

**Minutes of a governing body meeting of Charles Dickens on Thursday,
10th December, 2015 at 6.00 pm**

Governors Present: Nik Nicol (Chair), Cassie Buchanan (Executive Headteacher), Emma Gleadhill, Catherine Greenwood, Zoe Lillitos, Andrew Mayer, Cerian Morgan, Annastazia Nyaga, Linda Taylor, Matthew Harris, Perrine Summers, Shulamit Ambalu

Others Present: Malcolm Booth (Associate Member), Carolyn Forsyth (Observer)

Clerk: John Finch

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Claire Maugham, and consent was given for her absence.

2. Declarations of Interest in the agenda

There were no declarations of interest in the agenda.

3. Election of Chair

It was noted that Nik Nicol had been elected as Chair for two years on 4th September, 2014.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

It was noted that Andrew Mayer had been elected as Vice-Chair for two years on 4th September, 2014.

5. Minutes of the last governing body meeting on Tuesday, 14th July, 2015

5.1 Approval of the minutes

Governors received the minutes of the last governing body meeting on Tuesday, 14th July, 2015, as circulated with the agenda, and they were approved as a correct record, subject to the following points being raised:

- Page 8, item 6 – “There were currently 407 pupils on the school roll, compared to 244 in June 2014 and a national average of 251” should read “There were currently 407 pupils on the school roll, compared to 344 in June 2014 and a national average of 351”.

- Page 11, item 6 – “Are you looking for a new Assistant Head” should read “Are you looking for a new Deputy Head”.

Matthew Harris arrived at 6.08 pm.

- Page 13, item 7 – “This was because Southwark Council owed the school £13,000” should read “This was because Southwark Council owed the school £130,000”. **Action: Clerk**

5.2 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

6. **Minutes of the last governors’ strategy meeting on Friday, 18th September, 2015**

6.1 Approval of the minutes

Governors received the minutes of the governors’ strategy meeting on Friday, 18th September, 2015, as circulated with the agenda, and they were approved as a correct record.

6.2 Matters arising from the minutes

The Headteacher clarified that GLD stands for Good Level of Development.

7. **Minutes of the last governors’ strategy meeting on Monday, 19th October, 2015**

7.1 Approval of the minutes

Governors received the minutes of the governors’ strategy meeting on Monday, 19th October, 2015, as circulated with the agenda, and they were approved as a correct record, subject to Anastazia Nyaga’s name being spelt correctly on the first page.

7.2 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

7.3 Report back on Governors’ questions

At the meeting governors asked themselves the NGA’s 20 questions, and the following issues were raised as a result:

- Malcolm Booth has e-mailed a skills audit to governors and has received two responses.
- The Chair asked governors to complete the skills audit and e-mail it to Malcolm Booth as soon as possible.

- The school's induction of new governors should include the NGA's New Governor checklist.
- New governors should also have a mentor governor.
- The Chair will filter the NGA newsletter and website to highlight possible items of interest to governors.

Perrine Summers arrived at 6.18 pm.

- The Chair agreed to undergo the NGA's Chair of Governors' 360 appraisal.
- There should be succession planning for the Chair, and also for Chairs of committees.
- It was suggested that an annual review of each governor's performance was inappropriate, and that a more supportive approach would be more applicable.
- The Chair undertook to contact governors individually during the year to discuss relevant issues to their role as governor.
- It was agreed that the governing body should continue to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair every two years, although the clerk stated that most governing bodies hold these elections annually.
- It was stated that the policy schedule required updating, and the clerk stated that an updated version will be available in every agenda.
- There was concern about succession planning for Malcolm Booth's role as bursar, but the Headteacher is content that arrangements are in place for this.
- There was a suggestion that governing body meetings take place during the day instead of in evenings, and that this be reviewed when new governors are in place.
- As well as learning walks in the school, it was suggested that governors visit other schools that have been on a journey of improvement.
- The clerk suggested that governors might want to visit Charlotte Sharman Primary (Foundation) School and Bessemer Grange Primary School.

7.4 Development of 5-year Strategy

It was suggested that committees develop the ideas raised in the meeting around the development of a 5-year strategy.

8. **Governing Body**

8.1 Register of Business Interests

This was circulated for governors to sign, and the clerk stated that it will be held in the school by the Headteacher.

8.2 Governing body membership and vacancies

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

- The following governors are resigning at the end of the meeting:
 - Catherine Greenwood - Co-opted
 - Perrine Summers - Co-opted
- It was noted that Claire Maugham's term of office as Parent governor ends on 11/12/15, and it was suggested that Claire be appointed as a Co-opted governor.
- The Chair reported that he and the Headteacher had met with Carolyn Forsyth and they recommended that she be appointed as Co-opted governor.

Agreed – That governors appoint Carolyn Forsyth and Claire Maugham as Co-opted governors as of Friday, 11th December.

- Cerian Morgan reported that she will resign as Partnership governor as soon as a replacement governor is found.
- The clerk highlighted the following rules around appointing Partnership governors:
 - Partnership governors are appointed by the governing body.
 - Individuals are only eligible to be nominated as a partnership governor if the person nominating them believes that they have the skills needed to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.
 - Likewise the governing body may only appoint a person as a partnership governor if they believe that they have the skills needed to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.
- The governing body must first try to appoint Partnership governors from those nominated:
 - Where the school does not have a religious character, by the parents of registered pupils at the school and such others in the community as they consider appropriate (for example, staff, community organisations and other local bodies).
 - Where the governing body cannot fill all the vacant posts from among the nominees, either because there were not enough or because they rejected some of the nominees as ineligible, then the governing body can fill those posts from among persons nominated by governors.

- Where the governing body makes an appointment having rejected nominees as ineligible then they must put their decision and reasons not to appoint in writing to:
 - the local authority;
 - the person or body who nominated the rejected individual, and
 - the person rejected.
- A person is disqualified from being a partnership governor if they are:
 - a parent of a registered pupil at the school;
 - eligible to be a staff governor at the school;
 - an elected member of the LA; or
 - employed by the local authority in connection with its education functions.
- There is a Parent governor election underway for two positions.
- The Chair suggested to the Headteacher that parents be given two votes as there are two vacancies.
- The Headteacher communicated this to parents via e-mail that parents should vote twice on the same form.
- 30 parents who had already voted were given extra forms to cast a second vote.

8.3 Governing body meeting attendance

Governors received the report as circulated with the agenda.

8.4 Governor Training and Development

Governors received the reports as circulated with the agenda.

9. Committees

9.1 Committee membership and link governor roles

Governors received the reports as circulated with the agenda, and the following changes to committee membership were made:

- Children, Families & Community – Emma Gleadhill is Chair of the committee.
- Curriculum & Standards – Claire Maugham to replace Catherine Greenwood as Chair of the committee.
- First/Second committee – Carolyn Forsyth to join the standing committees in the event that a panel needs to be called.
- Resources – Matthew Harris to replace Perrine Summers as Chair of the committee.

It was agreed that the following link governor roles be disbanded:

- After School Club - Claire Maugham
- Creative Arts - Catherine Greenwood
- English/Literacy - Cerian Morgan

- Health & Safety - Linda Taylor
- ICT - Perrine Summers
- Inclusion/EAL - Annastazia Nyaga
- P.E. - Annastazia Nyaga
- Science and Environment - Andrew Mayer

The previous link governor roles are replaced by roles shadowing elements of the School Improvement Plan, in order to ensure that governors are aware of, and playing their part in, implementing the Plan. In summary, the new roles are:

- Assessment - Nik Nicol
- Attendance - Emma Gleadhill
- Attendance - Annastazia Nyaga
- Behaviour - Shulamit Ambalu
- Behaviour - Matthew Harris
- CPD - Andrew Mayer
- Inclusion - Emma Gleadhill
- Leadership - Andrew Mayer
- Maths - Nik Nicol
- Parental Involvement - Annastazia Nyaga
- Safeguarding - Emma Gleadhill is link governor, not Claire Maugham
- SEN - Claire Maugham
- SGA - Nik Nicol
- Writing - Claire Maugham

Committee membership and link governors will be reviewed further once new governors have been elected and appointed.

9.2 Link governor reports

The following link governor reports were given:

- The Chair took part in learning walks during the school day.
- It was suggested that it would be better for the Headteacher if dates and times could be set aside so that 3 or 4 governors at a time can visit the school and can focus on their link governor area.
- The school can keep a record of link governor reports, and the clerk undertook to circulate a proforma link governor report form.

Action: Clerk

Shulamit Ambalu arrived at 6.43 pm.

- Annastazia Nyaga visited the school and reviewed Maths, and found that staff are finding the new curriculum to be more challenging than the previous one.
- Children are receiving one hour Maths tuition a day, with extra 20 minute Mental Maths sessions for children who need further booster sessions.

- A new Maths pilot programme is being run in EYFS.
- Emma Gleadhill visited the school to review the curriculum, and saw children receiving help in 1-2-1 settings with teachers, including in classrooms.
- It was suggested that when considering the new build, the school should include more corridor space for interventions.
- A discussion was held with a TA over the use of play in interventions.
- Zoe Lillitos stated that six new volunteers have been trained to assist with reading.
- Shulamit Ambalu stated that she has been in to the school to see both Key Stages during morning play, and will come in again to observe play at lunch time.
- It was noted that the playground is small and this gives limited opportunities for children to play.
- It was nice to see the staff interacting with the children, although a lot of policing is required.

9.3 Committee meeting attendance

Governors received the report as circulated with the agenda.

9.4 Committee meeting minutes

Governors received the minutes of the following committee meetings as circulated with the agenda:

- Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 28th April, 2015
- Resources - Tuesday, 16th June, 2015
- Children, Families & Community
- Tuesday, 30th June, 2015
- Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 7th July, 2015
- Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 29th September, 2015
- Children, Families & Community
- Tuesday, 20th October, 2015
- Resources - Tuesday, 10th November, 2015

Nik Nicol left at 7.00 pm, and Andrew Mayer took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting in his role as Vice-Chair.

10. Headteacher's Written Report

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

- The inspection dashboard was reviewed in the last Curriculum & Standards committee meeting.
- Information on the baseline to summer progress for EYFS has been included in the report at governors' request.

- Data is available, but moderation has taken place today and some marks have been increased.
- The Headteacher undertook to e-mail updated data to governors in January, along with commentary, and this data will be reviewed further in the Curriculum & Standards committee.

Action: Headteacher

The Headteacher gave the following answers to questions from governors:

- *When are you expecting building works to be completed?* The building project is one term behind, and there is limited scope in moving the dates. The school is a maintained school, so Southwark Council is the client and it is their project. The handover date for the project is 12th December, 2016, although when initial discussions took place in summer 2015 the original handover date was summer 2016. There have been delays in the party wall agreement (between the site and the Rise) as Southwark Council couldn't establish the owner of the wall, and it has taken time to find out who the freeholders are. This delay has been explained to parents. The relationship between the contractor and Southwark Council has been difficult, as the contractor wanted payment up front and Southwark Council is following its processes on payment. There has been the first wave of early works, such as hoardings and demolition, and the second wave includes work on the foundations. The main contract has not yet been signed off. The school will try and release play space so children don't have to be in a temporary building. The school is trying to take the refurbishment of the bottom floor out of the contract and subcontract this work elsewhere, so that the Reception class can move into that space. This will help to avoid putting children into mixed year groups. The Nursery and kitchen will not be moved until work on their respective areas has been finished.
- *Is there anything governors can do to speed up the process?* The Headteacher and Malcolm Booth attend weekly client meetings, even though Southwark Council is the client and not the school. Governors were invited to attend these meetings on Tuesdays at 2.00 pm, and Matthew Harris agreed to attend these meetings from January 2016.
- *What is the latest update?* Southwark Council are discussing the terms of the contract with the contractor. The contractor has submitted final amounts for different elements of the project, and is awaiting approval from Southwark Council.
- *Why is Southwark Council in charge of the project when the school is a Foundation school?* Malcolm Booth stated that Southwark Council is involved in building projects for all schools, regardless of the category of school.
- *Are you keeping parents updated on the building project?* Yes, information is shared with parents in the school newsletter

whenever there is an update, but it has been difficult to find out what the reasons are for the delays in the project.

- *Is it realistic to expect the project to be completed by 12th December, 2016?* Yes. The school is looking to take item 35 (Holiday & Summer Refurbishment Works) out of the contract. It is important that classrooms are ready for children to move into in September 2016.
- *Are there any contingency plans in case there are further delays?* The school is not presenting a contingency plan to Southwark Council as the expectation is that the deadlines will be met.
- *Where do the baseline outcomes – characteristics of effective learning come from?* The school is buying into the government's pilots for baselining children. The baseline is vague, and the bottom one is for FSM children.
- *Does mean that no FSM children are Well Below Typical?* Yes. Overall, children coming into the school have lower Literacy skills.
- *What are the key points regarding the baselines?* The majority of children entering the school are Typical or Below Typical for skills in English and Maths.

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

11.1 Arrangements to review Headteacher's performance

The Headteacher reported that this will take place in January 2016.

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

- *Does the school have support for the Headteacher's Performance Management process?* Yes, the school will hire an experienced Headteacher from another school – Keith Fox from St. John's Walworth Church of England Primary School - to assist governors in this process.

11.2 Publication of Governor's Details and the Register of Interests/Governor Code of Conduct

Governors received a document titled "Constitution of Governing Bodies – Statutory Guidance – August 2015" as circulated via e-mail prior to the meeting, and the clerk drew governors' attention to the following points on page 10:

- The governing body should publish on its website up-to-date details of its governance arrangements in a readily accessible form (the information should be on a webpage without the need to download or open a separate document), and this should include:
 - the structure and remit of the governing body and any committees, and the full names of the chair of each;

- for each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable) and who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body’s instrument of government),
 - relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests) including:
 - governance roles in other educational institutions;
 - any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives); and
 - their attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year.
- Governing bodies should also publish this information for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees to which they have been appointed.
- Governing bodies should make it clear in their code of conduct that this information will be published on their governors and any associate members.
- Any governor failing to provide information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute, and in such cases the governing body should consider suspending the governor.

Governors received the August 2015 version of the “NGA Governors’ Code of Conduct” as circulated via e-mail prior to the meeting, and the clerk raised the following points:

- The NGA Governors’ Code of Conduct has been amended to reflect the changes in the updated “Constitution of Governing Bodies – Statutory Guidance – August 2015”.
- It is not statutory to have a Governors’ Code of Conduct, but it is good practice to adopt one.

The Headteacher raised the following points:

- The new school website is being set up during the Christmas holidays.
- The Headteacher undertook to e-mail a link to the new website to governors, and governors were asked to send any comments to the Headteacher.

Action: Headteacher

11.3 Discussion of issues arising from the school contracting with a governor

The following discussion was held by governors:

- The Headteacher suggested that the school commissions Emma Gleadhill for a one-off training session.
- The Teaching School Alliance, which contains Headteachers from other schools, may also commission Emma.
- The TSA has its own separate governing body, with Headteachers as strategic partners with an equal vote.
- No conflict of interest has been expressly articulated.
- The Headteacher sought advice from the Chair and was advised to consult with governors by e-mail, but it was agreed that this discussion needed to be held in person amongst governors.
- It is important for transparency that any decision and the process for arriving at that decision is minuted.
- It was suggested that there should also be a policy that clarifies the process should there be any future requests for commissioning work from a governor.

Agreed – That Matthew Harris will write a policy on the commissioning of work from governors, to be considered at the next governing body meeting on Thursday, 3rd March, 2016, with governors to send any comments on the draft to Matthew. **Action: Matthew Harris**

Emma Gleadhill left the room at 7.46 pm.

Governors were asked to consider the following questions:

- Should governors agree that the school can commission Emma Gleadhill for a one-off training session?
- Does this represent a conflict of interest?
- If so, how should this conflict be managed?

Agreed – 9 governors agreed, with 1 abstention, that the school commissions Emma Gleadhill for a one-off training session, and that there is no conflict of interest.

Emma Gleadhill re-entered the room at 7.53 pm.

11.4 Policy schedule

Governors received the report as circulated with the agenda, the Southwark Council model Pay Policy as circulated via e-mail prior to the meeting, and the school's updated Pay Policy as circulated at the meeting, and the Headteacher raised the following points:

- The school's updated Pay Policy is based on the updated Southwark Council model.
- The school doesn't have TLR2s, but it has TLR3s, which give additional money for management responsibilities.
- Some dates have been changed, and a pay scale for a Deputy Headteacher has been added in.
- The credit card limit in the Financial Scheme of Delegation has been raised from £4,000 to £8,000.

- There have been no substantial changes to the SEN policy.
- The Child Protection Policy has been reviewed and updated.
- The SFVS Assessment Form has been reviewed by the Resources committee.

The Headteacher gave the following answers to questions from governors:

- *What provision is there for TAs in the updated Pay Policy?* The pay scale for TAs has been lifted.
- *How are pay increments determined?* This is based on the outcome of the performance management process.

Agreed – That governors re-adopt the following policies as currently in use in the school:

- Governors' Code of Conduct (*as circulated via e-mail prior to the meeting*)
- Pay Policy (*as circulated at the meeting*)
- Child Protection Policy
- Financial Scheme of Delegation
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Terms of Reference – Resources committee

The Headteacher stated the following:

- The Equality Information and Objectives Statement is incorporated in the schools Equalities Policy, although this needs to be reviewed.
- The Statement of procedures – allegations of abuse against staff is incorporated in the schools Child Protection Policy.
- The school has a Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.
- The clerk has sent model Terms of Reference for the Curriculum & Standards committee to the school, and they need to be adapted for the school.
- Terms of Reference for the Children, Families & Community committee need to be written.

Agreed – That governors adopt the following policies as currently in use in the school:

- Equalities Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

It was suggested that documents and policies be made more readily available to governors, with changes highlighted, including but not limited to making them available on the school website.

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 Thursday, 3rd March, 2016:

Governing body meeting – Thursday, 3rd March, 2016

- Terms of Reference – Children, Families & Community committee
- Terms of Reference – Curriculum & Standards committee

12. Dates and times of future meetings

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

Spring term

Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 19th January, 2016
Children, Families & Community - Tuesday, 2nd February, 2016
Resources - Tuesday, 23rd February, 2016

Governing body - Thursday, 3rd March, 2016, 5.00 pm

Summer term

Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 10th May, 2016
Resources - Tuesday, 14th June, 2016
Children, Families & Community - Tuesday, 28th June, 2016
Curriculum & Standards - Tuesday, 5th July, 2016

Governing body - Thursday, 14th July, 2016, 5.00 pm

13. Any Other Business

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

- *Why were the community police in the school this week, as this raised concerns from parents?* It was explained in the school newsletter that community police came into the school to discuss PSHE, and the rule of law as part of British Values. Community police often come into the school, although not as much as they used to. No concerned parents have written to the Headteacher.

Governors received a document titled “Deputy Headteachers” as circulated at the meeting, and the Headteacher raised the following item:

- The Headteacher has met with the Chair to discuss this item, and would like to advertise internally for two Deputy Headteachers.
- Both would have a strategic leadership role, with one having a key role in further improving the academic provision at the

school, and the other having a key role in improving the pastoral provision at the school.

- This structure helps to clarify responsibilities when the Headteacher goes on maternity leave in the summer term.
- The rationale for advertising internally is that the school can only afford an additional £30,000 expenditure, which will be recouped through maternity leave insurance cover.
- As both Deputy Headteachers will be required to act as Headteacher to cover maternity leave, internal candidates will be able to provide stability through their knowledge of the school.

The Headteacher gave the following answers to questions from governors:

- *Would this be a permanent restructure?* Yes.
- *Is the restructure needed because of maternity leave, or will it still be necessary when you return from maternity leave?* It is still needed as there needs to be an additional layer of leadership in school, which will give extra capacity to the SLT which is needed as the school gets bigger.
- *Will the allocation of responsibilities be reviewed?* This is unlikely, as the current proposal allocates clear lines of responsibility, and mirrors practice in other schools.
- *What is the current SLT structure?* There are currently four Assistant Headteachers and one lead practitioner.
- *Would there need to be redundancies if the positions were advertised externally?* Yes, as the school doesn't have the money to advertise externally.

Zoe Lillitos left at 8.13 pm.

- *Could this proposal create conflict within the current SLT as up to five members of staff might apply for two positions?* Yes, so it is important to advertise the positions as soon as possible.
- *Do you think you can recruit to both positions by only advertising internally?* Yes, this proposal is only being put before governors as there are five outstanding candidates for the positions.

Agreed – 9 governors agreed, with 1 abstention, to the proposal to have two Deputy Headteachers, and that the posts should only be advertised internally.

Governors received the SFVS Assessment Form as circulated via e-mail prior to the meeting, and Malcolm Booth gave the following finance update:

- Someone will be trained to cover daily tasks as part of succession planning.
- Most of the £130,000 that was owed to the school has been paid, but the school is now owed £170,000.

- The school uses Wauton Samuel for accountancy, but it was suggested that the school uses the SAGE system which is used by the financial industry.
- The SAGE system costs £500, rather than £10,000 which is the cost of Wauton Samuel, and governors with a finance background will have a greater understanding of SAGE.
- This proposal was approved by the Resources committee.

Agreed – That governors approve the SFVS as circulated via e-mail prior to the agenda, and that the school uses SAGE instead of Wauton Samuel.

The meeting finished at 8.22 pm.

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