



**Extraordinary Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday 24th March 2021 at 6.30 pm
online via Zoom**

DRAFT MINUTES

Name	Role	Present	Name	Role	Present
Chris Ampofo	Foundation	√	Will Leaf (Co-Chair)	Foundation	√
Dan Brandt	Foundation	√	Zoë Miller	Parent	√
Ralph Cator	Foundation	x	Anthony Richards	Ex officio	√
Kwamena Duker*	Staff	√	Cristiana Silvaes de Melo	Parent	√
Victoria Heald- Barraclough	LA	√	David Sin*	Foundation	√
Lucas Janssen	Co-opted	√	Joel Wolchover*	Parent	√
Marianne Jenkins (Co-Chair)	Foundation	x	Katie Kilgallon	Assoc Mem, T&L	√

* Present for part of the meeting

Also present:

Nicola Christopher Deputy Head (advising)
Ben Larke Teacher (presenting, in attendance until the end of item 3)
LeandosTaliotis Prospective governor (observing)
Janet Gordon Clerk

1. Opening Prayer and welcome

Will Leaf, chairing this meeting, welcomed governors and began the meeting with a prayer.

Documents:

- HT Report to Governors spr 2 2021.docx – item 6
- Lockdown Procedures.docx – item 8ii
- PF EGB Draft Minutes 2021-02-03.doc – item 9
- PrincessFredStaffSurveyJan21.pptx – item 7iv
- SEND Information Repot 2020-21.docx – item 8i
- SEND Policy.docx – item 8i
- SIS External Remote Visit Evaluation of Remote Learning Provision 05.02.2021.docx – item 5
- Staff Survey feedback March 21.pdf – item7iv
- Writing status at PF March 2021.docx – item 4

2. Apologies for Absence

Marianne Jenkins had sent apologies for absence in advance and apologies for absence were received from Ralph Cator during the meeting. The Headteacher explained that Kwamena Duker would arrive late, as he had to travel home after working late. Joel Wolchover had apologised in advance for needing to leave the meeting for 15 minutes.

[6.40 pm Joel Wolchover left and David Sin joined the meeting]

3. Declaration of interest for items on this agenda

There were no declarations of interest for items on this agenda.

4. Writing update

Ben Larke (subject lead for English and Year 6 teacher) had presented on Writing to the Teaching & Learning committee in November 2018. Governors were invited to read the update document shared in advance of this meeting.

Writing remains a priority at the school. It was highlighted by Ofsted, has a prominent place on the School Improvement Plan and is discussed frequently.

Mr Larke began moderating Key Stage 2 (KS2) Writing across Brent 4-5 years ago. He realised that moderation and assessment practices at the school could be developed to bring the benefits of strong moderation, such as being able to effectively plot and plan progression through the school for the benefit of the children. Mr Larke has been able to share what he has learnt about moderation with the staff. There are now 3-4 moderation sessions per year, so colleagues are increasing their confidence in assessment, identifying gaps and knowing what they need to do to fill them. This has enabled professional, critical conversations about Writing, with staff coming to judgements together.

Moderation is now more rigorous and effective. Additionally, the standards of Teaching & Learning have been raised in the last few years. New practice has been introduced in the last 1-3 years, some of which is embedded and some of which will need time after the interruption of Covid.

The approach to Writing across the school has changed to “audience and purpose”: why are we writing and who are we writing for? Boxed success criteria have been introduced, with effective working walls in every classroom from Year 1 to Year 6. There has been a change in the way units are taught from one to two - three weeks, which allows more depth and opportunity to introduce relevant skills. With training and monitoring, the ability of staff to model effective writing has improved and shared, collaborative writing techniques have been introduced.

The curriculum has been adapted to ensure that progression is sensible and also to introduce fun. In the summer term there will be a surprise event which will prompt a variety of writing activity.

The improvement of Writing is an ongoing rather than immediate process, but the benefits of these changes have already started to be visible. In house assessment data shows that the children are starting to achieve higher and are beginning to make better progress. Mr Larke was disappointed when the SATs were cancelled last year, as he was expecting the best results in many years, with a positive progress measure and high achievers at higher than national average.

Covid-19 has caused Writing to suffer across the country. Children are staying still, regressing or not making as much progress as they would have done at school. The quality of provision during the lockdowns has been very good. The school's ability to adapt to the changing circumstances has been really impressive. Mr Larke knows this from talking to teachers at other schools in training sessions and from speaking to family and friends with children in other primary schools. The quality of home learning was as good as it could have been, despite the challenges.

Without the pandemic, the school would have hoped to have consolidated and secured some of the new practices introduced to teachers over the last few years. Going forward, the aim will be to consolidate and embed this practice, although the school will need to continue to adapt. Mr Larke will be leading training about the goals until the end of the year, which will focus on consolidating learning from previous years more than the current year's curriculum. Spelling has regressed nationally and there is some immaturity in compositional work through the loss of discipline and stamina which comes with regular formal writing. After the first lockdown, many children had recovered by Christmas. The children need time back in school and the staff will adapt as necessary, as more is learnt about where the gaps are in each child's case.

Governors noted from the document shared in advance that progress has been an issue because of high prior attainment at KS1 and asked for further information. Mr Larke explained that this is almost an issue with the assessment process itself. It is markedly easier to achieve Greater Depth at KS1 than it is at the end of KS2. With a high achieving cohort, it is very difficult for all children to remain at the greater depth standard. This is a national issue, but it is easier for low or middle achievers to maintain or improve their standard. One initiative to address this is Reading for Pleasure. Nationally and at Princess Frederica, boys who achieve highly at KS1 are less likely than girls to achieve highly at KS2. A major reason for this is likely to be that boys are more likely to fall away from reading at a high standard. The aim is to ensure that boys are still engaged with the books they are reading as much as possible for longer. This has been successful with some of the current Year 6 cohort.

Governors asked whether pupil mobility affects progress measures. The Headteacher explained that he has reviewed this and is of the opinion that it doesn't make a significant difference.

Governors thanked Mr Larke for the work he has done in raising the standard of Writing at the school. They were encouraged to see the focus being given to Writing and looked forward to hearing more at a future meeting.

[6.57 Joel Wolchover rejoined during this item and 7 pm Ben Larke left the meeting]

5. School Improvement Plan update

The Headteacher reminded governors that Writing is one of the six main priorities on the School Improvement Plan and the development of the Remote Learning offer is another. He will update governors on the other priorities at future meetings.

The Headteacher informed governors that he is proud of the way in which Writing has been adapted as part of the remote offer. This was based on the existing provision, questionnaire responses from parents, children and staff and was continually adapted based on feedback.

The evaluation of Remote Learning provided through an external remote visit (by the BSP) was shared with governors in advance. The report illustrates the remote offer during the last lockdown, which is described as “strong and reflective”. A good routine of implementation, review, design, implementation, review was established. Feedback was positive.

All decisions were based on whether they would work effectively for all children, not only a small proportion of them. Barriers to accessing online learning, risks and ways to enable parents to support their children’s learning were considered in a cycle of reviewing and reflecting.

The school took advantage of a number of funding opportunities, including Google Classroom and the tutoring programme.

This was a whole school effort. A decision was made before lockdown that teachers would work from home, leading their classes, based on feedback from the first lockdown. Learning Support Assistants rose to the challenge of ensuring the children in school – at some points almost 25% of the school population - received a mirror of the curriculum being delivered remotely, providing equality of access to the curriculum.

Governors were encouraged to read the report, which was produced after a meeting between the Headteacher and BSP School Improvement Specialist Orlene Badu, during which there was rigorous questioning. It includes recommendations and next steps.

Governors asked whether the Headteacher could elaborate on the recommendation for children with SEND. During the interview it was difficult to capture the provision for SEND children who were not in school. Those on the SEND register with accessibility issues were invited in to school where they received support. A small proportion remained at home. After receiving the report, the Headteacher and Deputy asked the DOTLs to capture the provision for children with SEND who were learning remotely. There is now an outline of the various strategies used to support children from home. The offer was generally very strong, which has led to a positive transition back to school for SEND children.

[7.09 pm Kwamena Duker joined the meeting during this item]

6. Headteacher's Report including Safeguarding

The Headteacher's written report had been shared with governors in advance.

Safeguarding: The Headteacher planned to meet the Safeguarding link governor early in the summer term. The Deputy Head is now qualified to be a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The existing DSL remains in post, but the Headteacher and Deputy are deputy DSLs and this Safeguarding team meets fortnightly to increase their capacity to respond to Safeguarding issues, as discussed with governors in relation to the risk assessment.

Attendance: First response sheets have been created to ensure priority contact is made when children deemed vulnerable are not on site.

Exit interviews: An overview of staff exit interviews conducted by a governor over the last year was included in the report, with full details shared with the Headteacher and Chairs. Some interviews were conducted in person, some via a questionnaire.

Risk assessment: The Headteacher thanked governors who reviewed version 10 of the Risk Assessment. School clubs will run separately from Kenzalia until at least the autumn term, so that year group bubbles are kept apart. Kenzalia is capped at 15 children, with only 4-5 attending currently. Parents are choosing not to use the provision, as they were asked to only use it when necessary. Next term it will be reviewed for the autumn.

Recovery curriculum: Overall the return to school has been positive. There is some impact from the lockdowns, including some anxieties.

Mental Health is being addressed through PSHE. The staff are aware that wellbeing is a priority. Attention is being given to rebuilding stamina and healthy communication. The children are responding well to clear boundaries and expectations. The children have been asked about how they are feeling on returning to school and the results of this survey will be shared with governors.

Physical Development has been a focus, especially in Reception and Year 1, as some children have not had extensive opportunities for physical activity during the lockdowns.

Rather than simply continuing with the curriculum, gaps in learning are being identified through assessment, so that children secure learning before continuing, particularly in Maths and Writing. Foundation subject material will be caught up in various ways designed by the teachers, such as focus days and workshops which are enjoyable but also develop key skills which will be needed in later years.

Statutory assessments will not take place this year, but the school will go through the process of replica SATs, which is recognised borough-wide as a good approach. Year 6 will work towards a week of testing in Reading, Writing, Maths and Grammar. This will provide clarity about the children's progress and gives them something to work towards in preparation for Secondary school, without putting unnecessary pressure on them.

Governors asked whether there had been any positive impact on the children's learning or progress from being in lockdown. The Headteacher explained that it was too early to say – there had been an assessment period the previous week and these results were being analysed. In keeping with the teacher presentation at the beginning of the meeting, it would seem that Writing has suffered the most, more than Maths. There appears to have been more progression in Reading than there might have been if the children were in school. Parents most naturally encourage reading and children generally enjoy reading and will read in their spare time. Families have had rich conversations with the children which develops their confidence in reading. There will be meetings for parents to explain that any catch up will be part of a slow recovery over 15-17 months, by which time the children will be back on track in some areas and for some children back to where they were previously. Catch up by the end of the school year is unrealistic.

Governors noted that one child with SEND had not returned to school. They asked what detail could be shared about the reasons and what provision the child was receiving in the meantime. The child's absence is not related to their learning needs. The family have been unable to return to the UK because of Covid restrictions. It is not viable for the child to receive education where they are, so teachers have provided some resources to support them. The child can access the provision for children who are self-isolating and the family are supporting them using the guidance the school has provided. The attendance code used to indicate that it is an absence because of Covid means that the family will not be penalised.

Governors asked whether Kenzalia will run over the Easter holidays. Stagecoach will run for a proportion of the holiday, but Kenzalia will not. Some works are planned in the Dining Hall related to the fire alarm system. Families can be signposted to other provision.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for his report. They were encouraged to see the Recovery curriculum plans.

7. GB Matters

i. Membership

The Clerk informed governors that the only current vacancy was the Foundation place representing the vicar of St Martin's. Leandros Taliotis was observing this meeting and would consider taking this up. One parent governor's term of office was due to end in October.

ii. GB ethnicity data (for info)

The Local Authority had requested all Boards to return ethnicity data to them. An overview had been shared with governors in advance. Some governor responses were missing and the clerk had returned these as "prefer not to say". The Clerk was asked to resend the questionnaire to governors who had not responded.

Action: Clerk

Governors asked whether the Headteacher could include pupil ethnicity data in his next report for comparison.

Action: Headteacher

iii. Vision update

Co-Chair Will, Co-Vice Chair Zoë and the Deputy Head met to resume work on the school vision. The staff survey (discussed in the next point on the agenda) highlighted that some staff felt that there was a lack of clarity about the vision. The staff had provided feedback on the initial governor work, producing a list of words for consideration and Zoë has collated the information into a framework. The draft strapline is “Learning for life in all its fullness”. The next step would be to formalise the vision and mission as well as a condensed list of values. These will inform governors’ work in leading the school and the aspiration is for them to be recognisably Princess Frederica. The staff team will provide further feedback and then governors will have further discussion in the summer term.

iv. Staff survey results

Zoë reported that before Christmas she designed a survey based on research from The Key for School Governors and other school staff surveys to produce questions that would be strategically useful. The main categories for comment were: school performance, staff wellbeing and leadership. The data collected was used to produce graphs and pie charts shared with the staff and governors. Zoë took the areas for development and concern that were raised through their comments to a staff meeting for discussion, so that the staff know that the Board have taken their views seriously and have plans to address the themes of concern.

Almost all teaching took part in the survey, but there was lower uptake from other staff. If the Board can demonstrate that they are listening and responding, if this is an annual process, there may be a better response rate reflecting all staff in the school.

There were very positive responses, with comments which have fed into the vision and values work. Many staff mentioned how much they enjoy being with the children. The Headteacher added that the staff appreciated Zoë coming to speak to them.

Governors thanked Zoë for carrying out this work and her letter to the staff team. They are aware that the staff are a great asset and the level of staff retention is a testament to the school. Zoë had sent a card on behalf of governors to the members of staff who were celebrating significant anniversaries at the school in the previous few weeks.

v. Staff Wellbeing working group

From the staff survey, the importance of a culture of wellbeing being set by the Board suggested some specific actions. There is already a staff working group. The addition of governors to this group could create more connection between the Board and the staff team beyond an annual survey and could ensure action and impact. This would involve termly, focused discussion and reporting back to the Board. Clarification of the school vision will also lift wellbeing.

Governors **agreed** that two governors should join the group. Zoë and Chris volunteered. They will liaise with the Headteacher about the next staff wellbeing meeting.

Action: Chris and Zoë

vi. Whole Board Training

The Chair informed governors that the Board had been offered training from the LDBS on governing well in the pandemic and the new Ofsted inspection framework. A number of governors attend individual training courses. The Chair encouraged governors to continue doing this, sharing what they have learned. However, this would be an opportunity for training together to build a shared understanding of good governance and the expectations of Ofsted in an interactive session, led by two facilitators from the LDBS who know the school well. The Headteacher encouraged as many governors as possible to attend.

The Clerk was asked to send a Doodle poll to find out governors' availability.

Action: Clerk

vii. Admissions

An additional item was inserted here, as agreed with governors at the beginning of the meeting, for the Chair of the Admissions committee, Joel, to provide a verbal update. Reception applications for September 2021 have been processed. There were a good number of applicants and the school remains oversubscribed. One issue which emerged is that there were an extraordinary number of sibling applicants this year. There are 60 places in Reception (ie two classes). 37 of the first round of offers went to siblings, whereas usually the number is around 20-25. This means that less parents without a child at the school will be offered a place in the first round of offers. and families with siblings are more likely to accept their offer, meaning that less places would be available in subsequent rounds of offers.

Governors were reassured that they can be confident that the admissions criteria were followed rigorously.

Governors asked whether it would be worthwhile preparing communications for parents who may be disappointed when offers go out on 16 April. Although the circumstances are unusual, parents would need to follow the usual appeals process stating their grounds for appeal. Joel offered to draft information for governors, in case they are asked about this.

Governors involved in checking Reception and Nursery applications were thanked.

8. Policies and documents for review

i. SEND policy and information report

These were provided for governors' information. Governors were invited to send any questions to the Headteacher and he would refer them to the SENCO.

ii. Lockdown policy (updated)

This policy relates to partial and full lockdown on the premises because of a threat. It was presented to governors because the installation of the new fire alarm system has changed the way that full lockdown is communicated to staff, more efficiently than previously. The new two tone fire alarm system provides a different tone to indicate full lockdown.

Governors suggested that it might be useful to provide a flowchart to indicate lines of communication, so that it is clear who needs to be contacted at which point. Suggestions will be emailed to the Headteacher.

Action: Zoë

9. Minutes of the previous meeting (3rd February 2021)

- i. Accuracy**
- ii. Matters arising**

Governors **approved** the minutes of the previous meeting as accurate.

Zoë had expressed thanks and appreciation to the staff on governors' behalf when she attended a staff meeting, as reported above.

There was an outstanding item to convene a working group to discuss the possible reorganisation of governor link roles.

Action: Clerk

Governors were asked to add details of any training completed in the school year 2020-21 to the training log on Google Drive and to upload any certificates or send them to the Clerk.

Action: Governors

10. Any other urgent business

There was no other urgent business not covered above. The Chair thanked governors, who wished the Headteacher and staff team a happy Easter and a good break over the holidays.

The meeting closed at 8.13 pm.