

# THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE ELIOT BANK AND GORDONBROCK PRIMARY SCHOOLS FEDERATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of the Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Primary Schools Federation held via Zoom on Monday, 14 March 2022 at 6.00 p.m.

## PRESENT

Ms B. Albert	
Ms J. Bishop	
Mr T. Bremner	
Ms B. Eadie	
Mr P. Fidel	Chair
Ms M. Gilmore	Executive Headteacher
Mr C. Hale	Vice Chair
Mr T. Hardy Hall	
Mr P. Jenkins	
Ms K. Knowles	
Ms M. Quinn	
Ms F. Scott	
Mr B. Stephen	
Ms T. Stickland	
Ms M. Worthington	

## Also present:

Ms M. Barry	Deputy Headteacher, Gordonbrock
Ms L. McGuire	Deputy Headteacher, Eliot Bank
Ms A. Osmond	Deputy Headteacher, Eliot Bank
Mr M. Ridler-Mayor	Acting Deputy Headteacher, Gordonbrock
Mrs K. Walsh	Head of School, Eliot Bank
Mrs J. Wright	Head of School, Gordonbrock
Mrs J. Woods	Clerk

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / WELCOME TO NEW GOVERNOR

Apologies for absence were received with consent from Ms Carboo-Ofulue and Ms Sood.

Governors were reminded that they must declare conflicts and pecuniary interest before items were discussed, and must withdraw from the meeting while the item was under discussion. If there is a change to a governor's declarable interests, the governor concerned must complete and return a new Register of Interests form.

Governors were pleased to welcome Beatrice Arthur and Faye Scott, the two newly elected parent governors, to their first meeting of the Governing Body.

Governors had been very sorry to learn that Mrs Walsh had resigned as Head of School at Eliot Bank, and would be leaving at the end of term. On behalf of the Governing Body, Mr Fidel expressed his sadness that Mrs Walsh would be leaving, and his grateful thanks for all of her contributions and dedication to the school and Governing Body over the last 20 years. Mrs Walsh in turn thanked governors and the Senior Leadership Teams at both schools for their support, and said that she had greatly enjoyed the 20 years during which she had been part of the Eliot Bank community.

Ms Gilmore reminded governors that the Eliot Bank quality of education review was due to take place the following day, and Ms McGuire, Ms Osmond, and Ms Quinn left the meeting to continue with preparation.

## 2. TO AGREE THE BUSINESS FOR THE MEETING

The order in which items were to be discussed and those items which would be considered as urgent business was agreed upon.

## 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

### (a) To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### (b) Matters arising which are not included elsewhere on the agenda

#### (i) Page 2, Minute 3(a) – Succession planning

*Mr Jenkins reported back on the recent discussion on succession planning at the meeting of the Strategic Group he had attended.* There had been a general consensus that it was not appropriate for governors to only serve for one term of office, because it took some time for new governors to become conversant with their role and particularly to get used to how the Federation operates and the value they can add. *There had also been discussion about introducing a buddy system for new governors, and Mr Jenkins had agreed to review the governors' training programme each term and highlight sessions of particular relevance to other governors.*

#### (ii) Page 4, Minute 5(d) – Governing Body Code of Conduct

The updated Code of Conduct had been circulated with the agenda for formal approval. It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Code of Conduct for 2021/22 be adopted and all governors would email the Clerk to confirm that they are in agreement with the Code and will abide by its provisions.

#### (iii) Page 4, Minute 5(e) – Agenda planner

A copy of the updated governors' monitoring and evaluation schedule had been circulated with the agenda. It was agreed that discussion of this would be deferred until later in the meeting.

#### (iv) Page 6, Minute 7(c) – Governors' information

There had been a previous suggestion that a document could be compiled with information about governors' backgrounds. *Mr Jenkins suggested that a more informal approach should be taken, with discussion about governors' skills rather than producing a full document. He had raised this as part of the proposal to develop a buddying process, and recognised that all governors had busy agendas, so it was likely to be helpful for a more informal discussion to take place.*

There had also been ongoing discussions about the possibility of using Google Classroom to share documents for governors' meetings.

Ms Gilmore informed governors that she and the Chair had discussed the possibility of moving back to face to face meetings from the summer term.

#### (v) Page 16, Minute 12 – Data

It was noted that the list of acronyms produced by The Key had been circulated. *Mr Fidel pointed out that there may be other acronyms which were not included in the list, and he urged new governors to ask for clarification if they were unclear about any terms used.*



**(vi) Page 17, Minute 12(d) – Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**

The Clerk reported that there were still a number of governors who had not provided written confirmation that they had read and understood the updated guidance, and it was agreed that she would email the governors concerned.

**(vii) Page 17, Minute 13 – School websites**

***Ms Worthington informed governors that she had reviewed both websites, using the guidance provided by The Key, and had cross referenced this with the DfE guidance.*** She confirmed that both websites were fully compliant and were in extremely good order. She had noticed a couple of missing links and typographical errors, and these had now been corrected.

Ms Gilmore thanked Ms Worthington for carrying out such a detailed review so promptly.

**4. GOVERNING BODY**

**(a) Changes to the Governing Body**

Ms Albert and Ms Scott were welcomed again to the Governing Body. It was noted that their term of office had begun on 22 February 2022. ***The Chair was pleased to confirm that all places on the Governing Body were now filled.***

**(b) DBS checks**

Governors were reminded that all governors must have a valid DBS check in place, and new governors should make arrangements with the school to start the application process within 21 days of their appointment.

**5. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES, LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS, VISITS TO THE SCHOOL, AND TRAINING**

**(a) Reports from committees**

**(i) Strategic Group**

The minutes of meetings of the Strategic Group held on 21 January 2022 were received; the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February were not yet available. At the meeting on 21 January, the Strategic Group had discussed succession planning, and governors had received an update on COVID. There had been discussion about the quality of teaching and learning, and updates had been given on staffing and recruitment, safeguarding, and governor recruitment.

At the meeting on 25 February, the Strategic Group had discussed the quality of teaching and learning, staffing and recruitment, and safeguarding.

**(ii) Resources Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 21 February 2022 had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee had scrutinised the budgets at length and had noted any variations from the agreed budget plans, and had also considered the benchmarking data in detail. There had also been discussion about a range of staffing issues, together with the premises and health and safety report. An update had also been given on the parent governor elections.

**(b) Review of committee membership and link governor responsibilities**

Governors discussed the membership of committees and it was agreed that Ms Bishop and Ms Carboo-Olufue would both join the Resources Committee. It was agreed that the Clerk would invite the two new parent governors to the next meeting of the Resources Committee as observers before they took a decision on whether to join the Committee.



**(c) Visits to the school, meetings attended, and other activities**  
*Mr Jenkins had taken part in a learning walk at Gordonbrock on 18 January.*

**(d) Governing Body training**

It was noted that the summer term governor training programme would be circulated at the beginning of the new term, and all governors were urged to take advantage of the training available. In particular, the new parent governors were urged to attend the induction training, which would provide a thorough introduction to their role.

**6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**(a) Contextual safeguarding**

Mrs Walsh gave an update to governors on contextual safeguarding and what Lewisham had been offering to headteachers and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) this term. She drew governors' attention to the section in the updated KCSIE guidance which related to contextual safeguarding, which had become increasingly important since 2018. The key aspect was that it was essential to be aware that children could be harmed in contexts outside of their home, and by other influences, such as youth clubs, in the neighbourhood, online etc. Mrs Walsh stressed that safeguarding issues did not occur just at home with parents and carers, and she pointed out that parents and carers may have less control over different contexts as children got older. This was not a new concept, but the profile of contextual safeguarding was being raised increasingly.

Headteachers were being asked by the local authority to review their practice around contextual safeguarding in their schools, and had been provided with assessment tools to identify what was being done well which also gave schools the opportunity to RAG rate themselves and create an action plan. This required input from the whole school community, including feedback from parents, governors, and all stakeholders. A survey had been organised to look at children's behaviours, the curriculum, and the community as part of the school context. The schools were looking at making sure pupils had thought about any concerns in terms of the school buildings, physicalities, and their safety in the school. This involved looking at any spaces in the schools which children found worrying, identifying any particular times of day when children had concerns, and any groups who made them anxious, and then taking steps to put things in place to mitigate these concerns.

Mrs Walsh stressed that the schools had rigorous procedures in place, but this was an opportunity to carry out a review and to look at what action may be needed to move forward to ensure that all stakeholders were fully aware and clear about the contextual aspect of safeguarding. This included looking at whether the curriculum was explicit enough about the work involved, and making tweaks and changes to prepare the children for the future.

Mrs Walsh then left the meeting.

**(b) Executive Headteacher's report**

Ms Gilmore had agreed with the Chair that she would not provide a written report to this meeting because of the additional pressure of work at Eliot Bank but would give a verbal report instead.

Ms Gilmore's priorities had been very much focused on the continued needs and challenges at Eliot Bank this term, together with the continued need for work on improving teaching and learning at the school, and the continued challenges of staffing at the school. In addition, there was a new challenge with the Head of School leaving at Easter. However, Ms Gilmore stressed that she was being supported by the strong Senior Leadership Team at Eliot Bank, who were all pulling together. The quality of education review, which was taking place the following day, would be the next milestone in the improvement of teaching and learning, and staff were busy preparing for this. Ms Gilmore said that she would report on the outcome of the review to the next meeting.



With the additional work at Eliot Bank, Ms Gilmore said that it had been more difficult to focus on all of the strategic Federation priorities, but she was aware that Gordonbrock was in very capable hands with Ms Wright, Ms Barry, and Mr Ridler-Mayor. While she was still leading and co-ordinating strategic work, Ms Gilmore had been spending most of her time at Eliot Bank this term, but once the quality of education review had taken place, she would be able to spend more time at Gordonbrock to help prepare for their forthcoming peer review.

There had been no other changes in staffing or recruitment, but this area had remained challenging. Gordonbrock was very stable, and was an exemplar school, leading in the local authority in terms of all aspects of practice, and it continued to thrive. Recruitment and retention of staff had been more difficult at Eliot Bank, but this was not an uncommon situation in Lewisham and nationally, with many local schools experiencing difficulties in recruitment and retention, and facing frequent changes of supply teachers since the pandemic.

Staff wellbeing continued to be at the forefront. Ms Gilmore said that a wellbeing meeting had taken place at Gordonbrock, and she would meet Ms Wright before the end of term to discuss the outcomes. Staff at Eliot Bank had completed a wellbeing survey from the Anna Freud Children and Families Centre, and the results had been analysed and returned. Ms Gilmore said that she would identify any common issues across the Federation and report back at the next meeting.

***Mr Hale commented that recruitment appeared to be challenging, and asked if there was anything the school could do to get ahead of the game; in particular, whether there was any best practice that could be followed or if the school could be proactive/creative to get ahead.*** Ms Gilmore assured governors that both schools were already very proactive. Although the schools always looked early for potential candidates for September, this was now more pressing, and the Senior Leadership Teams were already looking at teachers who would be coming through for the autumn term. Although there would always be a degree of movement in the Federation for natural reasons, more people were now re-evaluating their lives and careers after the pandemic. With the increased movement of staff in schools, there was a shortage of supply teachers; those available had much greater choice about where they worked, and unfortunately, some who seemed to be committed, then withdrew. Ms Gilmore said that both schools were sourcing every possible avenue to recruit staff, for example, the former Head of School at Eliot Bank was working at Eliot Bank at present, and all strong teachers who had previously worked in the Federation were being contacted and encouraged to return. In addition, Gordonbrock was providing support to Eliot Bank. The issue of recruitment had been debated at length by the Strategic Group, and it had been agreed that it was necessary to look at the staff as a whole across both schools. Ms Gilmore reminded governors that staff were contracted to the Federation rather than an individual school, with the exception of staff who had been in post for a very long time before the inception of the Federation. She had had very productive conversations with Kathy Palmer (ex Executive Headteacher, now leading Lewisham Learning Primary support) about the benefits of moving staff from one school to the other, and the career opportunities and progression that could be offered. Ms Gilmore felt that the Federation was ahead of the game, to an extent, because of the large pool of teachers across both schools.

Ms Gilmore was thanked for her report.

**(c) Head of School's report – Gordonbrock**

The Head of School's report and the termly safeguarding report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report included items on attainment, progress, School Improvement Plan priorities, quality of education, monitoring and evaluation, professional development and INSET, appraisal, inclusion, safeguarding, premises, personnel, budget, school roll, attendance, mobility, free school meals, fire and lockdown drills, accidents and incidents, educational visits and visitors, exclusions, and discriminatory incidents. The report also included an anonymised summary of key safeguarding cases which had been reported to the



Strategic Group. Mrs Wright highlighted areas from her report and answered questions from governors.

#### **Attainment and progress data**

Governors considered the data included in the report. It was noted that Mark Ridler-Mayor had revised the template in line with the discussion at the last meeting, and had included benchmarking information (highlighted in grey) which he thought governors would find helpful. The report gave a breakdown of data for the proportion of children who were expected to achieve a good level of development (GLD) by the end of the summer term, the phonics screening check, and the percentage of children who were on track to reach the expected standard and a higher standard in reading, writing, maths, and overall at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The same data was also given for Pupil Premium children. The benchmarking information was helpful for governors to see whether children were operating against the national picture.

The progress shown on page 2 of the report was based on the school measure, and Mrs Wright reminded governors that there was currently no way of comparing progress against the national average.

The Reception data was now based on the new EYFS framework which had been introduced in September. Although this was broadly similar, there had been slight changes to some of the areas of learning. The outcomes were predicted to be broadly similar to last year, but no national data was available yet for the new framework. Mrs Wright informed governors that there was now no exceeding judgment at the end of Reception, and children were now to be assessed as either emerging or at expected. However, the schools would continue the existing in house points-based assessment system for Reception, which would be very useful for the new teachers when they moved to Year 1.

The phonics data had been broken down into points ranges for Year 1, and would be looking at achieving an outcome of 32 or more points, which was the pass mark. 90% of children in Year 2 had passed the check in the autumn term; governors were reminded that they had missed the screening in Year 1 due to the pandemic and had therefore been tested at the start of Year 2.

It could be seen from the report that the proportion of children who were on track to reach the expected standard overall at the end of the summer term was lowest in Years 3 and 4, which was probably because of the amount of schooling that these year groups had missed in Key Stage 1 during the pandemic. Attainment in writing had been particularly affected, and Mrs Wright explained that, although teachers had done their best, it was extremely difficult to teach writing remotely, more so than other subjects. However, she was pleased to see that some strong data was now coming through and there were improvements in Year 2 and in reading in most areas. The proportion of children reaching the higher level was a mixed profile, but was showing an upward trend in many areas.

Research had shown that disadvantaged children were the worst affected by the pandemic, and the report gave a breakdown of the attainment of this group.

Progress was generally very good, and governors were reminded that there was a school based expectation that children would make four points of progress during the year, and although this could be split evenly across each term, because the summer term was longer, the expectation was for one point of progress to be made in each of the autumn and spring terms and two points in the summer term.

***Ms Albert asked whether the national average related to pre-pandemic, or if this was updated all the time. She also asked for more information on the Pupil Premium.*** Mr Ridler-Mayor explained that the last pre-pandemic data related to the summer of 2019, when the Year 2 and Year 6 SATs had taken place but there had been no formal data since then



and the national average therefore related to pre-pandemic information. It was noted that Pupil Premium funding related to any point in the last six years; some of these children may still receive free school meals, whilst others may not. The school received additional funding for these children, and could decide how to use this money to greatest effect. The use and impact of the Pupil Premium funding was set out in the school's strategy, and was reported to the Governing Body on a regular basis.

***Mr Jenkins felt that the changes which had been made to the presentation of the data were very helpful and gave a good flavour of the information.*** Mrs Wright informed governors that the children who were currently a term or more behind were discussed at length in pupil progress meetings. It had been agreed that some of the assessments made by teachers, particularly in writing, were over cautious. She reiterated the very high expectations at Gordonbrock, and said she was predicting that progress would be improved by the end of the academic year.

### **School Improvement Priorities**

Ms Wright drew governors' attention to the points highlighted in yellow, which were currently the main focus of the school's work.

*Quality of education* – the work around further diversification of the curriculum was ongoing, and was focused on the culture and ethos, as well as being very child centred. Work had begun with Gulshan Kayembe and the Senior Leadership Team, and it was hoped that this would be delivered across the school in the long term. This was a very significant piece of work, and linked in with work around the Race Equality Pledge.

Following the last Ofsted inspection, work was ongoing to ensure that teachers checked pupils' learning consistently, so that all children were challenged and moved on appropriately to enable higher proportions of children to achieve the higher level. This was a major focus, and staff were working hard on recovery from the pandemic, closing the gap etc. Teachers were constantly using a range of approaches to deliver effective feedback, including identifying misconceptions and in the moment marking.

Ms Wright said that work was continuing to prioritise teaching of missed content, which would enable children to make sense of later work in the curriculum. This included teaching key knowledge, skills, vocabulary, concepts, and links between concepts. A Federation document had been created by Mark Ridler-Mayor and Andrea Osmond which looked at recovery and closing the gap.

*Behaviour and attitudes* – The skills needed for children to be effective learners were reviewed explicitly with pupils to enable them to rebuild their confidence as learners. This was linked to Lever 4 of the Recovery Curriculum on metacognition.

*Personal development* – Work was taking place to further develop pupils' determination and resilience in improving the presentation of their learning, including handwriting, and to ensure that they took pride in their learning. Ms Wright said that although progress could be seen, there was still room for further improvement.

*Effectiveness of leadership and management* – Ms Wright informed governors that Gordonbrock currently had two ECTs, and the school's commitment to high quality induction was ensuring that they were happy and were developing well.

Gordonbrock was still providing a considerable amount of school on school support. Ms Wright was working with Eliot Bank and a couple of other schools, and Mark Ridler-Mayor and the maths lead were working with middle leaders.

The annual School Improvement Plan reviews had taken place with team leaders in February, which helped the middle leaders to develop their roles.



The peer review was due to take place the following week.

Ms Wright informed governors that the School Improvement Action Plan was reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis, and would be shared with governors after the next termly review.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The profile of teaching showed that all teachers were now at least good, with 50% having been assessed as outstanding in the spring term. She hoped that this would increase to 54% by the end of the summer term.

The Pupil Premium Grant audit had taken place in November, and had looked at Years 3 and 4. There had been a focus on high or middle attaining pupils who were not yet achieving their potential. There had been evidence of a strong focus on the recovery curriculum, and the children's love for learning had been clear, with a high level of engagement. Ms Wright said that the work on resilience and growth mindset had clearly had a positive impact on the children, and all pupils had said that they felt safe in school and were able to name several trusted adults in the school, rather than just their class teacher or teaching assistant. The report included a number of extremely positive quotes from the pupil voice.

Science book scrutiny had taken place in December in all year groups, and Ms Wright said that she had been very impressed with the work of the new science lead. The progression of knowledge and skills was evident, together with progression in scientific enquiry and development in the children's scientific knowledge. The areas for development included the need for marking to be more consistent and for WALTs to be more consistent in some classes. There was also a need to ensure challenge for children working towards greater depth in all year groups throughout the lesson, rather than just as part of extension tasks or responses to marking.

Exit tickets, which were a Google form, had been used to assess and monitor the effectiveness of the computing curriculum in Years 5 and 6, which was particularly important when time was spent out of school due to closure or isolation. Ms Wright explained that the exit ticket was a short question or task based on the day's lesson to evaluate whether or not the children had understood the main aims of the lesson. This had been a developmental process which had been very honest and reflective. Many strengths had been seen, and areas for development had been identified, with the next steps.

***A governor learning walk had taken place on 18 January with Mr Jenkins, which had focused on school improvement.*** The visit had included observations in the classroom and corridor environments, and discussion with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School. There had been consistency in teaching input across year groups, with well planned lessons, and high expectations had been evident. Strong pedagogy had been seen, with an emphasis on recovery. No common themes had been identified for development, and teacher-specific feedback had been given where appropriate.

Maths and English book scrutiny had taken place at the end of January and start of February. Strong progress had been seen, with engaged learners. Development of 'in the moment' feedback was ongoing, particularly in Year 6, and a marking and feedback PDM had now taken place to share strong practice.

At the end of February, monitoring of learning journeys in history and geography had taken place through pupil interviews. A high level of engagement had been seen across the school, and children were excited to take about their favourite pieces of learning.

A number of additional activities had been included in the report, and it was now possible to take part in events outside school. These included an intensive swimming course for Years 4 and 5, fundraising for Children in Need Day, No Pens Day, the Turning of the Year concert,



World War II day, Christmas performances, Year 2 multi skills festival, rap and lyricism workshops, Safer Internet Day, Buddy Week, LGBT and history, and World Book Day.

In addition, all phase leaders continued to carry out their own programmes of monitoring and evaluation, linked to their SIP action plans, and all monitoring outcomes were discussed in detail with the Senior Leadership Team and phase leaders.

### **Professional development and INSET**

The report included details of professional development meetings for the spring term, and listed the wide range of courses which staff had attended, most of which had been virtual.

### **Inclusion**

It was noted that the SEND audit had been completed on 3 March, and the outcome would be shared at the summer term meeting of the Governing Body. The report included the current SEND statistics, and information on looked after children. An anonymised summary was also given on children who were on Child in Need plans and other vulnerable children, who had been discussed in more detail by the Strategic Group. Details of the discussion of some of these children is included under the confidential section of these minutes.

### **Staffing**

Two resignations had been received, from a teacher and midday meals supervisor. A supply teacher had been appointed to cover the teaching post until the end of term.

It was noted that there were currently four vacancies for teaching assistants who were being covered by supply staff, and the school also had four supply learning support assistants and a supply nursery nurse.

### **Attendance**

Attendance was currently 96.52% overall, which was slightly lower than the same time last year. However, Ms Wright said that this was a national picture at present.

### **Accidents / incidents**

The report listed a number of accidents and incidents which had taken place since the last meeting. There had been five incidents involving children, and four incidents involving staff, which related to the child discussed under the confidential section of the minutes.

### **Education visits, special events, and visitors**

The report included details of a wide range of visits and events.

Ms Wright was thanked for her report. Mr Fidel urged governors to send any questions arising from the report to Ms Wright

### **(d) Head of School's report – Eliot Bank**

Ms Gilmore's report had been circulated, and followed the same format as the Gordonbrock report. Ms Gilmore pointed out that there were many similarities and overlaps because the two schools worked so closely together. She highlighted areas from the report, and answered questions from governors.

### **Attainment and progress data**

The report presented the data in the new format which Mr Ridler-Mayor and Ms Osmond, the assessment deputies, had shaped following feedback from governors, and included comparisons with the national picture from 2019.

Mr Ridler-Mayor and Ms Osmond worked closely together and the teachers also worked together to moderate assessments, and to check and compare writing assessments across the schools and agree on the standards. The assessment deputies worked to cross reference data. While there were differences in the data for the two schools because of differences in



the children, where significant differences were seen, this was scrutinised in greater depth by the deputies.

The data for Eliot Bank was broadly similar. It was higher in some areas at Eliot Bank and Ms Gilmore reminded governors that the data looked at progress over time. She stressed that this was the autumn term data, so that challenge was to sustain this trajectory over time with the spring term data.

There were some disparities between reading and writing, particularly in Year 6, but Ms Gilmore pointed out that historically, schools always had a little longer to work on writing before the assessments were completed and more work was needed to bring this in line with maths and reading.

#### **School Development Plan priorities**

There were some similarities in the priorities for the two schools, for example diversification of the curriculum. This would be one of the areas that the review team would look at the following day.

Ms Gilmore said that the biggest driver for Eliot Bank was currently the focus on the quality of teaching and learning with teachers using high quality assessment for learning in every lesson, and continually reshaping lessons and responding to pupils' needs. Over time, this had emerged as the biggest area of work, particularly thinking about the pitch of lessons, and the pace.

The remainder of the objectives were similar, and were underpinned by school action plans. Ms Gilmore said that ensuring consistency in practice had been the greatest challenge with staff turnover, and newly qualified teachers who had joined the school during the pandemic and had very disruptive starts to their careers. One of the aspects of the review would be to look at how these teachers had been helped to cover missed content, as well as the children.

#### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The next significant development for Eliot Bank would be the quality of education review by Lewisham Learning, which would be taking place the following day. As governors were aware, Ms Gilmore carried out some work for Lewisham Learning, and provided support for seven other schools in the Borough; in addition, Gordonbrock provided school on school support for other schools who needed support for teaching and learning or leadership. She stressed that this work must always be moderated with the need to support Eliot Bank.

Ms Gilmore reminded governors that Eliot Bank was in the current Ofsted window and the quality of education review would be very good preparation. The review would be carried out by Gulshan Kayembe and David Lucas, who would work alongside Ms Gilmore and the senior leaders.

Ms Gilmore gave an update on the current profile of teachers. She said that there were still teachers who were assessed as requiring improvement, which was an unusual picture for Eliot Bank, particularly in the spring term, but one of the teachers was fairly new, and both of the teachers concerned were receiving individual support plans. Currently, 18 teachers were assessed as good +, with 8 outstanding. She said that the grade descriptors used were somewhat outdated, but the judgments had been given looking at overall performance, based on a range of factors, such as professionalism, relationships, teaching, books, and classroom environments rather than just a snapshot.

Targeted support was in place to support specific teachers, and this was evaluated regularly and reshaped according to need. Ms Gilmore said that Mark Ridler-Mayor was coming from Gordonbrock to support teachers and would be involved in the review the next day because the reviewers wanted to discuss how support was being provided by Gordonbrock.



The peer review had taken place on 15 November, and the outcomes from this had been discussed by governors previously. This had involved senior staff from Eliot Bank and from the peer review schools. A number of strengths had been identified, including pupil conduct, pupils' attitude and involvement in lessons, behaviour, children being conscientious and being able to talk about their learning, personal development, and equalities and respect and sensitivity. The Early Years had been identified as a particular strength, together with reading. The help provided to children who found reading more difficult had been seen, and was evidence of the school's recovery plan. The development areas would be discussed in the review the next day, and included teachers having an accurate and astute understanding of pupils starting points and gaps, and where to pitch the lesson to ensure that children were challenged from the start. Also, refining the level of challenge for the most able pupils or those with SEND, and a focus on teachers receiving continued professional development. Ms Gilmore said that there had been an ongoing focus on high quality and consistent CPD.

Non-core portfolio scrutiny had taken place in December for Years 1 to 6. A number of strengths had been seen, and areas for development had been identified.

Scrutiny of maths and English books took place regularly, the most recent being on 8 March. The report highlighted the best practice seen in each phase for both subjects with evidence of children making progress, receiving specific guidance from the teachers on how to improve, and fewer sheets stuck into books. Ms Gilmore said that one of the key areas that needed work at Eliot Bank was to ensure that the children were less reliant on sheets and able to write freely in their books without restricted space. Good progress was now being seen in this area. The report also included areas for development. These included feedback for English books, opportunities to write more freely with less structure and the children having opportunities to redraft their learning based on improvements they had made. Phase leaders had given verbal feedback and discussed any individual issues with the teachers concerned.

A learning walk had taken place in the first half of term, which had also included book scrutiny. Every time these milestones took place, Ms Gilmore said that progress could be seen, and the same issues were looked at and measured at each review. She said that there continued to be evidence of more opportunities for pupils to write into their books, greater consistency in feedback, planning being stripped back rather than the slight over reliance that had been seen during lockdown on using ready made planning resources. Although White Rose was an excellent resource, teachers needed to be planning to meet the needs of their pupils rather than following a particular scheme.

Ms Gilmore highlighted the key objectives that the review team would be asked to look at the next day: all improvements securely embedded, continued planning for pupils' next steps, pitching at pupils' starting points, and continued focus on task and lesson design that ensures good pace in lessons. She said that she would also be asking the review team to look at the school's capacity to improve further.

***Ms Albert asked for more information about the two teachers who were below the level expected, and whether this was because of the difficulty in finding teachers in the market at the moment.*** Ms Gilmore said that this was due in part to the teacher shortage with teachers moving on regularly and not having the time to improve and sustain their practice, and partly because a number of teachers were new to Eliot Bank and it took time to train and reach expectations. Over time, there would be an expectation for there to be a decrease in the number of teachers who required improvement. Ms Gilmore said that this could also be to do with the teacher's career stage, or previous experiences, and the school must provide the best possible package to support them. This was one of the reasons why Jenny Klein was being used for coaching and monitoring, and Mark Ridler-Mayor was also providing support for teachers and senior leaders. She assured governors that any teacher who needed support had a bespoke package tailored to meet their needs, and she would want to look at how effective those packages were as part of the review.



Ms Gilmore highlighted the other work that had taken place including Safer Internet Day, Children's Mental Health Week, Year 6 Urban Synergy Workshop, World Book Day, and Inclusive Multiskills Festival.

### **Professional development and INSET**

The report gave details of training sessions this term, which had included follow up training in Talk for Writing and three follow up PDMs to ensure that this was fully embedded. There had been maths input on the Bar Model, followed by a PDM led by Marinda Barry, which was aimed at building capacity further by utilising the skills and expertise across the Federation.

There had been opportunities for staff to attend courses; many were still held virtually but there was now more opportunity to get out into the community.

### **Inclusion**

The report on SEND and inclusion was included, together with the statistics. A number of anonymised reports on individual children was included; Ms Gilmore reminded governors that this information was strictly confidential and must be deleted from governors' computers following the meeting.

### **Staffing**

Ms Gilmore informed governors that Jenny Klein was working on a supply basis for three days per week, and was stabilising the class currently without a permanent class teacher. Kate Angyalova had returned to Eliot Bank, to Year 2, and was Bhavna Mistry was proving to be a very good appointment in Year 1, to replace the ECT who had left.

One member of staff had started maternity leave, and six members of staff had resigned since the last meeting for various reasons including relocation and change of career. There were currently vacancies for a teaching assistant, a part time class teacher, which was currently being covered by Ms Angyalova, and vacancies for class teachers in Years 3 and 4. Ms Gilmore was pleased to report that the long term supply teacher in Year 4 had just confirmed that she would stay until the end of the year.

### **School roll**

There were currently 435 children on roll, and Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock had both been oversubscribed for Reception places, which had been filled with first preferences. It was highly likely that this would be the same for 2022.

### **Attendance**

Attendance was currently 96%, and although Ms Gilmore did not want to see an attendance rate of below 96%, as already noted, lower attendance was a national picture, and compared with some other schools, attendance in the Federation was better than many, with some schools having great concerns.

***Mr Fidel asked if the lower attendance rate was caused by a small number of pupils with long term absence, or by shorter periods of occasional absence by a range of pupils.***

Ms Gilmore said that there was a combination, with some persistent absence for a number of reasons. ***Mr Fidel asked if there were any children who had not returned to school since the pandemic restrictions had been lifted.*** Ms Gilmore said that both schools were relentless in safeguarding and their pursuit of pupil absence, including home visits, and had very robust and rigorous systems. Children were tracked until their whereabouts was known, and she confirmed that there were no children at either school whose location was unknown.

Ms Wright added that the children whose attendance had been poor before the pandemic still tended to have low attendance now. However, attendance was well above the Lewisham average, and senior staff also carried out home visits where there were concerns.



***Ms Albert asked the reason for concern if most absence was authorised.*** Ms Gilmore said that the schools had very high expectations for attendance and always tried to be above the average. There had been some exceptional circumstances as the country was moving out of the pandemic, and she had authorised slightly more absence than she would have done in the past. Ms Gilmore explained that headteachers had the authority to grant absence if they felt it was for exceptional circumstances. She was facing an influx of absence requests, and would consider each request carefully on an individual basis.

***Ms Albert asked how absence from COVID-19 was recorded.*** Ms Barry said that COVID absence had been authorised in a different way until recently, and all COVID-related absence now impacted significantly on the attendance data. The most up to date attendance data would be available on 24 March, and by this time, would be more accurate.

#### **Free school meals**

The proportion of children currently entitled to free school meals was 13.56% (59 pupils), and Ms Gilmore felt that there was an element of under claiming. Parents were encouraged to claim for free schools meals, if they may be eligible, on a regular basis.

#### **Fire drills**

The report gave details of the two fire drills which had taken place since the last meeting. On both occasions, the school had been evacuated quickly.

#### **Accidents / incidents**

There had only been one accident since the last meeting, which had involved a supply teacher, but this had not been serious.

Governors thanked Ms Gilmore for her report, and invited governors to submit any further questions to her by email.

#### **(d) Lewisham Learning School Improvement Framework**

Governors' attention was drawn to the local authority's School Improvement Framework, and Ms Gilmore explained the evaluation schedule and how schools were categorised using a RAG rating system. The majority of schools in Lewisham were categorised as green, which meant that they were self improving and able to provide support for other schools. Ms Gilmore said that she was currently working with seven green schools as their Primary School Improvement Partner, and Gordonbrock also provided support, led by Ms Wright, for an amber school. She said that she was frequently asked to provide support for other schools, and often had to turn requests down; at present, she did not have capacity to work with any additional schools, but once the intensive period of work with the amber school had come to an end, she would be asking Gordonbrock to focus all of their energies on Eliot Bank.

Ms Gilmore confirmed that both schools were categorised as green, and ***Mr Fidel explained the RAG rating system in more detail for the benefit of new governors.***

The governors' monitoring and evaluation schedule was discussed in more detail. Ms Gilmore explained what each category covered, and the role of the link governors. Governors were assigned to the remaining roles, and Ms Gilmore assured governors that they would be well supported to engage with the process. It was noted that a member from the Senior Leadership Team would contact governors, and that the curriculum leaders would contact Ms Worthington and Ms Eady to arrange a joint meeting across the two schools before the next meeting.

## **7. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

#### **(a) 2022/23 budget and three year projection**

Governors discussed the arrangements for setting and approving the 2022/23 budgets and three year budget plans, and it was noted that the budgets must be submitted by 17 June



2022. It was agreed that the Finance Strategy Group and Resources Committee would discuss the budget plans, prior to formal approval at the meeting of the Governing Body on 13 June 2022.

**(b) Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)**

Copies of the SFVS reports had been circulated to governors. It was noted that Lewisham Finance had granted an extension to the deadline for submission of the reports due to Ms McAllister's recent absence. *Mr Fidel informed governors that all of the responses to the questionnaires had been positive with the exception of the question relating to the administrative arrangements for the voluntary funds. Mr Bremner explained that when governors had reviewed the documentation, it had been suggested that some changes should be made to the arrangements. However, the amount of money involved was extremely small, and the guidance allowed for a reasonable and proportionate view to be taken. When the finance governors had reviewed the questionnaire, this had been considered very carefully, and it had been agreed that it was not practical to put much capacity into this area because of the sum involved.*

After careful consideration, it was **RESOLVED** that the SFVS reports for both schools be approved for submission to Lewisham Finance.

**8. SAFEGUARDING, HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

**(a) Safeguarding reports**

The safeguarding reports had been discussed under the Head of Schools' reports.

**(b) Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**

Governors were reminded again that they were required to provide written confirmation that they had read and understood the updated guidance.

Ms Gilmore reminded governors that the annual training session had not taken place in the autumn term, but once the Gordonbrock audit had been carried out, Ms McAllister would contact governors to try to rearrange the session. It was suggested that this could possibly be added on to a Governing Body meeting if the training could be kept to an hour. *Mr Bremner emphasised that the training must be aimed at governors rather than staff.*

*Mr Fidel asked whether there was a need to replace Mrs Walsh as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Eliot Bank.* Ms Gilmore said that the deputy heads and SENDCO had all completed the relevant training, and she would act as the lead DSL until the new Head of School had been appointed.

**(c) Risk management and safeguarding**

Governors were reminded that there was a legal requirement for schools to revisit and update their risk assessments, and governors should continue to satisfy themselves that measures were in place and working effectively. Ms Gilmore said that most of the risk assessments were COVID-related, and both schools had very robust procedures and risk assessments in place. The Chair checked the health and safety risk assessments each time he came into school.

**9. POLICY REVIEW**

The SEND Policy and SEND information report were due for review by governors. Ms Gilmore agreed to circulate the updated documents as soon as possible, and it was **RESOLVED** that the Policy and information report be approved, subject to no adverse comments being received by the end of term.

**10. SCHOOL UNIFORM: STATUTORY GUIDANCE**

Governors' attention was drawn to the DfE's update to the statutory guidance on school uniform, and were advised that schools should ensure that second hand uniform was available for parents to



acquire. Information on second hand uniform should be clear for parents of current and prospective pupils, and should be published on the school's website.

***Mr Fidel was aware that second hand uniform sales had been organised in the past, and asked if families who were facing financial difficulties were targeted to receive support with uniform.***

Ms Gilmore said that the Inclusion Teams at both schools were very mindful of families who may need support with school uniform and this was carried out in a very discrete way. The new guidance was aimed more towards secondary schools, but some of the provisions were relevant to the primary sector. Anne-Marie Küçükkaramuklu was reviewing the guidance and would update the websites as necessary.

Sales of second hand uniform had taken place in the playground in the past at Gordonbrock, and ***Ms Scott asked whether it was the intention that sales would be reintroduced again now that the pandemic restrictions had been lifted.*** Ms Gilmore said that the first priority once restrictions had been removed had been to reintroduce workshops, but uniform sales would be held again when possible. ***Ms Scott was also keen to promote the sale of second hand uniform from a sustainable aspect, and offered to help to run a future sale with another parent.*** Ms Gilmore agreed that she would pass her contact details to Ms Küçükkaramuklu.

#### **11. URGENT BUSINESS**

No items of urgent business were raised.

#### **12. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Governors were reminded that meetings of the Governing Body and Resources Committee had been arranged for the remainder of the academic year as follows.

##### **Governing Body**

Monday 13 June 2022

##### **Resources Committee**

Monday, 16 May 2022

All meetings to begin at 6.00 p.m.

It was agreed that face to face meetings should resume from the start of the summer term.

Chair



Date

13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022