admissions professionally and effectively, with parents as well as the local authority.
- 6.4.5 **A governor asked if the school was proposing that it take more control over admissions.**
- 6.4.6 CP states that this is not possible. She explained that an admissions system for all London schools is now online. The local authority has clarified its timelines, but despite clear timelines being set, these were not followed this year. The school has now put in place additional measures to ensure that the local authority does the things it has said it will do at the designated time.
- 6.4.7 It was **discussed** and **agreed** that this level of oversight should be unnecessary, but that the local authority has not demonstrated appropriately timely decision-making regarding admissions, or timely communication with schools and parents. The governors thanked CP for ensuring the school's proactive engagement with the local authority on this matter.
- 6.5 Behaviour issues within the school were **discussed**.

This portion of the minutes has been removed to Confidential Annex A.

- 6.5.4 CP stated that starting in the autumn term there is a significant piece of work to be done around the issue of bullying and handling its effects. This will include raising the profile of the CLT and to organising professional development opportunities around the issue. Policy development and strengthening communications will also be part of the school's efforts to address and manage future incidents of bullying within the school. Governors were invited to contribute their thoughts and input to the work to be undertaken.
- 6.5.5 It was **noted** that the CLT photo board would be reinstated in the autumn as part of efforts to raise the profile of the CLT.
- 6.6 **A governor asked whether the incidents of bullying this term indicated a more intractable problem than incidents of bullying in the past.**
- 6.6.1 CP stated that the involvement of parents in incidents being dealt with currently has been difficult. Some parents are contributing to the bullying and in some ways encouraging (or at least not actively trying to mitigate) bullying behaviours among pupils. Some parents have also not accepted that the behaviour demonstrated by their child constitutes bullying.
- 6.6.2 **A governor asked about the disciplinary process for the children involved and how this was being executed.**
- 6.6.3 CP stated that the school is following its policy. She explained that the policy allows for escalation up to exclusion of the child, if needed. CP stated that the current situation as not escalated to this point, but the option has not been taken off the table.
- 6.6.4 **A governor asked what the LGB could do to support CP in dealing with the matter.**
- 6.6.5 CP stated that the greatest challenge is changing the perception that bullying is happening in the school. She stated that the perception is inaccurate. Bullying is happening outside of school and the effects are being felt in school. She stated that the environment on the playground can be quite toxic as parents congregate at the start of the school day.

- 6.6.6 It was suggested that allowing parents to use the playground for their social interaction may be part of the problem. Conversely, it was observed that having parents congregating on the playground allows CP and other teachers to monitor conversations among parents and to insert themselves into conversations where this may be needed.
- 6.7 Pastoral care for the children involved in the current situation was **discussed**.
- 6.7.1 Qualities of the Year 3 cohort were **discussed**. CP reported that in one instance, she has confirmed with a child's previous school that problem behaviours displayed currently have been a problem previously elsewhere.
- 6.7.2 CP stated that clear messages have been sent to incoming parents that the school values inclusivity and to set expectations for behaviour accordingly.
- 6.8 CP reported that the school's assistant head has been on secondment to a school in Singapore this year and has recently communicated his intention to stay in Singapore. She reported that TS has been promoted to take up post as assistant head from September.
- 6.8.1 The governors congratulated TS on his new appointment.

7. Committee Reports

- 7.1 A verbal report from the Education Committee was **received**. It was **noted** that a written report would follow.
- 7.1.1 SR reported in his capacity as Chair of the Education Committee that assessments were the key item of discussion at the most recent meeting, along with SATs (for which results have now been received).
- 7.1.2 It was reported that there were no matters requiring governors' attention at this stage.
- 7.2 A verbal report from the Business Committee was **received**. It was **noted** that a written report would follow.
- 7.2.1 BJ reported in her capacity as Chair of the Business Committee that premises matters were reviewed extensively at the most recent meeting, and that the tight rein kept on premises costs and spending this year was commended.
- 7.2.2 BJ reported that the school's finances have also been reviewed. The school is in a broadly break-even position for the year. The three-year budget projections are an area of concern and will continue to be closely monitored. It was reported that the committee would continue to review areas of expenditure that may be reduced over time.
- 7.2.3 CP stated that good efficiency savings have been achieved this year. The emphasis on finding efficiency savings will continue through next year, as will the emphasis on finding other sources of funding.
- 7.3.4 **A governor asked whether PTA contributions were a result of fundraising or investments.**
- 7.3.5 It was **confirmed** that PTA contributions are purely from fundraising.

8. School Finances

- 8.1 The budget monitoring report (**Papers 6 and 6a**) was **reviewed**.
- 8.1.1 **A governor asked why the school's premises expenditure was so high, with expenditure at £30K over budget.**
- 8.1.2 BJ stated that the premises budget was reduced as part of cost containment efforts, but that the budget set was unrealistically low. Additionally, the reallocation of entries has affected this budget line, which includes contracts and utilities in addition to maintenance costs for the building. Some of these expenses are offset in cross-charging with Belham.
- 8.1.3 CP stated that key contracts are being looked at and renegotiated across the Trust where possible (e.g., cleaning).

8.1.4 A governor asked about staffing costs and whether the school had faced the reality that efficiencies in this area would need to be achieved.

8.1.5 CT confirmed that this has been a topic of discussion among the Trustee board, who are aware that staffing is a concern and that efficiencies need to be achieved. Current discussion among the Trustees is focused on how to achieve efficiencies without putting teaching quality or the “glittering curriculum” at risk.

8.2 The three-year plan (**Paper 7**) was **discussed**.

8.2.1 A governor asked why in the budget projections staffing costs continue to increase even after the bulge class leaves the school.

8.2.2 It was stated that the projected increase is due to staffing expenditure rather than to staffing numbers. There is also an assumption of a 2% year on year increase to salaries.

9. LGB Membership

9.1 The schedule of governor terms of service (**Paper 8**) was **reviewed**.

9.1.1 It was **noted** that the information included in the papers was taken from the school’s website, which was out of date. The following changes were **noted**:

- Tom Forster’s term of office was renewed in December 2017 for a further 4 years;
- Gina Taylor resigned effective 14 May 2018;
- Lorraine Thomas has resigned, with her date of resignation to be 16 July 2018; and
- Will Yong resigned in December 2017.

ACTION: CP to coordinate updates to the governor page on the school website.

9.1.2 It was **noted** that Tom Salomondson and Victoria Thompson were staff governors who are job sharing the one staff governor role on the LGB.

9.1.3 The Chair reported that LT would not continue with the LGB next year. Thought will be given to how her role is filled, and whether LT’s departure will leave a skills gap that should be filled, or whether these might be filled by parent volunteers supporting the school in other ways than through service as a governor.

9.1.4 It was **confirmed** that there is currently one parent governor vacancy and one co-opted governor vacancy. The intention is to fill both vacancies in the autumn, bringing the size of the governing body to 13.

10. Governor Training & Development

10.1 The Chair reported that all governors have received group training on safeguarding.

10.2 The Chair reported that she has attended Prevent training offered through the local authority. Materials from this training will be circulated to all governors once they are made available from the local authority.

ACTION: Chair to share materials from Prevent training.

10.2.1 It was **discussed** that Prevent is an area to consider for all-governor training, or for a joint training session with Belham governors and/or DHET Trustees.

ACTION: Chair to explore the possibility of all-governor and/or joint training on Prevent and report back.

10.3 It was **noted** that the skills audit has been updated. Areas of weakness identified in the skills audit will guide the recruitment of new governors.

10.4 It was stated that the induction programme for new governors would be revamped. A proposal for the new programme would be discussed at the October meeting of the LGB.

ACTION: KLT and Chair to draft a proposal for new governor induction to be considered at the October meeting.

11. Link Governors

11.1 The list of link governors (**Paper 9**) was **reviewed**.

11.1.1 It was **noted** that the link governor roles as shown would stand for the year ahead, with the staff contacts and designated link governors fulfilling their roles, excepting the following:

- Inclusion/SEND link governor will be Michelle Hobbs;
- Creative link governor will be Karen Larcombe Tee; and
- PHSE/Wellbeing link governor will be vacant for the time being until the vacancy can be filled in the autumn.

11.2 A written report from TF as the Literacy/Humanities link governor was **taken as read**.

11.3 A written report from the Chair as the safeguarding link governor was **taken as read**.

11.4 A verbal report from EP on her activities as the Assessment and Data/PPG link governor was **received**. She reported that her recent visit to the school focused on SATs.

11.5 A verbal report from KLT on her activities as the Creative link governor was **received**. She reported on her visit to the school's art show. She commended the school on the high quality of pupils' work on display and the professional way in which staff presented it.

11.6 **A governor asked whether link governors are meant to share their written reports with the staff contact before they are circulated to the governing body.**

11.6.1 It was **confirmed** that sharing the report with the staff contact would be encouraged before reports are shared with governors. Any actions arising from the visit should be agreed with the staff contact before these are communicated to governors. It was **agreed** that these guidelines would be made more explicit in the governor visits policy.

11.7 KLT reported on the outcomes of the first parent focus group on the subject of the Hamlet Herald. She reported that only two parents participated.

11.7.1 KLT stated her view that although the focus group was not well attended, as a model for bringing governors and parents together, the focus group worked well.

11.7.2 It was **agreed** that future focus groups would be advertised further in advance. KLT will also discuss with CP how any feedback received should be handled.

12. Safeguarding

12.1 A report on the recent safeguarding training and PowerPoint presented (**Paper 10**) was **noted**, as was the safeguarding audit form (**Paper 11**) distributed as a part of the training.

12.2 The action plan resulting from the safeguarding training session was circulated at the table and **discussed**.

12.2.1 It was **noted** that most of the actions set out in the action plan had been completed or were substantially in progress.

12.2.2 It was **noted** that inspection of the single central record was an item of particular interest at the training session. It has been clarified that inspection of the single central record is now the responsibility of the link governor for safeguarding.

12.2.3 It was **confirmed** that a visit to review the single central record was made by the link governor for safeguarding on 22 June 2018.

12.3 Specific safeguarding issues as highlighted in the PowerPoint (**Paper 10**) were **discussed**.

12.3.1 It was **noted** that school leaders and staff at LGB meetings would be asked to refer to the list in checking that staff training and awareness is effective. It was **noted** that this would also be an ongoing area of focus for the LGB.

13. Health & Safety

13.1 There were no accidents or incidents reported.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 **A governor asked about the implications of the Executive Headteacher's proposed reduction in hours.**

14.1.1 CT stated that a part-time Executive Headteacher is not a model the Trust has imposed, and that the Trustees do not view the Executive Headteacher post as a part-time post. He stated that with the new Head of School now in place at Belham and negotiations with The Charter no longer an issue, there is at least in the short-term an opportunity for the Executive Headteacher's hours to reduce. He clarified that the reduction has been made to meet the working preferences of the current post-holder, with discussions to continue with the Heads of School.

14.1.2 Various areas were identified where the Executive Headteacher will have less time to focus her energies. It was **noted** that these were mostly external facing activities. CT confirmed that the need for efforts to be focused on external facing activities would be monitored, and that ongoing discussions with the Executive Headteacher would continue regarding whether and how fulfilment of these efforts should be delivered.

14.1.3 CP stated that the reality for the Hamlet is that the Executive Headteacher's reduction in hours means that the school will receive a half day per week less of her time.

14.2 CT reminded all governors of the strategy session to be held at Belham on 16 November 2018 for members of the CLTs and governors at both schools and DHET Trustees. Timings and an agenda will be circulated as the meeting date approaches.

The business of the meeting closed at 20:35.

Date of the next meeting – Wednesday, 17 October 2018 at 18:30.

Signed _____
Chair

Date _____

KF/kf 23/07/2018