Diptford School – Minutes of School Committee meeting, 15 June 2019 (adopted 1 November 2019)

Present: Roger Knight (chair), Lizzie Lethbridge (Head), Louise Lethbridge, Laura Bell, Jo Palmer.

1. Apologies were received from Carole Partridge, Claire Moorman, Helen Price, Natalie Siddons and David Sayle

2. The draft minutes of the previous meeting of 7 May were reviewed and adopted. It was noted that there had been no further feedback concerning uniforms, the Hawks forest school and PE provision, and lunch provision and that it was understood that Devon Norse had spoken with Mark concerning the new arrangements and a possible role at Harbertonford. Other matters arising would be covered by the agenda.

Head of School Report

3. Lizzie’s Head of School report is attached at the end of these minutes. The report prompted discussion in a number of areas, including in particular:

a) Whilst pupil numbers have stabilised somewhat, there will unfortunately be a reduction with one family (two children at the school) leaving the locality and two other children being temporary attendees for the Summer term only. Currently 11 pupils are expected for the Reception class in September, although Lizzie is hopeful that there might be a twelfth.

b) Lizzie reported that the school’s budget for the next academic year, following considerable work by the staff with the support of the Trust, is looking okay. It has been boosted by the impact of the revised lunch arrangements.

c) All were pleased to hear that Miss Harvey has secured a permanent teaching post. Lizzie reported that Miss Jones, who has been appointed as cover for Mrs Siddons for the next academic year, will be participating in the school swap day on 9 July.

d) The parents on the Committee highlighted the positive feedback from other parents for the recent Adrenaline and Ski Centre trips. Arrangements for the year 3/4 and 5/6 residentials (and related Year 5/6 events) are finalised.

e) Lizzie reported on the recruitment at Link level of Mr Tanner; his role will be to develop the PE and sporting provision across the Link schools, replacing support intended to be provided by KEVICS. Saints South West and Principal will continue to provide after-school clubs.

f) Lizzie outlined the updated plans for Diptfest and the arrangements for the Leavers’ Assembly, on 19 July.

g) Lizzie followed up on the discussion at the previous meeting concerning the Committee’s potential role in relation to the school’s SIAMS approach and its Christian distinctiveness. She explained briefly the CoE’s vision for education underpinned, but not driven, by biblical reference, and shard with the Committee the Salisbury Diocesan ‘Spirituality policy guidance’ which she encouraged us to read. She explained how she and the staff had recently reviewed the school’s adopted values and had drafted a mission statement/vision for the school, building on these values and set out in her Report. The strap-line ‘Let Your Light Shine’, underpinned by the extract from Matthew 5, is intended to reflect the traditional approach to learning at Diptford. She stressed that the approach is not intended to be unduly Christian or CoE, but to be wholly inclusive.

Lizzie went on to explain how she envisages the Committee contributing. She sees the Committee’s role as observing and satisfying themselves that the vision is being met in practice by ‘getting to know the school’. She suggested that we might start by attending a collective worship event and observing lessons (‘RE’ is to be retitled ‘RE and World Faiths’).

Roger noted that he had had a brief initial discussion with Cat Radford (Chair of the equivalent group at Harbertonford), who had spoken enthusiastically about her, and the group’s, involvement, in ways consistent with Lizzie’s ideas. He will be keeping in touch with Cat. He noted that Diptford is a CoE voluntary controlled school whereas Harbertonford is a voluntary aided school; this apparently ties Harbertonford closer to the church than Diptford. He added that he would like to discuss this with the Rev’d David to understand better the Church’s role.

There was much discussion. The Committee agreed that its members, including those not present, should review the papers and consider the matter further, including implications for the Committee’s constitution and any need to refresh its membership, in advance of the new school year. Roger will meet further with Lizzie to discuss, and Lizzie will be considering, with Link input, the Committee’s terms of reference in the context of broader governance considerations.

Parental feedback

4. No matters had been raised in advance of the meeting but Jo raised a concern from a Little Dippers parent concerning the play equipment in the playground and whether children should be using it, the understanding being that it has been deemed unsafe. Lizzie reported that the equipment had recently been subject to its regular safety inspection and had, having been previously repaired, been found to be in need of replacement. Replacement has not been initiated yet although Lizzie understands that Link has submitted some relevant grant bids. In the meantime the children have been instructed not to use it. It was considered that probably stronger measures should be taken, and Lizzie agreed to consider taping off the equipment.

Governors

5. Lizzie reported that Diptford and other schools are in need of representation on the Totnes Federation governing board. The proposed invitation to parents is with the Link CEO and any appointment will be effective for the new academic year. The invitation will explain the function of the governing board (no financial responsibility any longer) and the relationship with Link and its directors. Lizzie is currently a staff representative on the governing board. Once the invitation is issued Lizzie urged the Committee to help identify and encourage a suitable parent to come forward.

FODS update

6. Laura reported on recent FODS activities, including assistance at the Horse Show and the sports day BBQ. She outlined proposed future events, including Diptfest refreshments, School Production refreshments, end of term arrangements and the Village Fete. She also explained the proposal to hold a social event for parents (not a fund raiser), including new parents, at the beginning of the new academic year, possibly a BYO BBQ at the village playing field.

Laura and Lizzie are discussing to what extent the grant received by FODs to fund community and craft projects can be utilised as a contribution towards the costs of the mosaic. Laura also mentioned the funds held towards the replacement of the stage area. She and/or Lizzie will liaise with the father who has offered to help construct the new stage and explore whether materials could be purchased now; it was noted that one child’s grandfather works with a decking company and may be able to assist in sourcing suitable materials. This will be explored.

Parish Hall Update

7. It was noted that there continue to be issues concerning cleanliness and that very often it is not the school that has used the hall when this is the biggest issue. There remains concern about the arrangements for cleaning (and the equipment provided for users to clean up). Lizzie will raise these concerns direct with the Hall committee.

Roger reported that the Hall Committee is seeking grant funds to provide a screen in the Hall and that, having discussed this with Lizzie, he had provide a note supporting the plans. Lizzie asked about the use of the display boards and wondered whether the school might be able to utilise them, eg to update the values messages currently displayed (which were probably themselves placed by the school). This is something that Carole or Helen might raise with the Hall Committee.

The extent to which the new lunch arrangements will reduce the School’s use of the Hall (and the kitchen) isn’t clear. It is anticipated that some kitchen time will still be required for keeping the food hot and for serving.

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**School Committee Meeting – 14.6.19**

**Head’s report – Lizzie Lethbridge**

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| **Pupil Numbers per year group** | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Summer term 2019 | | Nursery | 15 | | Reception | 8 | | Year 1 | 8 | | Year 2 | 14 | | Year 3 | 9 | | Year 4 | 2 | | Year 5 | 8 | | Year 6 | 12 | | Total: | 61+15 = 74 |   Currently 11 pupils for Reception in September.  Numbers are stable. |
| **Mosaic** | Thank you to those of you who came to support the mosaic project. It is beautiful and was a lovely project.  Several parents and community members come to join in, including Rev. David. |
| **School staffing** | Miss Cassandra Jones has been appointed to fill Mrs Siddons maternity leave. She is currently teaching at Witheridge Church of England Primary School which is a small, C of E School near Tiverton. She has experience in Year 3/4 which will be good for the Year 2/3 appointment. Mrs Siddons will start maternity leave in September.  Congratulations to Miss Rosie Harvey who has secured a permanent teaching post at Wembury Primary. |
| **Events, trips, visits** | The trip to Adrenaline Quarry was really well received – children had a fantastic day.  The Snowtubing and toboggan run was also an exciting day and enjoyed by all.  The sports week was a real success, including a lovely Sports Day. A huge thank you to everyone involved in supporting the sports week events.  Coming up:   * KEVICC sporting events * Transition days for Year 6 throughout term * Y3/4 residential 17-18th June * Y5/6 residential 24-26th June & kayaking on Thurs 27th June (adventure day) * CAP UK – parent meeting 2-3pm, 26th June * Class swap day 9th July (Miss Jones will be in school am) * Performance 11th July * Reports to go out 12th July * Y6 Forest School day with P.Moore 15th July * Diptfest 19th July * Last day Tues 23rd July |
| **PE** | We are really fortunate to welcome Mr Matt Tanner as a member of staff with The Link. He will continue to provide excellent quality PE and sporting events across The Link Schools, including festivals, events and competitions. |
| **C of E school**  **Christian distinctiveness** | -Staff met this week to write our mission statement and create our vision ‘strapline’ specifically to relate to Diptford as a unique setting. Our reviewed values led the discussion.  -Please read the Salisbury Diocesan ‘Spirituality policy guidance’.  -Our values (in this order, half termly):  Respect  Joy  Kindness  Courage  Community  Thankfulness  Our mission statement and vision:  Diptford’s mission statement and vision:    At Diptford we strive for excellence and enjoyment in learning through aspiration and collaboration.  With kind hearts and a community focus, we grow together with a deep respect for each other and thankfulness for our beautiful surroundings.  Our small school offers big opportunities that support our pupils to flourish and stand out with courage and conviction, finding joy and fulfilment in the exciting and enriching wider curriculum we offer.  **Let your light shine!**  *‘You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.’***Matthew 5:14-16** |