

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
MINUTES OF CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Date of Meeting	21 st May 2020
Venue	Virtually Via Zoom
Chair	Martin Young
Clerk & Minutes	Suzette Nicol
Time	5:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP:

Governor	Category
Robyn Bruce	Co-opted
Martin Young (Chair)*	Co-opted
Kiran Rahman*	Parent
Susannah Abdelouahed*	Parent
Andy Smith (Headteacher)*	Staff (Head)
Charlie McKnight (Co-opted)	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 welcomed all attendees to the meeting.</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p> <p>There were no declarations of pecuniary interests in any of the items on the agenda.</p>
2.	Minutes Of The Committee Meeting Held On 5th March 2020 And Matters Arising
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2020 which had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting were reviewed and agreed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of 5th March 2020 as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.</p>



	<p><u>Matters Arising:</u> There were no matters arising.</p>
3.	<p>Online Learning Update</p>
	<p>The Headteacher informed Governors that the school had adapted its online learning to send home the week's work on a Monday morning and had started to rely more on the Government's recommended support such as: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize and https://www.thenational.academy/. The school had also started to send home textbooks for 'Maths No Problem' and was making greater usage of online reading resources as well as sending home books from the Tower Hamlets Library Service.</p> <p>Governors were informed that some parents would like to return to the detailed homework that was sent home daily. However, the current approach had freed staff up to work on school development, CPD and would allow staff to return to work and continue to send work home. The work sent home was quite comprehensive and was enough to keep the children busy for a whole week. The Headteacher added that the school had started to notice that some parents were feeling the pressure of receiving homework while some of them were asking for less homework. A sample of the work sent out to children had been circulated to Governors for their information. The Headteacher mentioned that several staff members were creating YouTube channels while some schools were doing zoom classes.</p> <p>A Governor asked whether any pupils had fallen through the net and had not done enough online learning or whether all children were covered and engaged. Eddi said that there was one child in his class whose family did not have internet access. The mum said that she would be doing things with her child, but they had not done any of the work set by Eddi. Another family had not replied to a single email from the school.</p> <p>Q&A: Was this due to a lack of resources? Any family that asks for technology is given a device. A number of families are actively choosing not to engage with the work set online. Some do not see the need for it and some think schools will re-open in a week. The picture is the same for other Isle of Dogs schools. Other schools have an engagement rate of 30%-40%. We have one of the highest rates on the island in terms of engagement.</p> <p>Eddi mentioned that there was a child who was working significantly below the expected standard and her parents had limited capacity to help her. As a result, he was sending her a completely different set of work. The SENCO also checked in with that child once a week on a Wednesday and the child was meant to reply on a Friday. The Chair suggested that the school should have a database of children whose families had not engaged with online learning, produce an assessment of the reason why they had not engaged and any remedial action could then be taken now and in September. The Head said that they had a system in place for that.</p>



The Headteacher said that he had applied for grant funding for text books for the summer holidays. He said that he would inform Governors when the grant came through. It was noted that Harbinger had a high level of engagement around 80% to 90%. Governors asked the Headteacher to pass on their thanks to the teachers for what they had been doing.

Q&A: Will the parents who have not been engaging with the school bring their children into school when it opens if they cannot engage with home school? It is the same parents who do not normally engage. It is complex. For some of them it will be due to poverty, access and lack of knowledge of curriculum teaching. Some of them are struggling with the situation. We need to keep the vulnerable list going.

Eddi said that he kept a weekly register of all those who had replied. Logs were kept of everything. He mentioned that there were 3 children that they did not expect to hear from, otherwise, all had replied that they were getting on with the work and showed examples.

Q&A: Do you think that those vulnerable children will be the ones that come back into school when it opens, or do you think their parents are likely to keep them off school? The thing is if they are going to drop further below the standard, they are the ones that need to be brought into school. Is that not the case?

The principle is that we are going to prioritise our vulnerable list. We will revise our list of key workers and vulnerable children will be a priority. It is hard to say whether the parents will send their children to school. We will send a letter out tomorrow. We are not sure what will happen next week, as the situation is changing very fast.

The Chair mentioned that from the information available the them, Governors had been able to understand the level of engagement and understand the reasons for the lack of engagement from around 10% of the families. However, he acknowledged that the school had done everything that needed to be done.

Governors said that they recognised the hard work that had been put in by the staff. Although engagement was not 100%, they noted that the school had the agility and the staff to adapt to a crisis such as this.

Q&A: The summer engagement plan is a good idea. Do you think there are positive lessons learnt during the online period such as good homework strategies and engagement with home that can be built on when school re-opens?

I drew on my experience from China where the children do not fall behind in Maths. They all stay at the same level. We have implemented some of the Maths strategies in Harbinger. We introduced the 'Maths No Problem' books. There are books that can be taken home and can be easily used by parents. There has been some positive feedback from parents having easy access to textbooks. There is a lot more we could have done in preparing parents for that. One other thing that has been successful in China is that teachers routinely share lessons on a platform for children to access. I am planning for Harbinger to share access to a bank of resources online for parents to access. We will be building online



	<p>preparedness should the school have to suddenly close. This is yet to be discussed with the staff. It is something we can develop as a school as we get back to normal. The Chair added that the online resources could be used for revision and learning away from school.</p> <p>Governors thanked the Head for the update.</p>
4.	<p>Post-Ofsted Development Plan - Status Update</p>
	<p>The Headteacher presented a status update on the Post-Ofsted Development Plan that had been circulated prior to the meeting. He mentioned that certain areas needed to be worked on such as the development of their curriculum strands looking at what is Reading throughout the school and how it is developed from EYU up to Year 6. This had been started by Matthew Warhurst, Deputy Head before he went on leave. He had completed work on the Maths and Science curriculum. Eddi explained how the Phase Leaders had been working on the curriculum remotely. They had focused on the Reading curriculum. They had written an intent, worked on an implementation for the different phases and created a document looking at the different skills identified as part of the Reading curriculum. They tried to work out what comprehension would look from Year 1 to Years 6 and tried to unpick what you would see in the different year groups. Work has also started with Writing.</p> <p>The Headteacher said that the Isle of Dogs schools as a collective would be applying to the LA for funding next year to work on either Geography or History strands. Experts working to create the Island as a centre for curriculum development for History and Geography would be involved. The work done on History and Geography in the school will feed into the project.</p> <p>The Head added that the behaviour aspect of the plan had been implemented although there was a lot of work to be done on that. Oracy had been shelved for now due to workload issues post Ofsted. However, most areas were progressing quite well.</p> <p>Q&A: As you are aware, Ofsted Inspectors like to see evidence, plans being implemented and decisions taken. Pandemic aside, are we on track to provide that assurance? That will be my next piece of work before summer to make sure that all of the evidence is available.</p> <p>Q&A: What are the next steps to ensure that Teachers are clear about the Teaching and Learning Policy taking it from a written policy to one that has been implemented and is there a need to adjust it for the new year based on the current context? With regard to the curriculum strands, Matthew met with staff and talked through the intent, implications and how they fitted within the Teaching and Learning policy. This has been done for other subjects. We are feeding that policy through all of the planning that we are doing at the moment. With regard to dissemination, we have a rotating plan in place. Phase Leaders work on the policy and pass it on to class Teachers who look at the planning that is in place and put it into their</p>



	<p>planning for next year or look retrospectively at what they have done. All the necessary adaptations are made.</p> <p>Eddi said that this had been done for Science and History. Teachers looked through the year's plans and made adaptations in a different colour. Once these documents were created, other teachers would look at it. Reading was based on what the school was doing at present and there was no need to change the practice. It was more about focusing on what they did and why they did it.</p>
5.	<p>Education Innovations Introduced By Headteacher - To Be Kept And Built On</p>
	<p>The Chair said that this issue had arisen based on communication with parents after a letter went out informing them that the Headteacher would be leaving the school at the end of the year. He asked the Headteacher to provide a list of the innovations he had introduced to the curriculum explaining why they were important and why they should continue for Governors' consideration before he left.</p> <p>Action: Headteacher</p> <p>The Headteacher said that there were 2 aspects to this. One was what the parents perceived and the other centred on other things from the curriculum. He said that he had not implemented his vision but had worked with staff to develop approaches and as a result they were not innovations. He had introduced the Behaviour Policy and 'Maths No problem' which the school was still developing and it was too early to tell their impact.</p> <p>He added that what the parents were talking about was that they were very keen to get an understanding of positive change and how the Governors would continue to communicate that positive change. The Head added that it was more about communication with parents and the school. Work needed to continue positive change and the school needed to continue with the innovations in Maths teaching and in implementing the Behaviour Policy.</p>
6.	<p>Proposed School Re-Opening And Curriculum Impact</p>
	<p>The Headteacher informed Governors that Harbinger had responded well to the series of changes that had been put forward since the Government published its guidance. It had been a period of intense rapid change. The school was currently working on a risk-assessment document received from the LA and ensuring the school was safe to re-open. The LA was putting decision making at the level of the school and the school had to do what it felt was the right thing. The school had taken the decision that safety was the priority and as a result they could not open on 1st June as a lot of things had to be put in place. This was in line with other Isle of Dogs schools who were all opening on the 2nd week in June.</p> <p>When school opened, due to the size of the classrooms, there would be bubbles of no more than 10 children at a time and it would start in the first week with opening 2 bubbles in Year 6 and Year 1. Smaller Reception bubbles of 5-6 children would then open the following week. Intake was expected to be initially low and the school would grow the provision as demand increases. The nursery</p>



could not yet be open until there was proper guidance from the Government. The school would continue to provide support to Key Workers and vulnerable children bubble. This was expected to be around 70 children.

The school would be opening the bubbles for 3 days a week to allow the teachers time to plan and manage home learning. Any key worker children could also access that provision. The content taught in class will be used for home learning as well to ensure that they did not repeat learning.

The Head added that preparation was being made in the school for the opening and that a range of supplies had been ordered. These included cleaning produces, protective equipment for first-aiders and office staff and directional signs for movement around the school.

The school has conducted research on parents' views on the re-opening. 30%-40% said that they would like to send their children back. High quality work would be sent to the parents supporting the children at home.

Q&A: Will there be only 2 days of schooling for the children at home?

Home learning will carry on as usual. The Year 1 bubble will be open, but we will still send out 1 week's work. Anything we do in class will be mirrored in what is sent home.

A Governor asked whether there were any plans to do something on the social and emotional aspects of the pandemic. Eddi mentioned that the school was aware and had discussed this already. He added that the school intended to spend as much time as necessary dealing with the emotional fallout from the pandemic.

Governors were informed that a lot of planning had gone into how to manage the children's play. Arrival and departure times would be staggered. The pitch will be divided into social distance areas for them to play. Each area will have an adult on duty and children will be encouraged to wash their hands often.

The Headteacher mentioned that in addition to the need for plans to be put in place for the opening of school, the Unions had been sending aggressive letters to Headteachers and advising their members that they could take legal action against the school and individuals should they catch the virus. They were also advising members to go on strike and giving them legal information on how to do this. Union Reps would be working with the Head on the risk assessment to ensure that all was in place. The Head said that he would also be discussing the Unions' risk assessment with them. He undertook to circulate the risk assessment to Governors for feedback and scrutiny when it was ready.

Action: Headteacher

A Governor wanted to know whether Governors would be culpable if they signed off the risk assessment and a staff caught the virus while in school. The Chair said that Governors would only be culpable if they did something reckless. There was no question of personal liability attached. The Headteacher was asked to check what the insurance guidance said about this issue.



	<p>Action: Headteacher</p> <p>Q&A: When will the final decision be taken? The Government will take a decision on 28th May. During the first week of June, meetings will be held with the Unions who are supporting me with the risk assessment. The Unions will have it signed off on the Wednesday or Thursday of the first week in June.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged that although the opening was a matter for the professional judgement of the teaching staff as it was an operational decision, Governors were however satisfied that the school was doing things the right way. They complemented the Headteacher and staff for pulling together something so thorough and detailed.</p>
7.	<p>Any Urgent Business</p>
	<p>Food bags - The Headteacher informed the committee that Father Tom had been providing food bags for some of the most vulnerable families. Manor Field Primary had also been providing some food bags for some families. The school was hoping to do meals for vulnerable families during half term week.</p> <p>The Chair informed the committee that further to a conversation he had had with the Head concerning iftar meals for parents who needed them, he had contacted Cllr Haque who informed him that iftar meals for parents were being provided at Christchurch.</p> <p>The Headteacher commended the staff who had been going around the borough collecting and distributing food bags to families.</p>
8.	<p>Part 2 – Confidential Items (If Any)</p>
	<p>The Headteacher informed Governors that he had received a notice of resignation from a teacher earlier in the day. The staff member was moving to another position which was a step up. An exit interview would be conducted by the School Business Manager.</p>

There being no further items to discuss, the Chair closed the meeting at 18:15 p.m.

Chair's signature: _____ **Date:** _____

