



**Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday 20th October 2021 at 6.30 pm
online via Zoom**

DRAFT MINUTES

Name	Role	Present	Name	Role	Present
Chris Ampofo	Foundation	x	Will Leaf	Foundation	√
Dan Brandt	Foundation	x	Zoë Miller (Chair)	Parent	√
Kwamena Duker*	Staff	√	Anthony Richards (Headteacher)	Ex officio	√
Victoria Heald- Barraclough	LA	x	David Sin	Foundation	√
Lucas Janssen*	Co-opted	√	Leandos Taliotis*	Foundation	√
Marianne Jenkins*	Foundation	√	Joel Wolchover	Parent	√

* Present for part of the meeting

Also present:

Nicola Christopher Deputy Headteacher (DHT), advising
 Kay Banks* Assistant Headteacher (AHT) and Special Educational Needs
 Coordinator (SENCO), presenting
 Janet Gordon Clerk

1. Opening Prayer and welcome

The Chair welcomed governors and invited Will Leaf to lead the opening prayer.

Documents:

- Children Missing in Education Policy.docx
- Exclusions Policy.docx
- Interactive Whiteboards Purchase.docx
- Intimate Care Policy 2021.docx
- Mobile Phone Policy.docx
- PF FGB Draft Minutes 2021-09-22.doc
- PF SEND Information Report 2021-22.pdf
- SEF PF Updated Oct 2021.docx
- SEN update for Governors 2021.docx
- Sports Premium Report 2021-22 DRAFT.docx
- strategy statement 21-22.docx

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received in advance from Dan Brandt; Marianne Jenkins and Kwamena Duker had sent apologies for late arrival. Lucas Janssen sent notice that he was having trouble joining the meeting. No other apologies were received.

3. Declaration of interest for items on this agenda

None.

The Clerk agreed to chase the missing declarations of interest forms to create the Register of Interests.

Action: Clerk

4. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Update from SENCO
- Governor questions on SEND Information Report

The Chair thanked Ms Banks for the SEND Information Report and update which had been circulated in advance and invited governors' questions.

Q You mentioned having problems recruiting staff. Could you tell us more about that?

There seems to be a shortage of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who have experience of working with children with Special Educational Needs. The school needed to recruit staff with experience of working with children with complex needs and have had to use agency staff, because it is uncertain whether some children will stay at the school in the longer term. The Deputy and Assistant Heads have spent significant time contacting agencies and conducting interviews, but candidates have been put forward with general experience in a classroom where there is a child with SEND, which is quite different from the 1:1 support, implementation of a therapy plan and strategies to meet children's needs and liaison with parents that would be required. Some suitable candidates were recruited to other posts before the school could confirm their appointment.

There are sufficient staff for all children who need 1:1 support, but two children may be leaving for specialist provision, so staffing may be rearranged. Recruitment has been time-consuming, but professionals visiting the school have confirmed that there is currently a similar pattern in other schools. The job takes commitment and people may be seeking jobs with a higher salary.

Q Have other schools found different ways to deal with this issue?

Other schools are managing as well as they can and trying to train existing staff, although this takes time. Using staff without SEND expertise can have a negative impact on a child's experience and outcomes and can affect the rest of the class, so it is important to match staff with a child's needs.

The Headteacher added that significant work is also put into transition so that the child is prepared and comfortable with the member of staff who will be working with them. Changes in staffing can be disruptive to this process.

Q Do you have a view on why there is a lower than average number of children with SEND at the school? Is this something that we should seek to address?

It is important that children with SEND are identified accurately. A graduated approach is taken, ensuring that children have enough time to settle, then if a need is identified, support is put in place. It would not be appropriate to aim for a specific figure – this would depend on each cohort. More children are being identified earlier, as staff have become more skilled at identifying children's needs and referring them to the SENCO. Parents are also now more aware of SEND and notice and share concerns with the school.

The graduated approach, which provides early support, means that although there are not many children on the SEND register, many children with additional needs are being supported through Quality First teaching and personalised learning in the classroom. The ELSA initiative has supported emotional literacy for the past 2 years, with capacity for 16 children. The SENCO works closely with the Deputy Head to identify children who would benefit from catch up interventions. As part of the graduated approach, children would have received support first before being put on the SEND register.

Q To what degree do children come off the SEND register?

This is under review. When the SENCO started, numbers had been reduced because of the new SEN Code of Practice, removing children who had previously received any intervention but who no longer needed additional support. As a result of interruptions from the pandemic, the SENCO has taken a cautious approach to removing children from the register, but some will be removed when they no longer need additional support. Some children, for example those with a condition that has a lifelong impact on learning, will remain on the SEND register.

Q Could you tell us more about the dyslexia plan that was paused because of the impact of Covid and children's emotional needs?

The school would like to gain dyslexia friendly status, so there is a plan to implement an audit. It has been challenging to identify staff members to train so that they acquire specialist skills in teaching and supporting children with dyslexia. Despite this capacity issue, support is in place for dyslexia and staff had training before the pandemic on dyslexia-friendly strategies as part of Quality First and these will be revisited. Children with dyslexia are identified and strategies are put in place to support them.

Q In terms of data, the trend seems to be a gradual increase in the number of children with SEND, although the figures are lower than average. If this trend continued, what support would the SENCO need?

This would depend on the types of needs and whether these can be met by Quality First teaching and the LSAs. An increase might be needed in the number of staff directed for children with SEND, but this would depend on the budget. Sometimes an increase in numbers does not simply need additional staff – it depends on the children's needs. With adaptations, teachers can manage some needs within the classroom with adaptations. The

aim is to provide specialist training for all staff, to support a shared understanding of inclusion. Staff enjoyed recent autism training and all children can benefit from some approaches and adaptations, for example a visual timetable.

Q Anecdotally, getting an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) through the Local Authority seems to be a real challenge. What is the current landscape like?

A certain amount of time must elapse to show support has put in place using the graduated approach and evidence is needed of the interventions and reasons that a child needs support through an EHCP. The SENCO has applied for two EHCPs and both were approved. However, this is time consuming and the Educational Psychologist (EP) service has a backlog, meaning that there is a delay between their observation and report, which is very challenging in terms of providing evidence to support an application.

The Headteacher added that the SENCO is skilled in compiling and writing the application and acts as an advocate for parents.

Q Can a parent find their own EP or must they use Brent's?

They can, but managing access to a child in the classroom environment by private professionals can be tricky for the SENCO and Headteacher. The SENCO has had to have challenging conversations with parents who are frustrated by external issues such as EP wait times. The school puts in a referral, but then must wait. The service is overwhelmed and is not able to offer additional bought in time. Speech and Language referrals are faster, but Occupational Therapy services are difficult to access unless a child has an EHCP and even then, physio capacity is insufficient. CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is also over capacity at the moment. The SENCO has to let parents know that the school will do as much as possible in school, but there is a wait for external services, which is frustrating for parents and can be demoralising for the school. The Headteacher said that it was important for governors to know that any wait is not because of a lack of action.

Q Can governors support communication about this issue?

The SENCO deals with each individual situation on a case by case basis. Time is spent explaining what is happening to parents, in an open and honest way, to establish close relationships and to ensure that they don't lose confidence in the school when there is a wait because of external services.

The Headteacher thanked governors for a letter sent to parents in the summer term.

Q Is there a SENCO support network?

Before the pandemic, some networks had been set up. The school is in the Kilburn locality and will have the same SEND contact at Brent as other local schools, so they can work together in a supportive way to access services and share successful approaches. The former consultant SENCO continues to act as support for the SENCO as part of her CPD.

[6.36 pm Leandros Taliotis, 6.41 pm Kwamena Duker joined the meeting during this item]
[7.03 pm Ms Banks left the meeting]

5. School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)

The Headteacher reminded governors about two key documents:

- School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)

The SIP outlines the current priorities and areas of focus and the SEF evaluates the school against the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF), evidencing the school's main strengths and challenges. The school context is important, because this drives curriculum and financial choices. This section also includes the school's recent and future accreditations as well as external support and challenge.

Previous inspection targets from Ofsted and SIAMS and action taken against these targets are shown on pages 2 and 3 of the SEF, followed by Covid mitigations (page 4), the areas of the EIF (page 5-8) – Quality of Education, Behaviour & Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership & Management.

The SEF was reviewed with the BSP School Improvement Specialist by the Headteacher, joined by the Chair for part of this meeting. Some refinements will be made to highlight the school's strengths and this document will be continually updated.

The Headteacher drew governors' attention to the Quality of Education section of the SEF. The school has a curriculum to be proud of. A strength is the way in which cultural capital is developed and the curriculum progression with clear milestones for what children should achieve by the end of a year. Another strength is the love of music. The children leave as confident, caring, respectful, thoughtful and well rounded citizens who are prepared and equipped to engage in the world they live in.

Governors stressed the importance of becoming familiar with this document, which is a précis of the school's current context and strengths and reflects governors' experience and aspirations.

The Headteacher explained that the staff know the importance of each individual subject at the school and significant curriculum development work has been carried out and the opportunities such as African Drumming, the steel pan band, music performances and the range of clubs are an important part of the curriculum offer. The Chair reminded governors that it is important that they are able to articulate the impact of this offer.

6. Update from the Headteacher including interactive whiteboards proposal

The Headteacher reminded governors that he provides a written report at the end of each term.

Staffing

A permanent appointment was made in the school office and this member of staff had settled in well. There were three staff absences: one long-term and two short to medium-

term medical absences. The financial implications of this were discussed and the staff members were being supported where possible.

Health & Safety

There was an ongoing issue with the flush mechanisms on some children's toilets. Staff were monitoring the toilets when they were empty to ensure they were flushed regularly. Replacement of the original piping which exits the Junior toilet with plastic piping, which could be removed more easily when there is an issue, was being discussed with the LDBS.

Work was due to be completed by the LDBS on the water heating system to regulate the temperature of the tap water in the (mostly adult) toilets.

Pupil data

There were 420 children on roll when the October census was returned. Some children left the school, but others joined. 25 children are eligible for Pupil Premium – 20 eligible for Free School Meals and 5 who are Post-LAC (previously looked after children). This is a decrease and has financial implications. Another local school includes Pupil Premium in their admissions criteria and this may have an impact. There are no children eligible for Pupil Premium in Reception and Year 1.

121 children have English as an Additional Language and there are a total of 33 different languages spoken as a first language. Portuguese is the most frequent first language after English (24 children), then Gujarati and Arabic. Fluency levels are generally quite high, although three children are in the early stages of English acquisition. Approximately 30% of children speak English at home as a language of choice, but their parents have another first language.

The largest pupil groups by ethnicity are:: 200 children are White British, 23 are Indian and 64 are dual heritage.

Safeguarding and behaviour

The Headteacher informed governors that as a result of an increase in alleged cases of peer-on-peer abuse, which have taken up significant time for the Deputy Head, the Safeguarding team have discussed setting up new processes to investigate these situations fully with sensitivity. Outcomes may vary and solutions may differ depending on the scenario, but it is important that agreed processes are followed carefully and appropriate communication with parents and clear, confidential recording of the investigation is key.

School monitoring

Subject leaders have been released more frequently to upskill them and increase their confidence, as their level of responsibility for their subject is significant. A different subject is focused on each week and the relevant subject lead may spend a day working with the Deputy Head or Headteacher, talking to children, looking at books and writing a subject report. Lessons are not always observed, but pupil voice is always considered. Writing was a significant focus for two weeks, the BSP School Improvement Specialist worked with the subject lead for a day and all Year 2 to Year 6 teachers were seen. A report from the external adviser will be shared with governors at the next meeting.

Next half term, a morning governor walk was planned towards the end of November or early December, if sufficient governors (4-5 but no more than 6-7) can attend, otherwise this will happen early in January. The Clerk will be asked to share a Doodle poll when potential dates have been identified.

The Headteacher invited governors' questions.

Q Have there been any Covid cases in the recent period?

One staff member tested positive. Parents have been encouraged to tell the school about positive cases. At the previous meeting, the Headteacher had reported two positive cases; these children isolated and there were no linked cases reported. A small number of parents are anxious about the current approach that the DfE are taking. The school is following NHS Track and Trace guidance and based on HR advice are not able to disclose individual's medical records. Parents have arranged PCR tests quickly where there is a suspected case or if a house member tests positive on a lateral flow test and they have carried out daily LFTs on their child's return to school.

Q Have parents' worries persisted?

The Headteacher listened to their concerns and explained to them that he and the Board had to follow guidance for schools. The parents who were unhappy understood and were frustrated with the national approach rather than the school.

Q Could you explain the link between Free School Meals and Pupil Premium?

If a child is eligible for Free School Meals, the school also receives Pupil Premium funding. This fund also includes funding for the children of service people and Looked After and Post-LAC children. The school receives additional income per eligible child and must report on the way in which this money has been spent and its impact.

Q Is the absence of Pupil Premium in Reception and Year 1 down to parents not completing an application form for Free School Meals or the changing demographics?

It is probably down to changing demographics in the local area. Universal Free School Meals up to Year 2 does not incentivise parents to complete a Free School Meals application. The office staff strongly encourage new parents to complete this form.

Q How do these numbers compare with other local primary schools?

Even taking into account that the school is smaller, the numbers are lower (8%) than other schools in the area. The IDACI map shows the area immediately around the school has lower deprivation than the area around other primary schools.

[7.45 pm Marianne Jenkins joined the meeting during this item]

Whiteboard proposal

A written proposal had been shared in advance, including three quotes. The Headteacher recommended the cheapest quote (Viewsonic) after having spent time with the representative, as he believed that these whiteboards will not become obsolete and can be maintained. They offer a range of interfaces for different devices. He proposed buying eight

whiteboards this year and a further eight next year, with the potential for a fundraising campaign towards the second set, which could be installed by the summer, within the same academic year.

Q Are these whiteboards in the budget already?

Although they were not in the budget, money had been allocated to purchase PCs, which were then donated to the school, so the additional cost this year would only be £3,000.

Governors encouraged the Headteacher to look into donation of the old screens, for example, to a charity, if they are viable, or to investigate recycling.

Governors **approved** the purchase of eight whiteboards, as recommended by the Headteacher.

7. ABC Fund update

Marianne Jenkins reported on the budget monitoring meeting that had taken place earlier the same day. £38,000 ABC Fund income had been received to date in the current financial year. Governors had discussed recommending the encouragement of parent donations at school events. There had been a break in doing this because of Covid, so there are new parents who may be unaware of the importance of the ABC Fund and how it is used, for example to support and strengthen the music provision.

Marianne will follow up with Lucas on a letter to parents, sharing examples of previous communication about ABC Fund spending.

Action: Marianne

8. Reports (to consider and confirm)

- **Sports Premium**

The Deputy Head informed governors that £13,000 was carried forward because planned lunchtime clubs and competitions were not able to happen because of Covid. This year plans include bringing in expert playleaders at lunchtime to engage children and staff and termly skipping workshops. It is hoped that interschool competitions will resume. 25 children who did not reach the swimming standard in Years 3 and 4 have been offered 16 weeks of extra evening lessons at the local sports centre, as it is important that all children are able to swim by the time they leave the school. The parent response has been positive.

- **Pupil Premium and Catch Up Premium**

The Deputy Head explained that a different format was required this year, including a 3 year strategy statement and one year of budgeted plans. £10,000 catch up premium was carried forward from last year in addition to £41,000 Pupil Premium. The statement of intent (page 3) outlines the importance of giving children eligible for Pupil Premium opportunities such as music lessons, residential trips and after school clubs. 8% of children are eligible for Pupil Premium and after school clubs are offered to them first and their attendance is monitored closely.

Quality First teaching is the first step to ensuring all children succeed, so consistent teaching in English, Maths, Phonics and Reading is vital (page 5-6). Targeted interventions are outlined on page 6-7, using school-led tutoring. A Key Stage 1 reading intervention was successful last year, so the aim is to employ someone part-time to lead this. Wider strategies (p7-8) include the aim for 90% of Pupil Premium children to learn an instrument. Last year's target of 85% was achieved. The review of 2020-21 spending (p10-13) provides data to evidence the outcome of activities.

Governors were complimentary about the strategy, which they felt was high quality and detailed. They appreciated the studies and articles that had been included

Q Do you think the Pupil Premium fund is being used effectively?

It is. One of the most important things is that the progress of Pupil Premium children is monitored closely. Interventions are put in place as soon as they are needed and a trained tutor is available part-time. After school clubs have been a great success and Breakfast club is funded for some children. The Headteacher added that he was pleased with the way that the Pupil Premium strategy reflects the school's curriculum commitment and acknowledged the Deputy Head's work on this.

9. Policies for approval

- **Intimate Care**

This policy was new, as there are a few more children joining the school who are not toilet trained.

- **Children Missing in Education**

This policy was also new, outlining the processes the school follows if a child is not present at school and parents cannot be contacted. Both new policies were based largely on models from The Key, customised to the school context.

- **Exclusions**
- **Mobile Phone**

No change was proposed to these policies.

Q Is a periodic reminder needed to the parent community about their use of mobile phones and the sharing of photographs online?

The Headteacher acknowledged that this is a sensitive subject and that it would be difficult to stop parents from taking photos and videos at school events, but parents will be reminded to focus on their own child and not to publish photographs including other children on social media. The Head and Deputy have discussed supporting parents in the healthy use of phones and social media and how this is modelled to children. The Deputy Head will also work with parents on e-safety, including keeping children safe and

understanding the healthy use of mobile phones. The school will review the storage of mobile phones at school.

Governors **approved** these policies, subject to any questions or significant comments sent to the Clerk by Tuesday 2 November.

Action: Governors

Governors were invited to review the text at the beginning of the Exclusions policy for use to preface other policies and provide any feedback.

Action: Governors

10. Minutes from previous meeting (22nd September 2021)

i) Accuracy

Governors agreed to email any questions or comments on the September FGB minutes to the Clerk by Tuesday 2 November

Action: Governors

ii) Matters Arising

Governors were asked to email the Clerk to confirm when [Safeguarding training](#) has been completed.

Action: Governors

Dan will monitor the Quality of Education section of the School Improvement Plan.

The skills audit will be compiled when new governors are in post.

No changes were requested to the June minutes.

[8.31 pm Lucas Janssen joined the meeting during this item]

11. Governor visits

The Headteacher will contact David to arrange a **Health & Safety** visit.

Action: Headteacher

Zoë planned to carry out an **EYFS** visit after half-term.

- **Financial monitoring**

Marianne and Lucas had attended a budget monitoring meeting earlier the same day with the Headteacher, Deputy Head, School Business Manager and external consultant. There are demands on the budget, including staff absence, Education and Healthcare Plans and Covid cleaning. A carry forward of £212,000 is expected at the end of the financial year. By Year 3 of the budget, this reduces to £5,000. Managing the budget, especially staff costs and ABC income, will be vital in the next few years. Nursery income is high and the budget is being run extremely well.

- Wellbeing Group

Zoë reported that the staff member who leads the staff wellbeing group had provided feedback on the survey that was run on behalf of the Board last year. Some of these suggestions can be incorporated, including the types of questions asked and addressing some of the reasons staff might not fill in the survey. Chris and Zoë will put together another staff survey after half-term and will meet the Wellbeing Group.

[8.35 pm Leandros Taliotis left the meeting]

12. Any other urgent business

Governors agreed to the Headteacher's suggestion of sending policies out for governor scrutiny between meetings, nominating individual governors linked to their experience and interests, so that the workload is distributed.

The Chair thanked governors and closed the meeting at 8.43 pm.

Next meetings:

Wed 17 Nov FGB meeting (6.30 pm)

Wed 15 Dec FGB meeting (6.30 pm)

TBC Admissions committee (5.30 pm)

TBC Pay committee (5.30 pm)