

The Calcot Schools

Minutes of the

Full Governing Body Meeting 23.2.

Held on Wednesday 18 January 2023 at 1.30pm at the school

Present:

Julia Kidd (JK) (Joint Chair)
Joe Lally (JL) (Joint Chair)
Florence Rostron (FR) (Headteacher)
Hugh Baxter (HB)
Shelly Higgins (SH)
Nicky Bate (NB)
Katie Dean (KD)
Mark Hazelton (MH)
Carolyn Purchase (CP)
Akeelah Shadoobuccus (AS)

In Attendance:

Alice Elliott (AE) (Clerk)

Item	Minutes – Meeting chaired by Joe Lally
1.	<p>Infant Curriculum Progression presentation</p> <p>1.1. This was presented by NB.</p> <p>1.2. The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) curriculum has been created to progress onto KS1 (Key Stage 1) and beyond. Its basis from the beginning is developmental. OfSTED focuses on the quality of education (as well as behaviour attitudes, personal development and leadership and management).</p> <p>1.3. All subject leaders are familiar with EYFS. The national curriculum is quite sparse in places within KS1, therefore schools need to look at what we teach, what do we want our children to know and that our curriculum is sequential.</p> <p>1.4. The first focus is Intent, which is what the teachers want to teach. It is divided into disciplinary, which is observation and analytics, and substantive knowledge, which is the specific knowledge and skills which arise from the teaching. This is progressive throughout the school. Intent is included in every subject and forms the structure of the curriculum.</p> <p>1.5. Calcot created its own EYFS curriculum, tailored to the needs of the children, which are significantly different to other schools. It is important to think carefully about the demographic of the children within baseline testing to help with planning and targets.</p> <p>1.6. Baseline is contentious, as for the past two years it was not a requirement. The DfE has now replaced this with a universal version without any standardisation of scores. Progress isn't judged until children reach Year 6, but the school isn't told what the starting point is.</p> <p>1.7. CP asked what feedback was gained from the Request for Freedom of Information in relation to baseline starting point. The school decided not to do double testing as this would be double work for staff. CP asked if a note was made of how each child performed during baseline testing. The school standardise their own tests from Year 1. CP noted that it is highly likely the cohort will have changed between EYFS and Year 6 due to pupil mobility. This was 50% different last year.</p>

1.8. It is important to think about the demographic of EYFS in regard to the Early Years Policy and Intent. Many children arrive in school with impoverished language development, and this happens all the way up to Year 6. As a result, the curriculum focuses on language rich text, with the opportunity provided to build on these skills. Speech and language difficulties add to the mix, social interaction is another area of development, as many children haven't had experiences of pre-school when they arrive. NB showed examples of curriculum information on the school's website.

1.9. NB shared an overview of long-term planning for possible lines of enquiry, experiences of opportunities (such as the Chinese New Year), progress text which doesn't cross over with other years, ambitious vocabulary (which is displayed around the classroom), communication and language, linked text to PSED (Physical, Social and Emotional Development), Literacy, Writing and Maths.

1.10. Short term planning is done in PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time, which allows teachers to break it up into more detailed individual lesson plans. These are not published on the website, as they can be replanned when necessary.

1.11. Early Learning Indoor and Outdoor Environments include learning intentions, success criteria such as accuracy and care, key vocabulary, questioning by the teacher, Maths, Reading, understanding the small world and role play for fine motor skills.

1.12. **HB asked if the plans were differentiated for children.** Yes, as some children will struggle and will be 'peeled off' into TA-led groups to help them. This is the same for higher ability children to provide further skills.

1.13. **CP expressed surprise at the amount of detailed planning staff do every week.** Plans are usually two pages for one lesson, they show use of the other adult in the room and account for the level of need. Plans are regularly revisited in all areas as cohorts are so different. However, planning doesn't always work, and even *ad hoc* lessons can be very effective. The SLT try to protect PPA time for all teachers, but staffing issues and absence can affect this. FR looks at medium term planning to assess where the intent is, and Team Leaders have been trained to ask appropriate questions.

1.14. Short term planning for EYFS focuses on communication and language, physical development, PSED, Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World (which includes science, history, geography) and Expressive Art and Design.

1.15. Assessment judges which children reach their expected level of attainment and GLD (general level of development). Children vary, as some attain their GLD without social development, whereas others who are socially developed can struggle in Maths and Literacy. These all require different progression into Year 1. **JL presumed there were children who fell into the middle.** 47% of children are not at their expected baseline at their entry point.

1.16. Subject leaders meet to understand how to progress Early Years into Year 1, to build up on the skills already taught. Governors requested NB circulate a copy of her presentation.

ACTION – NB to circulate planning progression of EYFS to Year 1 presentation

1.17. **JL asked about information technology being integrated throughout the subject areas.** This is happening in the Juniors, known now as Computing, as a tool for all learning. Children have access to Chrome Books to learn computing and online safety, focused as cross curricular with learning coding and computer skills. Design technology uses skills to make a product which is programmable, and data is linked to the science curriculum. Programming is considered as Understanding the World.

1.18. **CP had examined the curriculum plans on the website, and confirmed they were extremely comprehensive.** much better than examples from other school websites. It is important to understand how much work has gone into planning lessons.

1.19. Children with difficulties are supported enabling them to feel they have succeeded. OfSTED notes this 'scaffolding' opportunities, with middle and lower sets having the same intentions but allowing the children to achieve in different ways.

	<p>1.20. There will always be gaps that require filling, especially with the amount of mobility happening in classes. Children arrive at different stages, usually with no English and with additional needs, so plans have to be expanded, making them more difficult to deliver effectively.</p> <p>1.21. CP asked about the level of mobility. It is high. The point of entry in September was 65 children, but as children move in and out, Reception started at 58 as 2-form and Year 1 has now 75 as 3-form. These changes are very hard on staff.</p> <p>1.22. HB asked if feedback was given by parents. Sometimes, and some want more planning. Encouraging more parents to give their opinion is as difficult as getting them to hear their children read. MH commented that in the past what was posted on the website wasn't always up to date. FR confirmed that all areas have been updated. WBC often cite Calcot as an example of school websites in their Governors' training.</p> <p>1.23. Thanks were given to NB for her presentation.</p>
2.	<p>Apologies for absence and completion of attendance sheet</p> <p>2.1. Apologies were received from MG and KH.</p>
3.	<p>Governing Body update</p> <p><i>(AS left the meeting due to a conflict of interest)</i></p> <p>3.1. JK recapped there had been three applications for the Parent Governor vacancy, AS was elected following a ballot. JK asked whether Governors would like to consider whether either of the two unsuccessful candidates could fill the Co-opted Governor vacancy. JK reminded that we should recruit on a needs basis. All three candidates had similar skills, however Mrs Sheikh has experience of working with SEND pupils which would be useful considering the high level of SEND in the school. JK added that we do not necessarily have to appoint, however SH felt that as parents had expressed an interest in becoming a governor there would need to be a good reason not to, we shouldn't reject parental engagement when it was offered.</p> <p>3.2. HB and SH supported the need for more SEND experience on the board.</p> <p>3.3. FR reported she had been building a relationship with The Ridge, an engineering firm who have allowed employees to volunteer supporting science in KS2. She hasn't approached them yet about the Co-opted vacancy, and it would be good to look more externally for Governors. Governors discussed and agreed that JK will apply to be appointed as LA governor, freeing a Co-opted governor role.</p> <p>3.4. AE reminded Governors KH's term of office expires in March, along with JK's and KD's. It would be advisable to talk with KH about whether she would like to extend her tenure, or become an Associate Governor.</p> <p>3.5. With no further discussion Governors agreed to offering Mrs Sheikh the Co-opted vacancy.</p> <p>ACTION – JK to offer Mrs Sheikh the Co-opted Governor vacancy</p> <p><i>(AS returned to the meeting)</i></p>
4.	<p>Declarations of conflict of interest (including confidentiality)</p> <p>4.1. MH, SL and AS have children in the school, and JL has a daughter who works in the school.</p>
5.	<p>Matters to be raised under Any Other Business</p> <p>5.1. Teachers' strike action</p>
6.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting held on 29 September 2022</p> <p>6.1. Governors confirmed these minutes were a correct record; they were signed by the Chair.</p>

<p>7.</p>	<p>Matters arising from previous minutes (if not an agenda item)</p> <p>7.1. – 23.1.14.7. SH requested that those Governors who haven't yet completed the Safeguarding Quiz to send them to her asap. JK said it was a very good exercise.</p> <p>ACTION - Governors who haven't completed the Safeguarding Quiz to send them to SH asap</p> <p>7.2. – 21.1.13.2. <u>Staff absence</u> was discussed in the last Personnel Committee meeting.</p> <p>7.3. – 21.1.12.1. <u>School Streets</u> CCTV traffic cameras are not expected until July at the earliest. Parents have been complaining about the increased traffic in Curtis Road, they have contacted WBC who tell them to contact the police who tell them to contact the school. MH had already told WBC there is only so much the school can do without additional help, and there are still altercations with parents without appropriate reinforcement. Parents still drive up to the gate to drop their children off, and cars continue to park inappropriately. FR highlighted the positive points that School Streets has brought to the school; it funded the outdoor gym and free Bikeability training for Years 5 & 6. AS commented that she has seen other schools with child no parking signs and asked if we could consider using these outside the school. These are quite costly, and cones have already been placed outside with little effect. There is also the issue of who would put these out every morning. JK suggested that we look into the cost of these.</p> <p>ACTION – The school to look into the cost of child no parking signs</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>8.1. <u>Curriculum Committee</u>: CP noted a local school that was placed under Requires Improvement by OfSTED had not been logging Behaviour Incidents properly. FR clarified Calcot uses Provision Maps for every incident logged which allows categories for filtering. All staff are aware of the procedures and NB tracks the logs and talks to the children at assemblies about behaviour. CP asked how the new Phonics scheme is bedding in. NB suggested Governors view a Phonics lesson in action, it was agreed CP, JL and JK will attend and report back. JL has asked the PE Lead to do a survey regarding choice of sport children would like and cross reference to school activities. JK informed the PE lead will be asked to provide a presentation about outdoor learning at a future FGB meeting.</p> <p>8.2. <u>FHSP Committee</u>: The West Berks H&S Audit has been finalised. The floor insurance claim was successful and the classrooms have new furniture. JK informed the projected end of year carry-forward has increased due primarily to central government extending the PE Grant. There has also been some additional funding received in some areas. HB noted the school's finances are healthier than most schools.</p> <p><i>(MH left the meeting)</i></p> <p>8.3. <u>Personnel Committee</u>: The November meeting looked at staff performance management. The meeting viewed an anonymised sample of teacher performance management, plus the impact of FR introducing coaching within the assessment strategy. Governors also discussed the 8% rise for new teachers and 5% rise for others and how this impacted on the school's budget. The January meeting looked at staff absence statistics. Absence is at a worrying level, in spite of COVID, other illnesses and the stress caused by expecting OfSTED. KD will examine the data and monitor trends throughout the year. Turnover of lunchtime staff continues to be a problem. Some LCTs are also TAs, which affects the staffing structure. This will be reviewed for what is needed in September.</p> <p><i>(AS left the meeting)</i></p> <p>8.4. <u>Pay Committee</u>: JK confirmed that FR's performance management was completed in October and the Pay Committee met to finalise the process.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Ratify Terms of References for Committees</p> <p>9.1. These were accepted and ratified by the Governing Body.</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p>Headteacher's Report (verbal)</p> <p>10.1. <u>Staff performance management</u>: FR has been meeting with staff informally since the appraisal process in October, to discuss progress on with their individual targets. Both she and staff have appreciated setting aside time to do this, it has enabled her to connect more with staff. This has included holding catch-ups with the ECTs. These meetings enabled FR to show each staff member what they have achieved, hear their perceptions of their job, and see how it fitted into the bigger picture within the school. Hopefully this will help retain staff for the next academic year. Supply covered for these meetings.</p> <p>10.2. <u>Attendance</u>: There continues to be a high rate of persistent absence in both schools, a lot of children are under 90%. The EWO (Education Welfare Officer) has contacted families, many of whom many are struggling. Three children have been referred to the EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) panel, with two returning on a part-time basis. The school has found that GPs have been supporting child absence with anxiety, which is contra to NICE guidelines, which state doctors should not be underwriting absences due to anxiety.</p> <p>10.3. NB said WBC's advice is to be harsher and fine for absence, and not to authorise any holidays. However, even the EWO agreed some absences were valid. One child with a 42% absence rate, due to extended holidays, has been taken off roll. Everyone agrees nothing can be done more than home visits and picking the child up to come into school.</p> <p>10.4. <u>Effectiveness of new leadership structure</u>: Review has been deferred. All agreed there is a need for a structure that allows opportunities for younger teachers to lead in the future.</p> <p>10.5. <u>Actions to offset stress in staff</u>: Staff have set their own targets and spending more time to listen to them has helped. Waiting for OfSTED does not help.</p> <p>10.6. <u>Progress of Feasibility Study</u>: A recent meeting has closely looked at the outside areas to make a case for retaining as much as possible. The next stage will be formal approval by the project board for recommendation to the Council. The project can then go to planning. However, different people at every meeting results in a lack of continuity. WBC did acknowledge the SEND provision proposals.</p> <p>10.7. The meeting agreed the building, grounds and phasing of a 3-year build should start by 2024. Because it is likely we will still have some larger cohorts, proposals include retaining the Infants building for 3 more years. The new school will be made fully accessible with every classroom at least 55 square metres.</p> <p>10.8. KD requested to see the drawings. After discussion it was agreed that these will be made available for all Governors once the project is approved.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Staff Wellbeing update</p> <p>11.1. Staff wellbeing is poor at the moment. Many are already exhausted after two weeks back. The looming OfSTED inspection doesn't help. Also poor behaviour by some parents which requires support. Every day another problem arises.</p> <p>11.2. JL enquired which part of the school has the problems. The Juniors' staff are struggling with parental behaviour, including coping with abusive talk and out of hours emails from parents. Some staff have decided they don't want to continue in teaching. Parents have no idea of the impact they are having, but sometimes their problems arise from their own distress. They need help but are unable to ask for it in an appropriate way. All the combined pressures make teaching a difficult job and the profession as a whole is struggling, leading to the forthcoming strikes. It's not just the pay, it's about the conditions and the long hours; teachers never have a 37-hour week.</p> <p>11.3. Parents ignore the Behaviour Policy and tell their children to hit back. These incidents quickly escalate to high levels and the parents by-pass the normal channels and go straight to FR. SH suggested a designated email for complaints, to alleviate the stress on teachers' personal emails. Sometimes putting their grievance in writing can help. FR said parents feel dismissed when told to do this, and she has to go into the playground to rescue staff under attack.</p>

11.4. FR does not want to go down the route of putting up notices telling parents not to abuse staff, similar to those in other public places. NB said some parents require a lot of support, they need to be listened to, as many have very large problems of their own. **JL said staff shouldn't have to put up with being abused.** Telling parents to not scream and shout is not as easy as telling children; adults tend to not be as compliant. Some adults tend to be less compliant to requests to modify behaviour and can be abusive to other parents and professionals such as social workers. School is not the place where to hold them to account. It's no good asking for time out when people are so rageful they can't be sent away to think it over. **JL said the school has a duty of care to the staff.** FR said there is also duty of care for the children who are present, and telling the parents to leave doesn't help the situation.

11.5. Some staff are unwilling to be trained to be empathetic. **KD suggested giving staff the tools to acknowledge and calm down** by following a process to de-escalate the situation might be beneficial, similar to NHS staff. FR said the staff don't have the extra time to do this, as much as they don't have the time to spend listening to parents to prevent them feeling dismissed or talked over. Teachers are not health or social workers; this is what makes it overwhelming for them. **JK asked KD to research into managing conflict training for staff.**

ACTION – KD to research into appropriate staff training

11.6. **SH asked whether intimidating behaviour by parents has been mentioned in the school newsletter.** JK prepared a letter last term about parent behaviour, but this hadn't been sent as a particular scenario had been resolved. **JK suggested this could be revised and sent out.** **SH was concerned about how this was communicated,** this should be used as a point of engagement, not as a stick. FR pointed out parents need to know the impact they are having on staff, and that we are losing good people as a result. **SH pointed out Governors have a duty to tell parents they cannot behave like this.** FR added parents should be the school's allies.

ACTION – JK to revise the parent behaviour letter and send to SH for input

11.7. NB reported disgruntlement regarding lack of PPA time at the end of last term and beginning of this term, as both were partial weeks. FR also reported she hadn't approved a staff absence to catch an early holiday flight. Governors discussed scenarios for authorising staff absence but ultimately agreed that it has to be fair for all staff.

11.8. NB noted some schools offer Wellbeing Days to their staff. **CP noted Calcot is a large school, with 90 staff this would be 90 days off which could impact significantly on the school.** FR will look at the cost of Wellbeing Days and whether they could be offered if needed. It is important for staff to feel valued and appreciated. **CP said maybe allowing people to catch early flights could be part of a Wellbeing Day.** FR noted staff with persistent absence would take full advantage of this.

12. Safeguarding update

12.1. SH has been working with JL regarding recording Governor safeguarding update training. Some governors have experienced difficulties logging on to the National College website to complete this. This could be because Governors are grouped on one login.

12.2. There is a cost attached to Safer Recruitment courses for Governors, so JK, JL and KD should ask to be booked onto a refresher course.

12.3. SH reported on the rolling programme of the school checking DBS every three years. A DBS update service can be subscribed to at the cost of £13 per person for a DBS which could be a way forward. There are different levels of DBS and those Governors who come into school on a regular basis will need to have a Section 28 attached to it. WBC suggest the update service is best practice, but it is up to the individual to sign up for this. Governors lamented the charge even for volunteers.

ACTION – Governors to email SH when they have updated their DBS.

13.	<p>SEND and Pupil Premium update</p> <p>13.1. There is still a high level of PPG and SEND children being admitted to the school including physical needs. All this results in a high amount of pressure for support staff, and for teachers who have to plan for SEND. The number of children with EAL has been increasing from 8% to 20% in the Infants, most of these are refugee children.</p>
14.	<p>Feedback from</p> <p>14.1. <u>Spring Term Parent/Teacher meetings</u>: Scheduled for 7-8 February, Governors discussed whether there is a need to add more feedback to what had been obtained at last term's meetings. It was agreed that it is important to ensure these concerns had been addressed before asking for more feedback. Governors agreed to defer attending Parent/Teacher meetings until the autumn term.</p> <p>14.2. <u>Governor Visits</u>: Reports had been circulated. HB has arranged his next Maths visits. JK will arrange a follow up for Early Years. JL commented he is frequently in school for reading and Forest School. FR told Governors she will gladly plan time for Governors whenever they wanted to visit – this was much easier than organising a Governors Day. JL asked whether he could observe an individual child with physical needs, FR said he could observe the whole class but not individuals. Governors were reminded to record their visits to build evidence of Governor interest for OfSTED.</p>
15.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>15.1. <u>Teachers' Strikes</u>: CP informed that although FR can ask staff, they don't have to tell the school management whether they are going to strike. FR had previously asked staff to let her know so she can plan provision for the children. NB noted some schools are closing because they don't know how many staff will be available. HB asked how many staff were in unions. Most are, but not all voted for strike action. CP noted the support staff cannot strike; however supply teachers will not want to cross the picket line. FR will have to make a decision to give parents as much notice as possible.</p> <p>15.2. The strike days are 1 February and 15-16 March. JK asked what happens about pay for all staff if the school decides to close. FR didn't know the answer.</p> <p><i>The meeting closed at 4.25pm.</i></p>
ACTIONS	
1.	1.16. NB to circulate her EYFS to Year 1 presentation.
3.	3.5. JK to write to Mrs Sheikh about the Co-opted Governor vacancy.
7.	<p>7.1. Governors who haven't completed the Safeguarding Quiz to send to SH asap.</p> <p>7.3. The school to look into the cost of child no parking signs.</p>
11.	<p>11.4. KD to research into staff training for managing conflict.</p> <p>11.6. JK to revise the parent behaviour letter and send to JL and SH for comment.</p>
12.	12.3. SH to email Governors regarding their DBS update.