

Minutes of the Governors strategy Day meeting held at Charles Dickens Primary School on Wednesday 12th September 2018 at 9am

Governors Present;

Shulamit Ambalu

Cassie Buchanan Headteacher

Daniel Efunuga

Michael Eggleton (item 8 only)

Simon Gleadhill

Ran Holst

Rebecca Kaloo Co-chair

Claire Maugham Co-chair

Miao Miao Yu

Clerk: Carrie Fentum

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Emma Gleadhill, Matthew Harris, Laura Johnson, Andrew Mayer, Jemima Rhys-Evans and Linda Taylor

2 **Introduction**

Governors considered the timetable for the day and reminded themselves of the Ruler governor's charter and how that is reflected in the way in which governors work together. The values of the charter were re-stated; respectful challenge, honesty, objectivity, engagement, effectiveness and being inspired and or inspiring.

3 **Vision and Values**

The Headteacher presented the new updated website which focusses on the three core values of the school

- Academic excellence, that expectations for children are ambitious, teaching is low threshold and high ceiling, the curriculum is knowledge based. The website shows what will be taught in each year and in each subject.
- Creativity. This is mainly focussed on creative arts but also encompasses creative thinking. It was noted that there are new creative initiatives this year including a new singing teacher, more peripatetic teachers, a mandarin teacher, Chinese folk dancing and calligraphy
- Social Intelligence; developing children's emotional intelligence, the Ruler programme which is now embedded within the school, Unicef

rights respecting school, work on expanding horizons

Governors undertook a tour of the school in order to look for evidence of the school values in practice. They shared their findings which were as follows

- Ruler is embedded, children were observed spontaneously engaging with the Ruler mood meter.
- Clear evidence of social intelligence in children's behaviour several instances of positive reinforcement of good behaviour were observed, children clearly understand behaviour expectations. Where they are rewarded they understand the reasons for the rewards.
- Examples of Strong engagement with learning,
- Strong displays in year 4, the science display had interactive questions and lots of information with stretching vocabulary
- Evidence of music and art
- Inspirational and creative story telling
- Evidence of early SEN assessment
- Strong SEN teaching
Governors commented on the level of processing difficulties evident in some SEN children and the excellent staff pupil relationships which gave these children the resilience to stay on task
- Evidence of differentiated work, in year 5 children working at different levels in maths.

Governors asked for an explanation of what is in place for children who have finished their work.

It was explained that the school is using 'Inspire' books. These are for use by 'accurate fast finishers' They contain the same content as the Maths no problem books which means that children are still working on the year group content but they offer less support for children who are able to work more independently.

4 **Governor review of the year**

Governors considered their roles as governors, both as individuals and as part of the full governing body.

Personal achievements were noted as

- Learning more about the role of governors
- Engaging with link roles of pupil premium link governor and SEND link governor
- Work to ensure that policies are up to date and in place
- Helping to develop the governance of the school fund

- Improving the controls in finance
- Developing teamwork and collaboration, specifically the co chairing

Highlights for the group were noted as

- Working to improve the kitchen provision
- The work that had been done around considering the MAT: the engagement of governors with the discussion and the flexibility to change track when that was the right thing to do, this demonstrated that discussions are robust and decision making strong
- Consolidation of the work of governors, putting plans and strategies into action
- Supporting the school
- Using different skills to support the school

Governors expressed that they felt that there had not been one strategic focus or dramatic moment in the year. There had been a number of significant changes over that past few years, this year had been a time for consolidation; embedding the changes that have been made and ensuring that the house is in order. Previous years have been more challenging and it had been satisfying to have a year in which there had been no major external challenges.

5 **School Improvement Plan**

The Long term strategic aims 2015-2020 were circulated to governors RAG rated. It was noted that the plan had been put in place in order to steer the school through recent changes on a steady pathway. It was recognised that many, but not all, of the aims of the 5 year plan had now been met and governors considered whether it was necessary to have a new strategic five year plan to take the school beyond 2020.

Governors felt that it was important to maintain a strategic aim and that consideration should be given to whether this should be a 3 year plan and possibly rolling. Any new plan is a task for later in the academic year/strategy day next year. Groundwork for this could be done in the current year to develop a greater understanding of risks faced by the school, how to manage these effectively and identify key stakeholder needs. Current risks were identified as;

- The funding environment, public funding is decreasing but it is not known how or by how much
- Changes in the local population, a reduction in the PAN at other local schools and a local surplus of school places
- Changes to the local community, the school reflects the local community which is changing
- Recruitment and retention of teachers and leaders.

A key area for development was identified as developing income streams. Governors felt that it would be useful to look at the school's capacity to develop a risk management approach. There was discussion about whether this would be part of the work of the full governing body or whether it fell into the work of one of the committees.

It was agreed that the work should be undertaken by all governors but that it should be done outside of FGB meetings. It was agreed to form a task force, all governors to be members and should feel free to make whatever contribution they were able to. The co-chairs agreed to scope out the work of the task force.

The school development plan 2018-19 was circulated at the meeting and considered by governors. It was noted that this had been prepared by the senior leadership team.

The Headteacher explained that two assistant heads had left the school. It was explained that if the school were to work with another school it would be necessary to have sufficient leaders in the school. Leadership capacity was being developed through developing the coaching skills of the wider leadership team.

It was agreed that the role of assistant head should be advertised internally.

Governors said that they felt that information enabling the tracking and monitoring of the progress of the school development plan is adequately provided in the termly senior leadership reports.

It was agreed to adopt the school development plan for 2018-19

6 Pupil Premium Strategy Statement and spending plan 2018-19

The Pupil premium strategy statement for 2018-19 was circulated at the meeting and considered by governors. It was explained that in the past pupil premium money has sometimes been used for interventions and that these had not always been sufficiently effective. The strategy for this year involves an emphasis on quality first teaching.

The document outlined

- Where PP premium pupils are in the school,
- Their current attainment and compared that with that of all pupils nationally.
- What barriers they could face in school
- External barriers to their learning
- Outcomes of Pupil Premium children
- Planned expenditure including quality first teaching for all pupils and details of other more focussed approaches

Governors asked the following questions

Will the home school books place undue stress on teachers? Have they replaced the communication via dojo?

Teachers are happy with the system. These have replaced the reading record books which teachers had been using and so will not be unduly arduous. Dojo was never intended as an email communication tool. Teachers would prefer not to engage in email conversations, The books are being trialled and the school will monitor their use.

Some of the pupil premium spending is targeted specifically at pupil premium children. Some of the spending is used for initiatives that are not targeted. Can this be justified?

The school has a duty to ensure the best outcomes for pupil premium children. Experience has shown that one to one interventions where children work with teaching assistants have not worked. Evidence shows that improving quality first teaching will benefit these children. The measures will not close the gap between pupil premium and non pupil premium children within Charles Dickens but will raise the level of attainment and progress when compared nationally.

It was explained that that the term 'closing the gap' will no longer be applied. Schools are required to ensure that progress is secure for these children.

It was noted that the figures in the report are not final figures, The numbers in early years have not yet been confirmed

The pupil premium strategy was approved.

7 **Sports Premium Spending Plan 2018-19**

Governors considered the sports premium spending plan which was circulated at the meeting.

The sports premium spending plan was approved

8 **SEND and wellbeing briefing**

Governors received a briefing from Michael Eggleton on the work being done in school around SEND and Wellbeing; governors reported that they had seen evidence of the measure in place during their walk around the school earlier in the day.

9 **Committee evaluation and Action Plan,**

Children Families and Community committee.

It was noted that within the five year plan the aim of further engagement with the local community had not yet been achieved. There was discussion around what was the target for community engagement and clarification of the strategic purpose would be sought.

It was noted that the number of meetings for this committee had been reduced in order to enable committee members to engage in more learning walks. It was agreed to add the following to the annual plan for the committee

- A learning walk on attendance in the first term in order to discover more about the work done by the school and the early help team to drive up attendance
- A learning walk to look at pupil engagement, pupil leadership opportunities and behaviour
- A project to understand the strategies in place to engage with SEND families and to support them led by the SEND link governor
- Succession planning to replace the SEND link governor as her term of office is coming to an end

Curriculum and standards committee

Members of the committee felt that they were well served by the reports provided to them and that the results achieved in the statutory assessments support those reports.

The committee felt that they would like to incorporate book looks into their termly meetings and that for the next two meetings the focus of these would be

- the impact of curriculum changes particularly in relation to vocabulary
- the quality of feedback and assessment, it was noted that not all assessment and feedback is evident in marking

A learning walk on changes to the foundation curriculum and vocabulary will take place in the Autumn term.

Resources committee

Members of the committee agreed ways in which they would like to improve and develop the work of the committee and identified the following areas

- Identifying six key financial indicators
- Increasing the use of benchmarking
- Increasing the use of audit tools
- Focusing the strategic objectives for the committee on developing financial sustainability and value for money

It was hoped that this would give the space to develop other objectives, for example fundraising

The Headteacher outlined the time table of an Ofsted inspection and explained to governors their level of expected involvement. The governance section of the Ofsted inspector's handbook was circulated to governors and it was explained that governors might be asked questions on the work of the Governing body and their own involvement. It was stressed that there was no expectation that governors should do any additional preparation for an Ofsted inspection as all governors are familiar with the school and engaged with their role.

11 **Governor Action Plan**

Governors noted that the reasons for deciding to look at a future as a part of a MAT had not changed and that this would remain on the agenda

Areas for development were identified as

- Risk management/Stakeholder task force
- Development and improvement of the new governor pack
- Improvement of policy planner including adding the governor visits policy, the governors statement on behaviour and the value added statement'