

The Calcot Schools

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting 23.3.

Held on Thursday 9 March 2023 at 9.30am at the school

Present:

Joe Lally (JL) (Joint Chair)
 Florence Rostron (FR) (Headteacher)
 Hugh Baxter (HB)
 Shelly Higgins (SH)
 Nicky Bate (NB)
 Akeelah Shadoobuccus (AS)
 Miriam Sheikh (MS)

In Attendance:

Alice Elliott (AE) (Clerk)

Item	Minutes – Meeting chaired by Joe Lally
1.	<p>Apologies for absence and completion of attendance sheet</p> <p>1.1. Apologies were received from KH, JK, MH, CP, MG, but not from KD. 1.2. JL welcomed MS to the Governing Body.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of conflict of interest</p> <p>2.1. SH, MS, AS have children at the school and JL has a daughter working at the school.</p>
3.	<p>Matters to be raised under Any Other Business</p> <p>3.1. FR reported that there are potentially two teachers' strikes next week which may close the school. However, the Bikeability coaches will continue to run over the strike days as a holiday club. They have public liability insurance and are not part of the teachers' union. Governors approved.</p>
4.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January 2023</p> <p>4.1. Governors confirmed these minutes were a correct record; they were signed by the Chair.</p>
5.	<p>Matters arising from previous minutes (if not an agenda item)</p> <p>5.1. – 23.2.11.3. JL asked about the possibilities of a designated email address for parental complaints. This is another email to check by the office. Parents know they can arrange meetings with teachers, and the office already deal with persistent emails.</p> <p>5.2. – 23.2.11.4. JL was concerned about staff getting verbal and semi-aggressive feedback from parents. It is important to get the message across to parents it isn't acceptable for them to speak to teachers like this.</p> <p>5.3. – 23.2.13.1. JL had spoken to EK about how to accommodate children with SEND. There are a lot of high-level children with SEND in mainstream schooling without enough support and the funds to train the staff appropriately. At the moment the school is staffed satisfactorily, but staffing absences cause difficulties and more children joining the school also cause more difficulties.</p>

6. Headteacher's Report (written)

6.1. FR circulated her report, showing a new layout.

6.2. Since Christmas she had received 50 Safeguarding referrals, of which 15 developed into Child Protection plans. This has been very time consuming for FR, who has to regularly meet with Safeguarding professionals.

6.3. The report was based on the school's Self-Evaluation Forum (SEF), which reports on different areas presented to OfSTED. The first section Outcomes showed the headline data and how it is managed. The school inspection data summary report (ISDR), a web-based page showing data for OfSTED inspectors to use when preparing for and during an inspection, was covered on pages 5-18.

6.4. The Infant school data showed nothing significant for Reading, Phonics or Writing, except greater depth was above the national expectations, as also was Maths.

6.5. The persistent absences at 14.5% was highlighted at being in the top 20%. This has always been high since 2018 with insufficient improvement, despite drastic actions taken with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to individually contact the parents. The Junior school has 27 children below 80% attendance, which is very high resulting in a lot of lost learning. FR reported she was amazed how many children failed to turn up to school yesterday when there was a little bit of snow.

6.6. **JL suggesting telling parents what the implications are for children missing school.** We keep trying to explain to parents how their children could do better if they turned up to school. Since COVID their sense of wellbeing has exasperated this, and they parents feel our attendance policy is very harsh. It is in line with the expectations of the new white paper for attendance and reflected in our policy. **JL noted a lack of a decent education leads onto higher levels of criminality, poor income and poor health.** For secondary schools the children have to self-propel themselves to attend school, but in primary schools it is not the children who are held to account, as attendance is a parental decision. We try to celebrate children who do well but we do not want to penalise children whose attendance is affected by parents who are struggling. While these trends continue to be a problem, the school would struggle to gain an Outstanding from an OfSTED inspection.

6.7. The Junior school data showed nothing significant for KS2. There are now 4 children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

6.8. Quality of Education highlights the school development plan (SDP). Early Years Reading and Phonics is now the main focus. The data lift since Christmas showed more children with English as an Additional Language (EAL): 17% in the Infants and 16% in the Juniors. This has doubled in the past two years, which has a big impact on Phonics. The amount of WBC support we receive is 2 hours a week! However, the progress data for Phonics is ahead of last year, as we prefer to teach in small class groups, providing more time and extra sessions where needed. **SH had noticed a massive improvement in Reading and Phonics. This was echoed by JL, MS and AS.** FR hoped this would affect Writing during the summer term. However the data showed in 2019 Phonics children meeting required expectation was 92%, but only 64% in 2022. But now our approach to Phonics is different, more rigid and methodical, and we are starting to see a massive improvement in KS1 which will hopefully grow throughout the children's time in school.

(NB entered)

6.9. Implementation looks at subject knowledge and continuous professional development (CPD) of the teachers. Material is now presented as smaller steps to avoid overload and being easier to remember. Questions are now open and closed and addressed direct to the children to help with misconception. Children are frequently and independently challenged to see if they have understood what they have been taught, also through an element of revisiting learning, carefully balanced to promote self-esteem. Support is offered to help with learning goals and independent practice leading to consistently reviewing and building up on learning. This is what FR and NB look for when observing lessons and research practices.

6.10. Staff training happens with regular INSET days, Staff meetings and Team Leader meetings. Also through the National College platform which offers self-learning access to 100s of bite-sized webinars.

6.11. Staff Recruitment has resulted in three new Early Career Teachers (ECT). There have been two resignations, one at Easter and one at the end of the year, and FR expects more. There are currently three teachers on Maternity Leave, with two moving out of the area and two leaving the profession. FR wants to advertise for more experienced teachers so she can plan for the next academic year.

6.12. **JL noted the significant national movement way from teaching.** This is due to wellbeing and the duty of care to teachers; many leave after only five years after training. **MS asked about those returning from maternity leave.** They tend to return part time, which tend to be in different roles. NB noted many very experienced teachers prefer to come back part-time, which means their expertise is lost to the Leadership roles. Currently the school has a very strong leadership teachers, but the middle leaders, who tend to be younger and leave to have children, find sustaining their workload is too immense. As a result we lose too many good teachers, their knowledge is diluted and the replacements are unable to understand the rationale.

6.13. PE Grant has arrived into the Budget, with a change in timetable to 2 hours a week. The PE Lead will address a governing board meeting in the summer term.

6.14. We have a new SBM starting on 20 March, and FR will get her up to speed with the Budget. MH is picking up the Health & Safety (H&S) walk-around with the Site Manager.

6.15. The children's choir was entered into the Let's Sing Competition and are now singing at the Hexagon on 24 March.

(FR left)

7. Committee Reports

7.1. Finance, Health, Safety & Premises Committee: HB reported that compared to most schools we are financially OK. However, he noted the Kitchen required a review to look at whether to retain our own staff. Historically it made sense to keep the cost of catering in school, for the right reasons, but the rise in cost of food means it may not be viable. NB noted the committee had debated the cost of meals for families who are struggling, but the increased costs means we are now right on the edge. **SH noted the importance of providing a decent meal to children with struggling families so they can learn properly.** However, Governors noted the quality of outsourced meals were not up to scratch with much smaller portions. We have to follow the school meal food standards, but it seems many children preferred the old menu items before this. The School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) has been based on last year's and broadly reflects the reality of the school's finances. Governors approved, HB and JL will sign it and give it to the Finance Office for processing. The H&S walk-about with MH has had all its issues addressed by FR.

7.2. Curriculum Committee: Governors visited the Infant school and were very impressed by the approach to Phonics. This is now delivered more consistently with every class teaching the same at the same time. The OfSTED inspectors were also impressed by what they saw. It is very highly paced, and children need to keep up and listen carefully. History and Maths were observed with Governors scrutinising the books. Children say they enjoy Maths, as they see how it relates to life, but History is not the same, as it is language and reading based. Children are well supported and enjoy what they are doing, with a focus on awareness of what they have been previously taught, what they are learning and what they will learn in the future. The History curriculum is ambitious; the History Lead is very knowledgeable and likes to create a challenge. Primary teachers have to be masters of everything and our staff benefit from individual high levels of expertise which is shared through training and mentoring. **JL noted the diversity of families in school and wondered how this affected learning.** It is necessary to understand the perspectives of different cultures from a variety of other countries. **AS noted parents would like to learn more African history. JL said it was important to find out how to fit this into our teaching of British culture.**

8.	<p>Safeguarding Update</p> <p>8.1. SH had recently found out the Single Central Record programme has many functionalities which have yet to be explored which could make the office staff's data gathering and production more efficient. This should be explored by the Finance staff to see what is needed and to establish what extra can be done. Currently the Single Central Record register is up to date. SH will look at the SCR programme instructions to see how this could make governing procedures more manageable regarding DBS, recording and reminding about training for teachers and governors, and providing data for governors for each meeting.</p>
9.	<p>Pupil Premium Update</p> <p>9.1. There are 21 PPG children in the Junior school who are 'doubly disadvantaged'. The school has 27.4% PPG children which is 77 children overall. This is significantly more than other schools in the area, as we are in an area of deprivation. The Infant school has 19.4% PPG children, because many families do not come forward because they are already getting free school meals. If we were able to get up to 35% overall from both schools, we would be eligible for more funding, which would help all the children. Parents can be reluctant to come forward, despite family support workers suggesting it to them but we will continue to monitor need through trips and payments due in school. As circumstances can change throughout the year, it was suggested families should be approached again.</p>
10.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>10.1. The next FGB meeting is Thursday 27 April to ratify the Budget. MS and AS were concerned if this clashed with their Eid celebrations. HB should liaise with the new SBM about the Budget so he can explain it better at the next FHSP Committee meeting. The FHSP meeting scheduled for 23 March will be postponed to the 24 April meeting because the new SBM won't be able to deliver her Finance report adequately. JL asked for a synopsis of the present financial situation to be sent to governors early in the summer term prior to the FHSP Committee and FGB meetings.</p> <p><i>The meeting closed at 11.05am.</i></p>
<p>ACTIONS</p>	
10.	<p>10.1. HB to liaise with new SBM over Budget.</p> <p>10.1. The new SBM to send governors a synopsis of the present financial situation in good time before the next FHSP Committee and FGB meetings.</p>