

ESSA PRIMARY ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
HELD AT THE ACADEMY ON WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2017 AT 9.00AM

Present: Nigel Whittle (Chair), Enid Cathcart, Nazida Patel, Phil Jackson, Aatika Patel, Salmah Akram and Jo Atherton (Principal).

In attendance: Andrew Cooper (CEO), David Mole (Finance Director), Sayeh Mariner (Early Years Lead – item 4e only) and Denise Hark (Clerk to the Local Governing Body).

Nigel Whittle in the Chair

Part 1

1a) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Sofiya Patel, Angela Stephens, Tasneem Patel and Ismail Kala.

1b) Election of Chair

Nominations were invited for the position of Chair of the Local Governing Body for the following academic year.

Agreed:

- That Nigel Whittle be re-elected as Chair of the Local Governing Body.

1c) Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

Governors made no declaration of pecuniary interest in the items to be discussed at the meeting.

Governors were requested to complete the annual Register of Business Interest form in readiness for the next academic year.

1d) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Agreed:

- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 March 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

2 **FINANCE & HR**

2a) Budget Monitoring Report 2016/17

The Finance Director presented a budget monitoring report which showed the financial position as at the end of May 2017 showing the contribution from reserves as income. The Finance Director explained that he expected the end of year position to rise to £96,000 if all areas which have been budgeted for are spent.

There had been an increase in income for SEN due to support provided for individual children which had not been budgeted for previously. There was also additional income from the breakfast club and also from the PE grant. The budget for staffing was showing as overspent as the vacancies had been offset by supply costs. It was noted that the apprentice clerical assistant position was still vacant. There had also been significant savings on the Teaching Assistant budget. It was explained that the vacancy and maternity leave budget had been over-budgeted at the start of the year.

There had been a small overspend of the premises budget but savings had been made on repairs and maintenance and also on utility costs. The office costs budget had been overspent due mainly to increased printing costs. There was a saving in the Learning Resources budget as part of the pre-opening grant which would be used for ICT as this remained unspent. The Finance Director explained that the Board would be asked to support this expenditure next year.

It was noted that the school had received additional funding due to increased pupil numbers and this funding would be used to support teaching and learning.

The Chair advised that the contingency budget heading should be looked at closely next year. The Finance Director explained that this budget pot is for unforeseen occurrences and advised that this can be moved to other areas of the budget if it is not spent. The Chair commented that if there had been more knowledge of this earlier a greater commitment to learning resources could have been made in March. The CEO asked for an explanation of why the SEN funding had not been included in the original budget. The Finance Director clarified that the income for these children had been received at a later date. The Head Teacher added that the academy pays the first £6,000 of support for SEN children and support is also given to a child who is not eligible for the funding.

A governor asked whether the additional PE funding had been spent. The Head Teacher replied that the academy was using a specialist PE provider and this costs more than the income received. It was planned that next year Essa Academy would be used to provide this service.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted

2b) Budget 2017/18

The Finance Director reported that nationally schools were faced with budget constraints due to increased staffing costs. He explained that the government was considering introducing the National Funding Formula from 2018. The draft budget had been prepared assuming that the National Funding Formula would come into force. The Finance Director explained that it was likely that Essa Primary Academy would benefit from the new formula because of levels of deprivation in the local area.

It was explained that the General Annual Grant funding was based on an estimate of pupil numbers initially followed by an in-year adjustment. The forecast numbers in January was 292 with the budget having been prepared on 289 pupils. The Pupil Premium Grant income was estimated based on the January 2017 Free School Meals eligibility.

A three year budget plan had also been prepared which allows for inflation at 1% and increased staffing costs at 1.5%.

The Finance Director explained that once the school is full it will be funded on prior year numbers; however, this causes a problem in that the top two years are single classes. In 2019/20 this will mean that the school is funded on the prior year whilst having an additional class. It was explained that the budget would have to fund an additional teacher and Teaching Assistants. It was also explained that because of this there would be a large overspend in 2019/20 and 2020/21 but this would drop in 2021/22.

The Finance Director explained that an overspend of £28,000 in the year 2017/18 would be balanced out by an underspend of around £23,000 in the following year. The Chair commented that the level of deficit was broadly the level of contingency. A governor asked how the deficit would be managed in 2019/20 and 2020/21. The Finance Director explained that the Board had committed to support Essa Primary Academy whilst it is still growing and said that the deficit was a result of how the academy had originally been set up. The Chair agreed that this is a technical point rather than a fundamental issue. The Finance Director added that the Trust has substantial reserves. The Chair advised that the Governing Body should keep the budget under close review. The Finance Director advised that the October census would give a better idea of the budget. He agreed to check whether the EFA still fund on an average of the pupil numbers at the censuses in October and January. The CEO explained that the Schools Minister had announced that there would be no delay in introducing the National Funding Formula for 2018/19. He added that the Local Authority would like Essa Primary Academy to take an additional class because of the pressure of pupil places in Bolton; however, this was not the right time for the school with its new staff.

A governor asked whether the appeals for school places had been successful. The Head Teacher explained that the outcome was not yet known for the Year 3 and Year 4 classes both of which are oversubscribed.

2c) Health and Safety Report

The Finance Director explained that a Trust wide Health and Safety Committee had been set up in the autumn term and health and safety policies had been reviewed over two terms, some of these policies would be presented to the Board for approval. The Health and Safety Committee has reviewed specific issues and areas of concern. The Trust had commissioned a Health and Safety audit in May, the result of this was that a Health and Safety training plan had been put into place and any urgent actions have been completed. It was noted that the Health and Safety policies need to be kept up to date and need to be published. It was noted that general Health and Safety training for staff had been identified as a requirement by the audit.

The new Principal at Essa Academy has carried out a safeguarding audit and a safeguarding action plan has been produced.

The Finance Director explained that the Health and Safety Committee had agreed to be more pro-active in ensuring that Health and Safety and Safeguarding are taken seriously.

2d) Policies for Approval

The following policies were presented for approval. It was noted that these policies which had previously been in force were now Trust wide policies.

Agreed:

That the following policies be adopted:

Intimate Care Policy
Exclusion Policy
Use of Reasonable Force Policy

2e) Risk Registers

The Finance Director explained that the risk register had recently been reviewed.

Agreed: That the Finance Director circulates a copy of the risk register to governors.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES (Confidential item)

This item was deemed as confidential and as such is contained in the Part 2 confidential minutes

4. EDUCATION, ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT WELFARE

4a) Principal's Report

It was reported that there were currently 242 pupils on roll with 48 children confirmed to start in Reception in September; out of these 48 children, 22 already have siblings at Essa Primary Academy and 16 have attended Essa Nursery. It was noted that having a nursery on site had reduced the number of pre-school settings.

It was explained that one child from Year 3 and one from Year 4 would be leaving and this would reduce the classes down to 33 pupils. It was noted that governors had previously agreed that they wanted classes to reduce to 30. The Principal asked governors to confirm whether it was their intention that these children should not be replaced. The Principal added that there was a significant waiting list for these classes. The CEO advised that any classes above 30 should be considered as an exception. The Chair asked whether governors had the power to refuse to admit additional children. The Principal replied that they had the power to refuse to admit additional children; however, parents would still be entitled to appeal against the decision. Governors were in agreement that they did not want to create a precedent and wanted to aim for 30 children in a class.

Agreed:

- That class sizes be no greater than 30 children where possible.

4ai) Attendance

The Principal reported that the academy had worked hard to improve attendance and this resulted in improvements being made; however, attendance had been affected by children being taken on holiday during term time. It was explained that 132 school days had been lost for holidays in the last few weeks with four families having been issued with penalty notices for these absences. The Principal added that this was a disappointing end to the year with attendance likely to be around 93% for the year rather than closer to the 95% target. The Principal explained that a number of families had been taken to court and four families had been found guilty in their absence. The largest fine which had been given was £600. The Principal added that the Local Authority was going through the full process and the maximum penalty was a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months imprisonment. The Chair asked what could be done to communicate the importance of attendance to parents. The Principal replied that this is conveyed through the newsletter and also staff have personal conversations with parents over attendance. The Principal added that she did not think that moving the term dates would have an effect on improving attendance. The Principal explained that one family who have three children in school left three weeks before the end of term as receiving a fine would be cheaper than waiting to fly out during the school holiday period. It was noted that a lot of the families of children at the school have families overseas. The Principal added that the school often finds out that they are unable to contact some families at the start of term as they are still overseas.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

4b) Term Dates 2018/19

The proposed term dates for 2018/19 were presented for approval. The Principal explained that the dates are in line with the dates for Essa Academy and more or less in line with the Local Authority term dates.

Agreed:

- That the term dates for 2018/19 be approved.

4c) SEND Annual Report

It was reported that there were 63 children on the SEND out of 238 pupils which represented 26.3%. Three of these children have an Education Health Care Plan. It was explained that the year groups with the most significant number of SEND pupils are Year 3 with 19 pupils and Year 4 with 17 pupils. A governor asked whether children could be added to the register in later years. The Principal confirmed that they could do so as the SEND register is assessed continually, some children are put on the register and then taken off as they go further up the school. It was explained that those children on the register for speech and language difficulties includes those who are working with a speech therapist.

The Principal explained that 60% of the children on the SEND register are persistent absentees.

A governor asked whether the gender split of the SEND register was a normal picture as 63% of the children on the register are boys. The Principal replied that in general there were usually more boys than girls with SEND but the percentage of boys on the SEND register at Essa Primary Academy was higher than average. A governor asked whether having 26% of the school on the SEND register was a high percentage. The Principal confirmed that it is high and added that children are tracked on an individual basis.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

4d) Safeguarding Annual Report

The report included a whole Trust overview which included the areas of IT, visitors and staff. It was noted that an intensive audit had been carried out. There would be twice monthly meetings Trust wide of the Safeguarding group with one meeting focusing on attendance and one on safeguarding.

Mrs Cathcart, the Safeguarding governor, said that she would revisit the online safeguarding training.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

4e) EYFS Report and Year 1 Early Excellence Project

Sayeh Mariner, the EYFS Lead reported on the Year 1 transition project. It was explained that this was to look at transforming the Year 1 environment to ease transition for pupils from Reception to Year 1 by taking the best practice from EYFS

and transferring it into Key Stage 1. Ms Mariner explained that children make a good start in Reception and this needs to be moved forward so that the Early Years principles can be built on in Year 1. The progress to date is that the Year 1 teacher has attended courses and in-school training has been delivered by a consultant. All staff now have an understanding of the approach. An audit of the resources and environment has taken place to allow the environment to inspire curiosity. The project was being supported by Early Excellence. It was explained that transition from Reception to Year 1 was more difficult than for Year 6 to Year 7 as children would have experience summer dip followed by a further dip of four to five weeks. The environment would now mirror where they have come from and there would also be a strong focus on literacy in both areas. The Chair asked whether there was a monitoring process in place when children move classes. Ms Mariner explained that an action plan would be put in place which would assist monitoring. The Year 1 teachers would have five days training and two audit visits this year from Early Excellence. It was explained that the new Year 1 teacher had already spent two days at the academy and has been involved in the project via Skype. It was planned that Teaching Assistants would be exchanged during this term and one Teaching Assistant would be moving up with the children. Ms Mariner explained that a safe secure environment would be built up and added that a good programme had been put in place.

Agreed: That the report be noted

4f) Big Lottery Funding

It was reported that a bid had been made for £10,000 for a wellbeing programme and the academy had been successful on the first round of application. The bid was to section off an area in the library to create a calming space to support staff dealing with challenging behaviours and to purchase a technical kit to help children de-escalate themselves. The Principal explained that some of the persistent absentee issues were due to children who don't find school easy.

Agreed: That the report be noted

5. GOVERNANCE

5a) Schedule of Meeting Dates

Agreed: That the Local Governing Body meetings for the next academic year be held as follows:

Wednesday 20 September 2017 at 9.00am
Wednesday 8 November 2017 at 9.00am
Wednesday 17 January 2018 at 9.00am
Wednesday 7 March 2018 at 9.00am
Wednesday 27 June 2018 at 9.00am

5b) Governor Training and Development

The Principal encouraged governors to continue to visit the academy. The Chair reported that he had attended a Senior Leadership Team meeting and also a HR review meeting. He added that governors should try to meet on a more regular basis with teachers to look at individual subject areas. Mrs Cathcart reported that she had visited over the year to look at safeguarding and her links subject and classes. The Chair asked all governors to meet with the corresponding teacher for their subject area next term. A review of governor subject links would take place at the next meeting.

The Principal explained the process behind Governor Mark which is a national award and agreed to send the document to governors for them to consider whether they would like to proceed with it.

It was noted that an Education and Achievement Group meeting had been arranged to take place during the final week of term.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6a) Whole School Art Project

The Principal reported that there was a whole school art project to develop banners based on school values. Governors were invited to participate in the project.

6b) Governor I-Pads

The Principal asked governors if they would like I-Pads to be available for use at Governing Body meetings.

Agreed:

- That the Principal provides I-Pads to be used by governors at Governing Body meetings from the next academic year.

6c) Fire Evacuation

It was reported that an unplanned fire evacuation practice had taken place during a lunch time and that it had gone well.

7. CONSENT TO ABSENT GOVERNORS

Agreed:

- To consent to the absence from this meeting of Ismail Kala, Sofiya Patel, Angela Stephens and Tasneem Patel.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That in accordance with Article 125 of the Articles of Association for the Academy the following matters be designated as confidential:

Minute 3 and Minute 4aii)

The meeting closed at 10.45am

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____