

Putting the Community First



LONDON BOROUGH

**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICE MEETING WITH CHAIRMEN
AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF GOVERNORS
NOTES OF THE MEETING ON TUESDAY 10 JANUARY 2012
AT NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK**

In attendance

Andrew Ballam-Davies	Holly Park
Laura Bier	Brookland Junior & Infant
John Bowra	Christ's College
Helen Burns	Deansbrook Junior
Bronwen Tuman	Foulds
Christine Chamberlain	Whitefield
Mark Chapman	Holy Trinity CE
Simon Clifford	Chalgrove Primary
Andrew Colman	Church Hill
Marianne Corcoran	Brookhill Nursery
Liz Court	Woodcroft Primary
Stephen Ferguson	Oak Lodge
Clare George	Grasvenor Avenue Infant
Sara Gibbins	Brookland Junior and Infant
Richard Groves	Hollickwood Primary
Rosemary Gwilliam	Monken Hadley CE
Vicky Hobart	Holly Park
John Ireton	Danegrove Primary
Caroline Korniczky	Northway
June Last	Brookhill Nursery
Beryl Maltby	St Margaret's Nursery
Bruce McGill	Coppetts Wood
Janet McIntyre	Christ Church
Peter McNamara	Blessed Dominic Catholic
Simon Motz	Childs Hill
Graham Old	Coppetts Wood
Colin Page	Northway
Liz Pearson	Hampden Way
Neil Ruckman	Grasvenor Avenue Infant
Valerie Standen	The Hyde
Jill Summers	Wessex Gardens
Nigel Taylor	Wessex Gardens
Clare Viccars	Parkfield
Marc Wetherill	Church Hill
Denise White	Hampden Way Nursery
Sue White	Copthall

Sheila Bennett (Clerk), Trevena Champion (Clerk), Keith Golding (Clerk), George Peradigou (Clerk) and Kam Varma (Clerk).

1. INTRODUCTION, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Robert McCulloch Graham, Director of Children's Service, welcomed all to the meeting and wished everyone a happy New Year. He announced that the Children's Service was currently undergoing a two-week Ofsted inspection in respect of Safeguarding and Looked After Children. He was pleased to report that, in terms of outstanding schools, Barnet was in the top 16% of boroughs nationally.

Apologies for absence were recorded on behalf of: Brenda Barrett (Queen Elizabeth's Girls'), Kristine Chowdhry (Bell Lane), Kristine Cronhelm (Edgware Junior & Infant) Jon Epstein (Akiva), Evelyn Gruber (St Joseph Catholic Infant), John Hickman (Bell Lane Primary). Cllr Sury Khatri (Copthall), Ann Robinson (Whitefield), Julia Sanitt (Garden Suburb), Alice Thomas (Christ Church), and Peter White (Brunswick Park).

2 UPDATE ON PUPIL PLACES

Val White, Assistant Director, Children's Service, gave a presentation on the pressures facing the local authority (LA) regarding pupil places in the primary sector (presentation attached). This increase in pupil numbers would feed through to secondary schools in the near future.

Val White thanked those headteachers, schools and governors who had risen to the challenge by accepting bulge classes to help the LA accommodate these children. The government had made extra funding of £9.47m available in the previous financial year, but due to the economic restraints, only £3m would be available for this purpose in the coming financial year. Six primary schools had already been identified for permanent expansion, and due to the increasing pressure on the LA to provide pupil places, bulge classes would continue to be needed. The LA would be asking primary school headteachers to look for scope within their schools to take additional children from September 2012. The LA had to be robust in making use of any spare space available in schools in an effort to resolve this problem.

Governors were updated on the situation regarding secondary schools. The same approach of asking existing successful schools first to accommodate students would be used. It was noted that funds to expand up to three secondary schools were in place to accommodate students from 2015/16, when a shortage of places was expected.

A short discussion period followed the presentation, and questions were taken. It was noted that the cost of a new two-form entry primary school was approximately £8m and a recently-built secondary school had cost £32m. Recommendations regarding secondary school expansion were still being discussed by cabinet and it was hoped the action plan would be completed by 6 June 2012.

3 EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE, KEY STAGE 1 & 2

Amelia Whitehouse, Narrowing the Gap, Early Years Lead, gave an overview of the changes to the statutory assessment arrangements in Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (presentation attached).

It was noted that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile remained unchanged in 2012, but from 2013 a new, less bureaucratic, profile would be introduced.

Key Stage 1 assessments at Yr 2 would remain the same. Governors were given information regarding the new phonics screening check for Yr 1 pupils that would take place from 18 – 22 June 2012. This check was a statutory requirement and the LA would be supporting schools to make the process as comfortable as possible. A recheck would take place in December in Yr 2 for those children who had not reached the required standard.

The 2012, Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests would be held in the week beginning 14 May 2012. Externally marked tests would take place in mathematics and reading. Externally marked level 6 tests in reading and mathematics would be available to schools in 2012 to administer to eligible pupils on an optional basis. These tests would take place on Monday 21 May and Tuesday 22 May.

In 2012, writing would be moving towards teacher assessment. Schools could decide to take part in the externally-marked writing test in the week beginning 14 May 2012, or opt for writing test which is marked internally. Teacher assessment of writing across the school year would be the primary source of evidence of pupils' attainment. Schools would be required to report the teacher assessments in writing. Samples of schools would have to be marked externally but the results would not be published. It was noted that 25% of schools would be moderated by the LA; 10% of these selected by the Department for Education (DfE).

A short discussion opportunity followed the presentation, and questions were asked. It was noted that all information regarding the phonics screening check was available on the DfE website at the following link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment>. Examples of the words and non-words to be used in the check were given on this site, although a full list would not be published. It was explained that this check would be moderated partly internally as well as by the LA. Governing Bodies had a statutory obligation to ensure that processes were in place for the check to be carried out and moderated correctly. Amelia Whitehouse explained, in answer to a question, that the check was to discover the pupils' phonetic decoding ability, which was one of the skills necessary in learning to read. It was noted that this check would be suitable for those children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) as no comprehension ability was involved. The results of the check would be reported to parents and would be part of the information provided during an Ofsted inspection.

Further information regarding Key Stages 1 and 2 was also available on the DfE website. Following a question, it was confirmed that schools would have a choice of externally-marked writing tests to support teacher assessment this coming year.

4 BARNET GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Simon Clifford, Vice-Chair at Chalgrove Primary School, proposed that a Governors' Association be established in Barnet to provide the opportunity for Governors to work together and explore ways in which they could collaborate for the benefit of their schools and ultimately their pupils (presentation attached). The inaugural meeting of the Barnet Governors' Association would be taking place on Wednesday 8 February 2012, 7 pm at the North London Business Park.

Robert McCulloch Graham endorsed this proposal to form an association run by governors for governors. He emphasised that budget cuts would be felt in the next financial year and would continue over the next three years. The possibility of the association arranging group buying to save costs was very exciting. He mentioned that the LA had been able to drive down energy costs for schools by negotiating a block contract.

Sarah Beaumont, Governor Services Manager, said that all Governors had been invited personally by letter to this inaugural meeting, which was also advertised in the Governor Development Programme. Governors could contact her direct or register in the normal way. It was also noted that Simon Clifford was in the process of forming a planning committee, and any Governor interested in being part of this should contact him direct.

Opportunity for discussion followed this presentation.

5 NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

Mick Quigley, Assistant Director (Schools & Learning) gave an overview of the LA's new relationship with schools in a changing educational environment (presentation attached).

He highlighted the contribution of school governors to the Big Society, and the government's determination to drive through educational reforms. It was noted that 91% of schools in Barnet were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, with none in an Ofsted category, and 93% of private, voluntary and independent settings in Early Years were rated good or better. The Children's Service, currently undergoing an Ofsted inspection, had fully integrated children's service and social care department. Although the LA had had to be reduced in size it retained a number of important functions around school improvement, children, parents and vulnerable pupils. Mick Quigley also spoke about the risks to schools, including the demographic shift, the recession, and the challenge to maintain performance in these difficult times.

Mick Quigley spoke about the work of the Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI) which was a fully-traded service used by 90 primary and one secondary school. BPSI offered consultancy, training, training materials and supervised learning of teaching

and management. It was emphasised that this service was dependent on schools continuing to buy into it. Mick Quigley was pleased to say that four Learning Network Inspectors had been retained to make regular visits to support schools. He spoke about the importance of 'Narrowing the Gap' between the attainment of average and vulnerable children and reminded Governors that the Team Around the Setting linked schools with key agencies for the most vulnerable pupils.

The new Ofsted framework from January 2012 would have a sharper focus on overall achievement of pupils. The four judgements: attainment, the quality of leadership and management, the quality of teaching and the behaviour and safety of pupils, were noted.

Mick Quigley reminded governors that headteachers needed challenge as well as support from their governing bodies. The good communication channels between the LA, schools and the wider community were noted.

A discussion period and questions followed. In answer to a query, Mick Quigley said the government had made it easier for schools to convert to academy status. The LA would support them throughout the process but would not push them to do so. He said that primary schools had to decide whether the additional responsibility of academy status outweighed the benefits of conversion. Robert McCulloch Graham confirmed that the LA wished to maintain the family of schools in Barnet and continued to work closely with those schools that had undergone conversion.

6 LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS' MEETING

Robert McCulloch Graham informed Governors that Cllr Harper wished to meet LA governors to discuss ways of helping them become more proactive in their role. A meeting to further discuss this matter, to which all LA governors were warmly invited, would be held on Thursday 2 February 2012 at 7 pm at the North London Business Park.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 2 May 2012 at 7.00 pm at Hendon Town Hall.