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NEW END PRIMARY SCHOOL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING HELD at 9.15am on 16 May at NEW END PRIMARY SCHOOL

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|  |  | Name | Post |
|  | HA | Helen Andrews | Chair, Co-opted Governor |
|  | VZ | Vassilis Zarifis | Co-opted Governor, Chair of Finance, Staffing and Premises Committee |
|  | HT | Karyn Ray | Headteacher, Ex-Officio |
| Absent | SS | Stephen Stark | LA Governor |
|  | AG | Alan Girling | DHT, Associate Governor |
|  | JB | Juliette Bearman | Parent Governor |
|  | CL | Catherine Levin | Co-opted Governor |
|  | PQ | Philip Quinn | Co-opted Governor |
|  | AC | Andreas Christodoulou | Parent Governor |
|  | JC | Jane Crispin | Co-opted Governor |
|  | HN | Hunada Nouss | Co-opted Governor |
|  | AS | Anna Sullivan | Staff Governor |
|  | Clerk | Gill Green | Clerk, Camden Learning |

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| **ITEM** | **BUSINESS ITEM** | **ACTION** |
| 1. | **Talk by Nick Smith from Camden Council.**  The meeting began at 9.20 with a zoom presentation by Nick Smith, Head of Education, Commissioning & School Organisation for Camden Council.  He talked about overall pupil numbers in Camden and five year predictions, plus possible strategies to be followed in Camden. He then covered the issues at New End and the local area and future strategies for New End.  **Overall position.**  Births in Camden had reduced by 30% in the past 11 years, from approximately 3000 in 2012 to approximately 2000 in 2023. Birth numbers are the major variable affecting reception admissions. Camden also looked at GP data, housing information and migration data but these had less impact. There were several reasons for the fall including Brexit, with European families leaving and/or no longer arriving; housing costs and shortages plus the cost of living; Covid influencing relocation to areas with more communal and individual open space/gardens. In five years the borough closed 4 schools and lost 10 entry classes.  The reduction has not been uniform across the Borough. Camden divides the borough into 5 for planning school places; NW, NE, central and two areas south of the Euston Road. NW is more stable and demand has increased by 30 for September 2024; the NE area has a moderate decline, central Camden a more acute decline and South of the Euston Road the sharpest decline. Overall the Council expects a drop of 90 children for September 2024. Because the NE area has increased by 30 this means that the rest of Camden has lost 120 children.  Vacancies do not fall evenly across schools. More popular schools tend to fill up first, though this is affected by nearness to other schools and very local demography.  Legislation means that classes are capped at 30 (except for a twin!). So if a school entrance number remains at 60 and 32 pupils apply for places (for example) a school would have to split that group and provide 2 teachers, which would be financially difficult for such a low number of pupils per teacher.  Current demand suggests that New End should have a September 2024 entry capped at 30. It is likely that the school will have to run at that entry number for several years. Nick Smith recognised that such a reduction was a difficult decision for a school, as such a reduction could mean turning away a few local children.  The Council hopes that births and reception numbers are now stabilising, at the current lower level, but there is no evidence of any increase.  **Camden’s current policy response**  The Council does not intend to close more schools.There is no plan to close 1 form entry schools and keep 2 form entry elsewhere, for example. The council do not want to take put potential future capacity for any potential future increases, because in an inner London borough like Camden it would be very difficult and expensive to find new school sites if that became necessary.  This means that schools previously taking up to 60 may have their entrance numbers reduced to 30 (one form entry). Over all schools the Council expects a vacancy rate of about 8%.  This means that some schools will have underused premises. The Council are talking to schools in this situation. Possible options include co-locating suitable services (for example Adult Community Learning); and perhaps some more specialist units /spaces for some children with SEND given the increase in the number and complexity of pupils presenting with SEND.  Another structural option for some could be partnerships between schools to share some resources and gain possible economies of scale and sharing of staff expertise to help deal with the tighter budget pressures that reduced rolls will bring. Some schools have already started these (e.g. Torriano and Brecknock).  There followed a confidential discussion recorded in the confidential minutes. |  |
| 2 | **Welcome and Apologies**  The meeting began at 9.15. No apologies had been received.  The new staff governor, the Year 2 teacher Anna Sullivan, was introduced. She noted that she had been a staff governor at a previous school. |  |
| 3 | **Notification of Any Other Urgent Business**  Planning Application. |  |
| 4 | **Declarations of Interest:**  Register of Governors Business and Pecuniary Interests - No issues to report.  Conflicts of Interest in respect of the agenda- none. |  |

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| **5** | **Nick Holt the bursar introduced the outturn for 2023/4 and the final budget for 2024/5**  NH noted that FSP had looked at year end outturn and the 24/25 budget in detail on 30 April and recommended it to the full Governing Body.  The good news was that the school had successfully managed the budget for 2023/4, leaving a good springboard for 2024/5. Camden had confirmed that the final account was out of deficit, giving a positive carry over for 2024/5; and the planned budget would mean the school remained out of deficit at the end of April 2025. Because the school was now out of deficit they were back in full charge of their budget and did not need to get Camden to confirm it.  The school had benefited in 2023/4 from two large grants not budgeted for; £130,000 from Homes for Ukraine and £35,000 for Afghan refugees. Extra funds had also come in via children coming from St Dominics (£17,000); £25,000 extra for pupils with SEND; and more parents paying extra for children to stay in Nursery for up to 30 hours (only the first £15,000 is paid by the government). The school encourages going up to 30 hours as it benefits the children when they move up into Reception.  All cost centres came in within budget, with savings made in administration, learning resources and premises.  The FSP had done a deep dive into agency staff costs to identify why costs here were relatively high; they realised that there was no crisis as the costs were explained by the need for 1:1 support for some pupils with SEND; much of the funding for that came in to the school eventually. The budget for 2024/5 would look in detail at this area to help planning for 2025/6.  The final underspend had been £300,100; because the school had been carrying a deficit from the previous year the actual carry forward was £158,354. This gave the school a little more flexibility for 2024/5 on staffing and capital spend.  The budget for 2024/5 had been set without using this carry forward. That meant the extra money could be used strategically. After 5 years of turbulence they wanted to maintain the current offer to families, children and the staff team. FSP had looked at risk factors and intended to divide the contingency roughly into four;   1. A general contingency of around ¾% of budget (£60-£80,000;) 2. Money for the senior management to use for easing staffing pinch points – for example, currently KR has to act as a school meals supervisor, which is not a cost effective use of a Head’s time! Also, they would explore using the existing staff team instead of agency staff in some cases, especially current part timers who might give some extra days. 3. Curriculum provision – this would probably need less as NESSA was generous here, but there would be some leeway for enhancement. 4. Agreed capital priority spend. Major works went through Camden; for example, Camden should be paying for window and roof work this year. But smaller peripheral works were the school’s responsibility.   An example was the phone sand associated alarm system; BT were on site providing a new cable and the Aurora phone company were due to convert the phone system over summer half term. But more work might be needed to the alarms and Entry phones.  **FSP had agreed that this focussed approach to the budget was prudent and realistic and recommended it to the FGB.**  VZ noted that a-d above were all one offs that did not create long term liabilities.  NH said that as staffing was the main cost (over 70% of budget) finance in 2024/5 needed to look again at staff structure and possible tweaks.  VZ reminded the FGB that the school had deliberately decided to go into red during lockdown as they had not wanted to make any redundancies at such a difficult time; the deficit budget had not been the result of financial mismanagement. The school had been expected to get back into the black in three years; they had managed to do so in two, despite falling numbers, the loss of Saturday school income and less Covid catch up money than expected from Government.  The Chair thanked NH and the FSP for their work and the **FGB were happy to ratify the 2024/5 budget.** |  |
| **6** | **Governors Monitoring, Development and Training.**  Three Governors -HN, VZ and CL - were going to the Camden Governor Conference on 18 May. |  |
| **7** | **Forward planning dates**  Next FGB 9.15am 4 July 2024  Governors confirmed that FGB for 2024/5 will be on Tuesday mornings. Dates to be agreed on 4 July. | **Clerk** |
| **8** | **Any other urgent business**  There was a planning application for the roof works; the link would be sent to Governors.  The Head confirmed that SATS were finished and she felt that Year 6 had made huge progress. Next assessments would be phonics Year 1 plus Early Years assessments. | **AG** |
| **9.** | **Confidential Items**   * Safeguarding – no issues reported * Numbers on Roll - see Confidential minutes |  |

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| Ref | Actions noted in the minutes | Who | Completed |

**ITEMS FOR ACTION FROM 16 MAY**

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| REF | Actions noted in the minutes | WHO | Completed? |
| 1 | NS and Camden to send school detail of legal situation re nursery building. |  |  |
| 7 | Dates for 2024/5 on next FGB Agenda | Clerk | Yes |

Signed Date