

Putting the Community First



LONDON BOROUGH

**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICE MEETING WITH CHAIRMEN
AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF GOVERNORS
NOTES OF THE MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 2 MAY 2012
AT HENDON TOWN HALL**

In attendance

Angela Accups	St James Catholic High
Brenda Barrett	Queen Elizabeth's Girls'
Laura Bier	Brookland
John Bowra	Christ's College
Helen Burns	Deansbrook Junior
Maria Casey	The Compton
Andrew Colman	Church Hill Primary
Liz Court	Woodcroft Primary
Peter de Naeyer	Grasvenor Avenue Infant
Catrina Dillon	Martin Primary
David Drimer	Broadfields Primary
Jon Epstein	Akiva
Tricia French	St Mary'
Sarah Gibbins	Brookland
Clare Goodman	Martin Primary
Evelyn Gruber	St Joseph's Infant
Neville Haneef	St James Catholic High
Paul Hoskins	Childs Hill Primary
Kate Jade	Foulds Primary
Margaret Johnson	Friern Barnet
Hansha Kara	Parkfield
Cllr Sury Khatri	Dollis Junior
Gerry Kirby	Oak Lodge
Caroline Kirbuczky	Northway
June Last	Brookhill Nursery
John Living	Dollis Infant
Beryl Maltby	St Margaret's Nursery
Bruce McGill	Coppetts Wood Primary
Janet McIntyre	Christ Church Primary
Gerald Murphy	Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary and Bishop Douglass RC Secondary
Daniel Neuman	Woodrige
Graham Old	Coppetts Wood Primary
Nick Paliayiotou	Hollickwood Primary
Liz Pearson	Hampden Way Nursery
Kim Politzer	Moss Hall Junior
Margaret Pond	Northside

Lia Pottinger	Courtland
Ann Robinson	Whitefield
Chris Rosser	St Vincent Primary
Neil Ruckman	Grasvenor Infants and Underhill Junior
Julia Sannitt	Garden Suburb
Tracy Simmons	Sunnyfields
Nigel Taylor	Wessex Gardens
Bronwen Tumani	Foulds Primary
Mick Upton	St Mary's Primary, Finchley
Francoise Wagneur	Garden Suburb
Denise White	Hampden Way Nursery
Ros White	Sunnyfields Primary
Sue White	Copthall
Peter White	Brunswick Park and Chalgrove
Jonathan Wolinsky	Menorah Primary
Philip Wright	Courtland
Trevor Young	Edgware Junior and Infant

Sheila Bennett (Clerk), Trevena Champion (Clerk), Keith Golding (Clerk), George Peradigou (Clerk), Janet Robinson (Clerk), Kam Varma (Clerk).

1. INTRODUCTION, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Robert McCulloch Graham, Director, Schools and Learning, welcomed Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were recorded on behalf of: Claire Adamson (Claremont Primary), Jeremy Alford (St Mary's EN4), Andrew Ballam-Davies (Holly Park Primary), Kristine Chowdhry (Bell Lane Primary), Revd Jane Craft (Whitings Hill), Kristine Cronhelm (Edware Junior and Infant), Dr Ibrahim Dustagheer (Broadfields Primary), Stephen Goad (Underhill Infant), John Hickman (Bell Lane Primary), John Ireton (Danegrove Primary), Richard Jefferies (Whitings Hill Primary), Nick Mottershead (East Barnet Academy), Angela Park (Claremont), Alice Thomas (Christ Church Primary), Edwin Strauss (Barnfield Primary), Jill Summers (Wessex Gardens Primary).

2. OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

Robert McCulloch-Graham reported that in late December 2011 the Local Authority (LA) received notice from Ofsted that Barnet LA's Children's Service would receive an Ofsted inspection during the first week of January 2012. He said that all of the Children's Service had been included in the inspection, which had focused on Safeguarding, Child Protection, Looked After Children (LAC) and safe practice.

He thanked the governors who had attended the inspection as part of the focus groups, which had included children, front line staff, parents and other individuals,

including Chairs' Trust Boards. He said that Ofsted carried out 80 interviews over seven days, and had looked in great detail at the work undertaken by the LA.

Robert McCulloch-Graham said that all teams worked towards providing children with the support they need, and added that the Social Services Care Plan was very strong.

He said that early intervention was identified as an area of strength. He explained that the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) form was used to work directly in partnership with troubled families within the LA, schools, the voluntary sector and multi agency groups and services, and added that this had been recognised by Ofsted as a strength.

Robert McCulloch-Graham stated that the Ofsted inspection results had recorded 22 judgements; 20 of which were good and 2 of which were adequate, and had included some recommendations. He said that the LA did not receive notification of any areas identified for improvement. He said that Barnet LA was in the top 20% of LAs in the country, and added that no other LA had received an outstanding judgement for safeguarding.

He said that the LA's other areas of focus included housing and domestic abuse.

Robert McCulloch-Graham stated that safeguarding in schools was excellent. He said that the Children's Service would continue with its work with schools to narrow the gap and to ensure that safeguarding was clear and that procedures were faultless, and that training for schools would continue to be ongoing. He said that Governing Bodies played a crucial role towards the support of the schools, and added that the LA should be contacted if there were any areas for concern.

Robert McCulloch-Graham explained that a London Pledge for Looked After Children (LAC) was in place. He said that the Children's Service wanted to ensure that all of the children within its schools knew of the Pledge, and stated that arrangements would be made to send a copy to all schools within the borough.

Action: Robert McCulloch Graham, Mick Quigley and Sarah Beaumont

Mick Quigley, Assistant Director, Schools and Learning, reminded Governors that they should ensure that their schools had clear policies and procedures, including the induction for all new staff.

It was suggested that Safeguarding should be a Governing Body standard agenda item for discussion at each Governing Body meeting.

At this point, there was a short break for Governors to discuss how their schools dealt with safeguarding, which was followed by a short feedback session.

A Governor enquired if the LA monitored female circumcision amongst young Muslim girls. Robert McCulloch-Graham stated that monitoring was commissioned to voluntary faith groups. He stated that voluntary agencies had found it difficult to

receive information, and added that the groups had acted on information that they had received. He said that the Children's Service held an annual month of events which included procedures for dealing with such safeguarding issues.

The Chairs and Vice Chairs congratulated the LA's Children's Service on its receipt of a good Ofsted report.

3. CHANGES TO THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE – NARROWING THE GAP

Amelia Whitehouse, Children's Service Challenge and Intervention Early Years Consultant, gave a presentation on the changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which she explained were minimal, and would take effect from 1 September 2012. She explained that the core areas would include:

- Language
- Physical wellbeing
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

She said that focus would also be given to:

- positive relationships
- nurturing
- every child is a unique child
- the emotional environment
- the learning and development

all of which would be interwoven into Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

Amelia Whitehouse stressed the importance of ensuring that children received thorough and practical initial training in the concept use of maths in day to day life situations.

Governors were informed that as from 1 September 2012 statutory assessment would change whilst schools would continue to adhere to some safeguarding statutory guidelines on the use of mobile telephones and cameras. Amelia Whitehouse stated that school policies should explicitly state protocol for staff having mobile telephones and cameras on their person whilst in the school environment.

Action: Headteachers and Governing Bodies

4. NARROWING THE GAP ISSUES ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS LINKED TO THE NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Amelia Whitehouse, , reported that the new Ofsted framework came into effect from January 2012, and added that under the new guidance, schools could receive no notice inspections. She said that the inspection would include an

invitation to Governors to attend an interview with the inspection team; examination of minutes of Governing Body meetings, and a check to ensure that policies were in place and up to date. She explained that the new framework would also:

- focus on narrowing the gap
- have a programme of pupil attainment. Schools would have to demonstrate how children and progressed; show under achieving pupils
- add more rigour to school expectations
- aim to ensure that schools raised children's literacy skills.
- Inspect to ensure that children had good reading skills
- listen to children read
- listen to children's use of phonics
- listen to how children deciphered words
- inspect behaviour
- inspect quality of teaching
- look at what makes a significant impact on the children
- inspect quality of Leadership and Management. This would be a single judgment and would look at key approaches to ensure that children achieve.

At this point, there was a short break for Governors to discuss accountability and how/if they challenged their schools, which was followed by a short feedback session.

Governors expressed concern about the new inspection framework's no notice. A Governor stated that if the Headteacher was out of school on the day of inspection; or if governors were not available to attend an interview with the inspection team, how this would be rectified by Ofsted. Amelia Whitehouse explained that the Ofsted team used the Parents' Questionnaire as an item of referral and other data.

Governors were informed that absenteeism was a safeguarding issue which also had a large impact of narrowing the gap. She explained that nursery children were entitled to 15 hours free education, and added that parents had to sign a contract to state that the child would attend nursery. She said that if the child was absent for 10 days or more, or absent on regular occasions, the absence would be referred to the LA, who would have the option to withdraw the funding.

There being no further questions, Amelia Whitehouse thanked the Governors for their input and left the meeting.

5. MEETING THE GROWING DEMAND FOR SCHOOL PLACES

Mick Quigley informed Governors that to meet the rapid increase in demand for reception class places, oversubscribed schools were being asked by the LA if they would have a 'bulge' class. He said that discussions had also taken place with other schools in the LA, and some of the schools had agreed to help. He reported that funding had been made available to ensure that LAs could meet

their duty to offer school places. Governors were informed that the additional reception classes would be added in time for the September 2012 autumn term. He explained that the LA received inward migration from other parts of London, the United Kingdom and from across the world. Mick Quigley, on behalf of the LA, thanked the schools who had agreed to have the additional classes.

Mick Quigley explained how schools with a reception bulge class would be financially supported. He explained that:

- the schools would receive LA funding until March 2013 for 30 children; a class teacher and the appropriate number of extra staff
- as from 1 April 2013, school funding would be provided in accordance with the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data
- the schools would receive a one off payment from the LA of £10,000, to be used for the purchase of resources for the classroom. He explained that the schools could use all of the money immediately, or could phase the outgoings over as period of time for example, for the purchase of resources as the children grew and the class moved up to Year 6
- capital costs would be funded by the LA
- the LA use the Fair Access protocol.

Mick Quigley explained that the LA were also considering the future expansion of three secondary schools within the borough; The Compton School; Christ's College and Copthall School.

At this point, governors were given a question and answer opportunity.

Governors enquired:

- if a temporary class would become a permanent class? Mick Quigley explained that the status would depend on factors such as a demand within the area. He said that the LA would discuss the change with the schools, and a review of the buildings and form entry would be carried out
- if class sizes would increase? Mick Quigley stated that the size of the school could increase but class sizes would remain at 30 children per class. He said that if a class size increase to for example 31 children, the school would receive extra funding. He explained that if a child from the larger class left the school, the school funding would revert to payment for 30 children
- how the LA planned to deal with the probability of a continuing increase in birth rate? Mick Quigley stated that the LA monitored the Greater London Authority (GLA) predictions, whilst the LA's inward migration was harder to predict
- how the LA dealt with refusal of school places offered? Mick Quigley explained that parents had the right to appeal against offers
- if a parent appealed against a school offer, would the place be left open during the appeal process? Mick Quigley explained that the place would not be left open during the appeal procedure. He stated that

Headteachers and the LA had a responsibility to offer all children a school place within a two miles walking distance, and added that the LA would use the Fair Access protocol.

Governors were informed that the LA was working with the LA's Housing Department.

There being no further questions, Robert McCulloch-Graham handed the meeting to the next speaker.

6. CHANGES TO GOVERNING BODY CONSTITUTION

Sarah Beaumont, Governor Services Manager explained that in February 2012, the Department for Education (DfE) issued a document stating that governing bodies would have more freedom to choose their own constitution. She said that the new arrangements would become effective from September 2012, and that detailed guidance would be published. She said that the change of constitution would be optional.

Sarah Beaumont explained that, under the new regulations:

- the LA would nominate candidates to LA Governor positions, to be approved by the Governing Body;
- The Governing Body could appoint Co-Opted Governors with specific skills required by the school for example, a governor with finance experience
- Associate Members would continue to be appointed to a committee in an advisory capacity and would be non-voting members of the Governing Body

Sarah Beaumont concluded by saying that as from September 2012, changes to a Governing Body's constitution would take place under the new regulations, and suggested that, if Governing Bodies were considering making changes to their constitutions under the existing regulations, they should consider this action to take place during the 2012 summer term.

At this point, Governors were given a question and answer opportunity.

Governors enquired if:

- Academies would be affected by the new constitution regulations? Sarah Beaumont stated that these regulations affected maintained schools only.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Governor expressed concern that some children missed schooling whilst some schools were closed to the children whilst being used as polling stations for local and Government elections. Governors enquired if a review could be carried out

for alternative use of venues for the elections. Robert McCulloch-Graham stated that he would undertake to raise Governors concerns with the Chief Executive and Director for Education for Children and Families, in advance of the next election cycle.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 19 September 2012.