Diptford School – Minutes of School Committee meeting, 29 January 2019 (adopted at meeting of 12 March 2019)

Present: Roger Knight (chair), Lizzie Lethbridge (Head), Helen Price, Louise Lethbridge, Rev’d David Sayle.

1. Apologies were received from Jo Palmer and Claire Moorman, who had provided feedback and questions from the Little Dippers and Kingfishers parent groups in advance, and from Carole Partridge and Laura Bell.

2. The minutes of the previous meeting of 18 October were approved. Roger, on behalf of all parents, thanked David and Lizzie, and all of the school staff, for finding an alternative timing for the school carol concert. 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. Roger had advised Lizzie in advance of a number of matters raised by parents and her report covered many of these. The report prompted discussion in a number of areas, including in particular:

a) Very provisionally Lizzie expects an intake of ten children into reception in September.

a) On behalf of the Committee Roger congratulated Lizzie and her staff on retaining the school’s ‘good’ Ofsted rating in difficult circumstances. Lizzie reported on the steps being taken to address matters raised in the report. In particular she explained the increased focus on years 5 and 6; Lizzie is working closely with Miss Harvey during her days at Diptford and is conferencing daily. Year 5 is spending some time with years 3 and 4 to allow greater focus on year 6 teaching. Bikeability for year 6 children has been deferred until after SATS which are scheduled for 23 May. In future Bikeability will be for year 5 children.

Roger suggested that Lizzie might usefully arrange a meeting with year 5 and 6 parents when she could explain the school’s initiatives and give parents an opportunity to ask questions; Lizzie will give this consideration. [Parents’ session now scheduled for 23 March with Lizzie and Mrs Nicky Dunford (LINK Academy CEO)]

b) Marking Year 6 Leavers/Year 6 and Years 3 and 4 Residentials – in response to a suggestion from parents that a session be arranged for year 6 pupils with either Forest and Beach (Pete Moore) or East Soar to provide more varied outdoor experiences for children, Lizzie noted that a lot will be going on towards the end of the Summer term. We discussed whether one of the Diptford based residential days might be devoted to a session with one of these providers. Lizzie will consider this, and suggested that FODS might be prepared to support this initiative. There are no plans for a years 3 and 4 residential. [Subsequently it has been decided that there will be a years 3 and 4 residential]

c) The traffic and driving problems remain under consideration. Efforts have commenced to focus the children on this (so, eg, they can influence parents’ behaviours), through the School Council. Rev’d David noted that any approach to the Diocese concerning possible use of the former Glebelands is extremely unlike to succeed, quite apart from the dangers posed by an absence of lighting and pavements. Lizzie is still to try to make contact.

d) Parents’ feedback on after school sessions has already been fed back to the providers. Typically only 3 to 5 children attend the second sessions and efforts will be made to make these sessions less screen based

Other matters raised by parents

4. Some highly positive feedback had been received concerning the teaching staff and the relationships being developed with the children.

Lizzie suggested that the parents with a particular interest in reducing the use of plastics might wish to speak with Mrs Gilby whose year 3 and 4 children have commenced a plastics project.

Outdoor assets – Lizzie reported that it is difficult if not impossible to ask school staff to take on more in relation to, eg, Paddington’s Patch or the yurt and asked whether FODS might be able to ask for volunteer parent assistance. A quotation has been obtained for work required to the yurt and Lizzie has been able to find money in the school’s budget to cover this. There is now an additional problem, with the shed in which much of the PE equipment is stored as regards a leaking roof. Roger noted that FODS has had little success recently in broadening the number of parents involving themselves and suggested that an appeal direct from the school might have more chance of success. [Subsequently Lizzie did send a note to parents seeking assistance with the shed and one parent kindly arranged for the necessary work to be done.]

[A couple of other matters were discussed privately by Roger with Lizzie and Roger subsequently fed back to the parents concerned and suggested that, if they wished to take the matters further, they should arrange to speak personally with Lizzie.]

Matters from the Governors

5. Lizzie reported that there was nothing to feedback except thatit is now considered that greater representation from parents at some of the schools, Diptford included, is desirable. A letter will shortly be sent to parents seeking volunteers.

The Church and the School

6. Rev’d David had nothing to add to Lizzie’s report in this regard,

FODS Update

7. On behalf of Laura, Roger reported that the Christmas Crafts morning and Christmas lunch had gone well with a good turnout of parents. Sales of cards, mugs and tea towels had been successful. The Disco event was upcoming (on Friday 1 February). Notwithstanding the assistance with the crafts morning, FODS is finding it increasingly difficult to generate support from parents and ‘fundraising fatigue’ may be a factor.

Parish Hall update

8. Lizzie has met with representatives of the Parish Hall committee; the school’s use of the hall and concerns over cleaning and the Deep Clean were discussed. An understanding has been reached on all points (the hall committee will take responsibility for cleaning matters but the school may pay more), and a new Agreement is being drafted. The school’s use of the hall is not a cost to be school’s budget but is met by DFE funding.

Engaging the Community

9. Neither Carole nor Roger has had any success so far in finding volunteers from the community to assist with matters such as Paddington’s Patch.

10. The Mosaic project has been delayed due to the pressures of the Ofsted inspection and inviting the community into the school may have to be delayed until the summer term. Lizzie is pleased with the design; the project is likely to cost of the order of GBP2500 and Lizzie has managed to find about half of this within the school’s budget; fund raising may be required for the balance.

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**School Committee Meeting – 29.1.19**

**Head’s report – Lizzie Lethbridge**

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| **Pupil Numbers per year group** | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Spring term 2019 | | Nursery | 10 +4 in January | | Reception | 8 | | Year 1 | 9 | | Year 2 | 13 | | Year 3 | 8 | | Year 4 | 2 | | Year 5 | 9 | | Year 6 | 11 | | Total: | 60+14 = 74 |   Numbers are stable. Numbers for September are not in yet. |
| **Ofsted update** | Overall positive.  The report reflects that we have identified the challenges and that work was already underway.  Rapid progress continues to develop across school and significant support is in place to ensure this is sustainable. Rapid progress in Year 5/6 is already significantly increased as shown in pupil books.  School’s response is to continue working and driving standards in the way we have, particularly for Year 5/6. We doing this in a way that’s mindful of pupils’ resilience.  Miss Harvey is being supported by LL in a number of ways, including: joint planning; joint marking and target setting; working in class to give conferencing support, booster sessions with Miss Harvey and Mrs Gilby for all Y6… |
| **Issues raised** | -Bikes can be left on site during Bikeability.  -TV time has already been discussed recently with parents. Staff have discussed a consistent approach to how it is being used. Use is minimal and short, educational programmes are used occasionally. It is important that ‘Golden Time’ or rewards should to be chosen democratically. Films are no longer used during wet play times.  -Forest school in wet weather – forest school should ideally go ahead ‘all weathers’ However, we are mindful to shorten sessions if the weather is particularly cold or wet, and in more extreme conditions, alternative sessions with a ‘forest school’ ethos take place in the classroom. I have addressed this issue regarding our younger pupils  -Y3/4 will be undertaking a plastics project as part of the 5\* pledge. LL will mention the parent idea to her. |
| **Year 6** | -End of SATs – there will be a ‘SATS treat’ arranged in class by Miss Harvey.  Perhaps parents with the PTFA would like to consider Pete Moore/Forest and Beach as a Y6 leavers event?  -Leavers photos – Rachael has access and will organise. |
| **Events, trips, visits** | Coming up:   * Fire safety * Paralympian visit * Netball * Bikeability * Y6 creative writing * Cyclo-cross * World Book Day – Friday 8th March * Science week – 11th March * KS1 multi skills * Tennis festival * Easter service – 4th April, 9.30am * Last day of term – 5th April.   Next term:   * Healthy Living Week incorporating Sports Day – 23rd May 2019 * SATs week 13th May – all Y6 pupils expected to be in school. * Phonics screening 10th June – all Y1 and 2 pupils expected to be in school * Y5/6 residential – 24th June |
| **Christian Distinctiveness and Ethos update** | Staff had an introduction to the new SIAMS framework last week.  We will be continuing to review our mission statement and vision following our values review last year, and will have continued support from Landscove Primary who lead the SIAMS and C of E hub.  The Church of England’s Vision for Education, 2016:  <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/vision-education> |