

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Date of Meeting	25 th February 2021
Venue	Virtually Via Zoom
Chair	Martin Young
Clerk & Minutes	Suzette Nicol
Time	5:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP:

Governor	Category
Caroline Hurley (Chair)*	Co-opted
Martin Young*	Co-opted
Kiran Rahman*	Parent
Susannah Abdelouahed*	Parent
Jasmine Islam*	Parent
Rebecca Abrahams (Executive Headteacher)*	Staff (Head)
Nimesha Nagahawatte*	Head of School
Charlie McKnight	Co-opted
Edmund Miller*	Staff
Lawrence Houldsworth*	Associate Member

Also In Attendance	Role/Title
-	-

* Denotes attendance

PART 1 – OPEN SECTION

	ITEM
1.	Welcome, Apologies For Absence And Declaration Of Pecuniary Interests
	<p>The Chair introduced herself and welcomed all attendees to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Kiran Rahman.</p> <p>There were no declarations of pecuniary interests in any of the items on the agenda.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether committee members had any items they wished to add under Any Other Business. There were none.</p>
2.	Minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 5th November 2020 And

	<p>Matters Arising</p>
	<p>The minutes of the committee meeting held on 5th November 2020 which had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting were reviewed and agreed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of 5th November 2020 as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Page 1 agenda item 2 – A Committee Chair was elected at the governing body meeting of 18 March 2021. II. Page 7 agenda item 11 - Send Policy & Offer – The Executive Head said that these would be presented to the full governing body.
3.	<p>Standards Update</p>
	<p>Rebecca Abrahams, Executive Head, mentioned that she would be taking the standards update and the School Development Plan (SDP) together. The SDP had been circulated prior to the meeting. Rebecca mentioned that she had shared observations on what she felt were the priorities for the school which she planned to include in the SDP at a previous meeting. She added that she would have liked to have shared them with staff and Governors before bringing them to the committee but it had not been possible to do this due to Covid. The SDP had been done at the beginning of the last half term. It was shared with the senior leadership team who were of the view that it was a fair assessment of the school. The SDP would be taken to the governing body for approval.</p> <p>She said that as the partnership with St Luke’s was for two years and it was already half-way through the first year, it was sensible to draft a plan that would last the two years. The priorities would not change over the period but what would change was how success was measured. The first page of the document was a summary of where the school was at and where the priorities were. In the bottom of the first column were the Ofsted judgements of November 2019.</p> <p>The Executive Head reported that there had not been an opportunity to move things on due to the disruption caused by the pandemic and as a result it could not be said that the judgements had significantly changed. There was however evidence to show that there had been an improvement in leadership. She added that with regard to teaching and learning, there remained some provision which required improvement and she would be working closely on those when the children returned to school. There was also a summary of standards and achievement in the school over the last three years. She reminded the committee that this was the data that informed the last inspection and that because of Covid, it would be the same data that would be used were there to be another inspection. The next set of data would be available in 2022.</p> <p>Outcomes of the last inspection and the key priorities arising from the data were summarized in the document. In terms of the quality of provision, there was work to be done to raise standards of attainment particularly as the children moved through KS2. The data had shown that for Harbinger the outcomes for the end of Year 1 Phonics had routinely been quite strong. The outcomes for the last 2</p>

years at the end of KS1 had also been strong and compared favorably with outcomes nationally. However, it was at the end of KS2 that attainment had struggled. In the last 3 years the attainment had at times been significantly below national outcomes. One of the key priorities was raising attainment especially around reading. In order to do so, there was a need to review the curriculum to see if it was challenging enough. On speaking to staff, it became apparent that there was a lot of scope to raise expectation. Work on this had already started and an exciting curriculum was being built. Before half term teachers had reviewed the KS1 curriculum. Earlier in the day, work was being done on the Year 4 curriculum and the following week, work would be done on the curriculum for Years 5 and 6.

In so doing, they would be looking back across this academic year to ensure that they had addressed the things that they did not think the children could progress without knowing. They would also need to ensure that the curriculum was exciting and engaging. In addition, they would want to see that the curriculum was cohesive and ensured progress over time. They also wanted the curriculum to be sequential and wanted it to build the children's aspects of learning. In addition to the above, there was the need to teach children the new vocabulary and ensure catch up. This was not uniquely so for the children with English as an additional language.

With regard to behaviour and attainment, the Behaviour Policy had been approved and implemented although the whole school was away for now. There was a need to look at the restorative approach that underpinned this. Attendance needed to improve. This was not a Harbinger issue but rather an Island issue. There was also the need to ensure that safeguarding was effective. Rebecca Abrahams said that while this had been a real concern at the last inspection, she was no longer concerned about this as a thorough audit of this was being done. She added that the next audit would show that safeguarding was effective. The PSHE curriculum was an aspect of the wider curriculum which needed to be updated. She added that there was a need for a more cohesive curriculum that embraced the children as they travelled in school and also enabled the school to meet its statutory requirements in RSE.

In terms of leadership and management, decisive action needed to be taken to revise the staffing structure. The structure was expected to deliver more but it did not. This was a big focus of work the aim of which was to create a more distributive leadership. There was a need to enable more staff members to be developed. In summary, the front page gave a strong sense of the school's focus.

With regard to the objectives, each priority area had its own detailed plans. As the plan was over two years, it ran over 4.5 terms. Objective 1 involved developing the school's curriculum. There was a summary of the current strengths including a direct quote from Ofsted. The document mapped out what the school wanted to achieve at the end of this year and next year. Looking at the detail, the success criteria for this year was how to get the infrastructure for the new curriculum in place by the end of next year and to be able to see the impact of the new curriculum on the children in terms of their work. This section of the document showed what the school planned to do for each of the areas of the

objectives and each area had a detailed plan for subject leaders.

Objective 2 involved developing the use of data and assessment to improve pupil outcomes. This was about the improved use of data, the development of a provision map and seeking to increase the impact of interventions. It was also about empowering learners to become independent and strengthening the partnership between the school and parents, with a focus on learning. There were no data outcomes for 2021 as there were no national outcomes for the school to measure its progress against. However, in 2022, the school would have to show impact.

Objective 3 was about improving pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes. This would involve looking for attendance to be closer to 96% next year. It also involved refining provision for safeguarding, ensuring that everyone was equipped to deal with online safety: and ensuring the consistent use of positive behaviour management with integrated restorative practice. It also involved developing the provision for PSHE and RSE, strengthening extra-curricular provision and seeking to develop Pupil Voice and Responsibility so that pupils felt listened to and their views were acted upon.

The last section was on leadership, looking at how the school was increasing capacity to deliver improving outcomes and how to improve the effectiveness of leadership. This included ensuring that all leaders took decisive action to improve the quality of provision and maximising the school's use of its resources. The finance committee would be looking into maximizing the school's use of its resources. This would also involve looking at staff efficiency and effectiveness, looking at financial control as well as investing in computing. The school's management information system would also need to be reviewed and the school's site would need to be developed.

The Executive Head delivered a Standards update. The outcomes of the autumn term's assessment had been added to the grid. The data from the spring and summer terms would also be added to the grid to give a sense of whether cohorts were achieving and meeting targets. She mentioned that this had been an unusual year as when the children started in September, they had already been out of school since the first half of the spring term of the previous school year. As a result, there was no shared discussion between the teachers they had the previous year and their new teachers. The new teachers did not know the children very well and had not had a handover. As a result, it was hard for the new teachers to set aspirations for the children. Teachers agreed some percentages for what might be achievable at the end of the year on the basis of what the children had demonstrated during the first few weeks of school. The targets which had already been achieved were in green. Those in yellow were the ones that were quite close and the areas in red were the areas where judging how the children had achieved at the end of the autumn term, those targets now looked unachievable.

Teachers assessed the children at the end of the autumn term when the children were in school. In Year 1, there were 44 children on roll but there was data

available for 38 at the point that the assessment was done. Pupil mobility was a possible factor in this. Sixteen was the number attributed to the expected level of learning at the end of Reception. At the end of the autumn term in Year 1, the children were expected to have achieved 17 points and 19 points at the end of Year 1. In Year 2, the figures were 20 and 21 respectively. The system was organised in such a way that if children were assessed as working at the expected level, they had those numbers awarded to them. If they were assessed as working at greater depth, they would only get one more point. However, if they were working just below (at the cusp) they would be working one point behind. If they were working significantly below, the teacher would track that to the curriculum level and the year group level where they felt that the child was working and that would be the number attributed to the child. This allowed teachers to work out the average point score (APS) for any year group at any given time. It was obvious at a glance whether the year group was working broadly on track or not. Thirty-five percent of the children were working at age related expectation (ARE) in Year 1 in reading while 19% of children were working at greater depth. This meant that 54% of children were working either in line with or at greater depth in reading at the end of the autumn term in reading. For writing the figure was 54% and for Maths the figure was 57%. The Head said that while these figures were low, they were not low at the moment and was in line with other schools due to the significant learning loss among younger children. According to the teachers if the children who were already working at continued to do so, then the outcomes would be in line with those set by the teachers. When the children returned from the recent lockdown, the school would assess the impact of the last few weeks on them. Teachers would then try and work to make the figures improve. The targets would be slightly lifted when the spring data was being considered so as to make them aspirational.

In Year 2, 62% of children were working at the expected level or at greater depth in reading, 56% in writing and 57% in Maths. The numbers were expected to move into the 70s or higher. The areas rated yellow were expected to move to green over time. In Year 3 the numbers were 69% for reading, 58% for writing and 63% for Maths. In Years 4 and 5, 72% of children were at expected in reading in Year 4 and 71% in Year 5. Writing was not as secure as the reading and maths. In Year 6, the figures were 64% at age related expectation in reading, 62% in writing and 74% in writing. The targets highlighted in green and yellow would have already been achieved or would be about to be achieved.

The Executive Head pointed that the data was not moderated because when it was gathered the school was not able to do moderation of the evidence behind the data. When the children returned, the time between when they returned and the easter holiday would be used to test the evidence behind this data and the data from the spring assessment which would be added to the overview. She mentioned that some focused teaching would be done with the children before they were assessed for the Spring term.

The next page looked at the gap between where the children were and where the school would like them to be. If the gap was less than 1, that meant that the children were not far from where they were expected to be as a cohort. If the gap

exceeded 1 then the children were more than a term behind on average in terms of their learning. This was what was expected given the disruption they had had. It was useful in getting a sense of the various groups who might be vulnerable and how they compared with the whole cohort. Looking at the data and when the boys were considered as a group, the data showed that the boys in Year 1 were struggling. Only 38% of boys in Year 1 were currently reading and writing at the expected level for their age. The data was very worrying. In Year 5 the gaps for the boys were much greater compared to the whole cohort. On average, they were a year behind where they were expected to be.

On looking at the data for pupil premium (PP) children, of all the PP children in Year 2, only 6 were working in line with age related expectations. This represented 40% of them. The numbers were lower than for the whole cohort which reflected the concern at a national level. The impact of the pandemic had been felt by the more disadvantaged children. The gaps had widened between PP children and their peers in terms of their learning and achievement.

White British children were also looked at. In Year 4, 5 children were classified as White British but of those 5, only 1 was considered as worked at the expected level in writing. In Year 6, there were 4 White British children and none of them were achieving in line with age related expectations in writing. The average point score for them showed just how far behind they actually were. The Head said that this was only headline data which prompted questions. This information was useful for progress meetings so that additional support could be put in.

The Head said that when the children returned to school, the focus would be to give the children some good teaching and then assess them again. The data would then be sent to Governors for them to decide at the next meeting after the spring data whether the picture had been maintained or improved. Eddi Miller informed the committee that the phonic screening assessment had been done for Year 2 as they could not take the test in Year 1. 76% of the children passed the test. Two children who had been on long term absence did not take the test. Had they taken the test, they would have passed and the result would have been 81% of pupils in line with age related expectations.

Some questions were put to the Executive Head.

Q&A: What analysis have you done on attendance and why are the children not attending school?

It is quite difficult. We joined the school in September and only had half a term of operating all classes on site.

Q&A: You had mentioned that the Isle of Dogs performed badly compared to other areas in terms of attendance. Have you done an analysis on this?

As with all these things it is a complex demographics and the legacy of low aspirations in some pockets of the community. In attendance 1% point makes a big difference. Nationally, a very small 1% makes a big difference in attendance. It can be associated with the levels of disadvantage the school has.

Q&A: Why is attainment at KS2 not as strong as in the EYU or at KS1?

It is due to a lot of different factors that we need to unpick. The cohort finishing KS2 is not always the one that starts at KS1. There is a lot of mobility. Families move out of the island and mobility can make a difference when looking at attainment data. We also need to look at the curriculum itself. We need to increase the expectations of the curriculum.

Q&A: Why is writing so much lower than maths and reading?

It is an issue we are familiar with. It is complex and can be linked to children's experience of language and spoken English. This does not just affect the children with English as an additional language as it is a White British issue as well. The lockdown has had an impact on this as well. While at home, the children have missed out on what they would have had at school. Some had an impoverished language experience before coming to school and the lockdown has not helped.

Martin Young joined the meeting at this point and apologized for lateness.

Q&A: In attendance is it the same children all the time that have got problems with attendance or is the issue spread across the whole cohort?

On attendance it varies. This is why we look at individual data as well as class data. For a child who comes back in September and in the 3 weeks of term catches chicken pox and has to have 5 days off school, their attendance will quickly plummet. The amount of time they have had off is huge but if that child then continues to attend regularly then by the end of the year, they will not be a cause for concern. However, for some it is an inherent culture of not needing to come to school. It is something that should be addressed at the individual level.

Q&A: You were talking about focusing on the children where you can make a difference, with the pupils that fall lower than that does Harbinger subscribe to the attendance and welfare service in Tower Hamlets?

We do. We have an Attendance and Welfare Officer who works with us.

A Governor commented that she found the absence figures concerning especially as this did not mirror what parents had signed up to when their children joined the school. The Headteacher mentioned that there was a need to look at what the policy and practice were in Harbinger. She said that an additional challenge this year had been Covid as there were children who had had to stay at home while there were others who did not have to stay at home but did stay at home. She mentioned that the school had been tackling it through engagement with the Remote Learning as staff members had been persistently following up with the children who had not been engaging in remote learning. It was not that attendance had not been challenged during this period, it was just that it was a different level of challenge. However, attendance remained a priority for the school to work on.

	<p>Q&A: In the action plan there does not seem to be anything in the spring window for writing. Do you have any ideas or interventions to be used for writing when the children come back to school?</p> <p>That is what we have been talking about in relation to the curriculum. One of the things we could do is to ask Nimesha to bring the summer term curriculum document to the next meeting so that you can see the emphasis we have given to all aspects of the curriculum including writing. We have been talking about how we need to prioritise the basics as well. If we can do some work around the basics around particularly punctuation, handwriting and spelling alongside the more creative aspects that the curriculum inspires, that will encourage the children to see themselves as writers.</p> <p>Nimesha reported the conversations she had had with teachers. They had been talking about writing and had discussed writing at LKS2 earlier in the day. There were 15 weeks in which to focus on what the children had missed out on during the spring term and on what knowledge and skills they needed to acquire to get them to the autumn term. They discussed selecting some topics and giving children opportunities for writing, for art and D&T. They had been working on the curriculum for Years 3 and 4 and the following week they would be working on the curriculum for Years 5 and 6. She said that she would be happy to share that with the committee at the next meeting. Nimesha mentioned that there was a staff meeting planned to introduce a programme for handwriting and spelling. Last term, the staff had met to discuss handwriting and spelling and they had realised that something consistent was needed across the school that would ensure progression. Some tools that had been used at St Luke's would be introduced at Harbinger in order to improve writing. There would be looking at a handwriting programme called Letter Join and would give access to parents so they could see what the expectations were in school. Pen Licenses would also be introduced and embedded in the school. A Governor asked whether the school would consider organising a Spelling Bee competition. The Executive Head said that that could be considered.</p> <p>Governors thanked the Executive Head for her presentation.</p>
4.	School Development Plan (SDP)
	This item had already been taken under agenda item 3 above.
5.	Attendance
	This item had been dealt with in detail under agenda item 3 above.
6.	Language Used By The Children
	This was an item that had been raised by Kiran Rahman at the last meeting. As Kiran was not present at this meeting, it was agreed that the item would be deferred until the next meeting of the committee.
7.	Governor Knowledge/Skills Audit And Training Needs

	<p>The Chair said that she had asked for this item to be added. She added that whilst a lot of the training available to Governors were skills based, there appeared to be a gap in terms of primary specific knowledge. She wanted to know from Governors who were not primary specialists whether they felt the same and to see what would be helpful for Governors. She wanted to know whether other Governors had difficulty accessing information. A Governor said that she needed practice on how to data. Another Governor said that information was needed on primary levels and on what it meant when a child was said to be working towards the expected standard. Governors said that they needed people friendly level descriptors.</p> <p>The Executive Head said that there was information which could be shared with Governors. It was a question of deciding on the best way to share that information with Governors. Martin Young said that the Tower Hamlets training for Governors was very good. She asked Governors to look at the training menu as primary focused sessions were held from time to time.</p> <p>Eddi Miller undertook to deliver a presentation at the next committee meeting on Years 1 and 2 levels. He mentioned that other Phase Leaders would be happy to do the same. Governors were of the view that the presentation would make the statistics more meaningful. Eddi Miller said that he would speak to the other phase leaders about the presentation. Action: Eddi Miller</p> <p>Rebecca Abrahams suggested that the presentation should be on writing and on the expected levels in writing. At a future meeting it would be reading followed by maths.</p>
8.	<p>Policies For Review</p>
	<p>The following policies were presented for review and approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid Policy - Agreed • Complaints Policy - Agreed <p>RESOLVED: To approve the above policies and to recommend them to the governing body for ratification.</p> <p>Positive Handling Policy – This policy was circulated by Rebecca Abrahams earlier in the day. She mentioned that she did not expect Governors to provide feedback on it at this meeting. It was agreed that committee members should send any feedback or comments to the Executive Head by 4 March after which the policy would be taken as approved. Action: All</p>
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p>
	<p>None</p>

10.	Date of Next Committee Meeting
	Thursday 6 th May 2021 at 5:00p.m.
	The open side of the meeting ended at this point and Eddi Miller (Staff Governor), Lawrence Houldsworth (Associate Member) left the meeting so that confidential items could be discussed.
	Part 2 – Confidential Item
1.	Confidential minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 5th November 2020 And Matters Arising
	Governors reviewed and RESOLVED to approve the confidential minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 5 th November 2020.

The Chair closed the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Chair's signature: _____ Date: _____