

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 at Gordonbrock Primary School on Monday, 1 December 2022 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Ms B. Albert	
Ms J. Bishop	
Mr T. Bremner	
Ms B. Eady	
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 F. Scott	
Ms T. Stickland	
Ms M. Worthington	Attended remotely

Also present:

Ms M. Barry	Deputy Headteacher, Gordonbrock
Ms A. Carter	Senior Admin Assistant, Gordonbrock – for item 6
Ms K. Glasheen	Interim Head of School, Eliot Bank
Ms S. McAllister	Federation Business Manager – for item 6
Ms L. McGuire	Deputy Headteacher, Eliot Bank
Ms A. Osmond	Deputy Headteacher, Eliot Bank
Mr M. Ridler-Mayor	Deputy Headteacher, Gordonbrock
Mrs J. Wright	Head of School, Gordonbrock
Mrs J. Woods	Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Apologies for absence were received with consent from Ms Quinn and Mr Stephen. Ms Worthington attended the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Governors were reminded that the Governing Body are required to maintain and update annually a register of the pecuniary interests of their members and of members of staff with significant financial responsibilities; governing bodies also have a duty to publish key information about their members and associate members and their register of interests on the school website. The remaining governors who had not yet completed their forms were asked to ensure that they returned their forms to the Clerk as a matter of urgency.

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.

Mr Fidel informed governors with much regret that Mr Hale was leaving the Governing Body after many years and this would be his final meeting. Mr Hale was moving to New Zealand with his family early in the new year, and the Chair thanked him for his work and commitment to both schools during his time as a governor. On behalf of the Governing Body, he presented Mr Hale with a gift from governors, and wished him well for the future. Mr Hale said that it had been an honour and a pleasure to serve as a governor, and he had really enjoyed being a governor in the Federation.

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. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

(a) To note the procedures for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair and terms of office

Governors were reminded that the following procedures for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair had been agreed at the meeting held on 13 June 2022.

- Term of office – one year.
If the term of office of Chair or Vice Chair is broken, the Governing Body will appoint a successor initially only for the remaining period of office.
- Nomination and self-nomination for appointment to be made at the meeting.
- Election procedure to be by secret ballot, but in the event of a single nomination, the Governing Body will vote on the nomination by a show of hands.

Any governor standing for election must withdraw while the item is under consideration.

(b) To elect a Chair to serve from the autumn term 2022

The Clerk took the chair and invited nominations and self nominations for a governor to serve as Chair for the academic year. Peter Fidel was nominated and left the meeting while his appointment was considered. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that Mr Fidel be elected as Chair of the Governing Body until the first meeting in the autumn term 2023.

(c) To elect a Vice Chair to serve from the autumn term 2021

Nominations and self nominations were then sought for a governor to serve as Vice Chair of the Governing Body for the current academic year. Paul Jenkins was nominated and left the meeting while his appointment was considered. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that Mr Jenkins be elected as Vice Chair until the first meeting in the autumn term 2023.

(d) Facilitated initial meeting for new Chairs and Vice Chairs

It was noted that Lewisham was offering to provide an externally facilitated meeting for schools where there was a new Headteacher, Chair, or Vice Chair of governors to help them review and agree how they would engage and work with each other. ***It was agreed that Mr Jenkins would contact Suhaib Saeed in Governors' Services to arrange a meeting.***

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

(a) To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

(b) Matters arising from the minutes

(i) Page 2, Minute 3(b)(ii) – Governors' information

Mr Ridler-Mayor and Mr Hardy Hall had discussed options for the secure storage of governors' documents, and had been looking at setting up either a Google drive or an area on Google Classroom. It was proposed that Google Classroom would be preferable because as well as providing storage, it had a facility to stream when new documents were added. There was discussion about the possible timeframe for introducing the new platform, and it was **RESOLVED** that Mr Ridler-Mayor would arrange for new accounts to be added to Google Classroom for all governors, with a view to the new system being in place for the March meeting of the Governing Body or before. The Acceptable Use Policy was circulated for governors' information.

(ii) Page 7, Minute 4(b) – Remote Attendance Policy

Further to the discussion at the last meeting, the revised Remote Attendance Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that the Policy be approved.

(iii) Page 7, Minute 4(f) – Governing Body self review

Following discussions at previous meetings, governors gave further consideration to arrangements for a Governing Body self review, and in particular the possibility of working with a governing body from another school. Ms Gilmore said that peer relationships had now been set up, and **Mr Fidel suggested that the review could take place in conjunction with governors from one of the other schools, or with a facilitated trainer.** It was proposed that this should be discussed further by the Strategic Group.

Mr Bremner asked whether there was any risk associated with a delay in the review, and whether Ofsted would look unfavourably at this in the event of an inspection taking place in the near future. Ms Gilmore pointed out that a self review was good practice, and whilst a delay in carrying out this exercise could potentially be seen as an issue with some schools, this was not the case with Eliot Bank or Gordonbrock. She added that this was not part of the framework that was measured.

Ms Bishop was mindful that there was never enough time to discuss a self review in Governing Body meetings because of the lengthy agenda; Mr Bremner suggested that it might be good practice to just review how well meetings had gone, and to consider having a mini-review. Ms Albert asked whether there would be a cost involved in carrying out a self review; Ms Gilmore said that there would be a cost to buy in a consultant to facilitate the review as well as an additional charge for a written report. Because Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock were classed as 'green' schools by Lewisham, they were only eligible to receive the minimum level of support from Lewisham which would not include support for a review. It was **RESOLVED** that Ms Gilmore would bring information on options to the Strategic Group for discussion in the spring term.

5. GOVERNING BODY

(a) Changes to the Governing Body

Resignations

Name	Category	With effect from
Mr C. Hale	Co-opted	31/12/22
Ms N. Sood	Co-opted	31/8/22

End of term of office

Name	Category	With effect from
Ms T. Stickland	Co-opted	7/2/23
Ms M. Worthington	Co-opted	7/2/23

Following Mr Hale's resignation, it was noted that there would now be two vacancies for co-opted governors, one of which was reserved for a member of the Eliot Bank staff.

Governors noted that the term of office for Ms Stickland and Ms Worthington was due to expire on 7 February 2023. It was agreed that they both brought valuable skills and experience to the Governing Body; however, Ms Worthington said that she was considering whether she was able to continue for a further term of office and may step down when her term of office ended. It was **RESOLVED** that Ms Stickland be reappointed as a co-opted governor for a

further four year period of office with effect from 8 February 2023, and that Ms Worthington's reappointment would be considered further at the next meeting.

(b) DBS checks

Governors were reminded that they were legally required to have a valid DBS check in place, and should ensure that their check was renewed every three years. Ms McAllister confirmed that all DBS checks were up to date.

(c) Governing Body information to be published on the school websites

The agenda included a reminder of the of the information relating to the Governing Body which must be published on the school websites. This included information on all Governing Body members and associate members, together with their responsibilities, including current governors and those who had served in the past 12 months, a list of all agreed committees and their membership, the attendance record of current governors and those who had served within the past 12 months, and the Register of Interests. It was noted that the Clerk updated this information on a regular basis and passed it to the schools. Ms Gilmore reminded governors that Anne-Marie Kucukkaramuklu monitored the website content on behalf of the Federation, and ***Ms Worthington carried out regular website reviews on behalf of the Governing Body to ensure compliance***

(d) Governing Body Code of Conduct

Governors were reminded that they should review their Code of Conduct annually, and the agenda included a link to the National Governance Association's model code of conduct for 2022/23. The Governing Body had adopted the model Code for several years, and it was **RESOLVED** that the NGA model code of conduct for 2022/23 be approved, and that a personalised version of the Code be brought back to the next meeting for formal approval.

(e) Skills audit

Governors were recommended to carry out a skills audit to ensure that the Governing Body had mix of skills and experience necessary for the year ahead. The Clerk had circulated the NGA's skills audit and skills dashboard for completion, but had unfortunately only received four replies so far. It was **RESOLVED** that all governors who had not yet returned their skills audit would do so before the end of term, and would return it to either the Clerk or the school office.

(f) Agenda Plan for 2022/23

The agenda included an item which encouraged governors to plan the work of the Governing Body for the year and to draw up an agenda plan. Ms Gilmore reminded governors that business for the year was monitored through the monitoring and evaluation schedule, which would be considered as part of the item on committee membership.

6. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

(a) 2022/23 budget monitoring and three year projection

The revised budget plans for both schools were circulated for approval. Ms Gilmore informed governors that there had been no significant change in the budget plans since the last meeting. She had worked closely with Ms McAllister on the Eliot Bank budget, and Mrs Wright had worked with Ms Carter at Gordonbrock. ***Two meetings of the Finance Strategy Group had taken place, which comprised Mr Fidel, Mr Bremner, Mr Jenkins, and Ms Bishop,*** and it had been agreed that a face to face meeting would take place after Christmas. The governors concerned had agreed that it was really useful and productive to meet as a smaller group, and had been able to look strategically at what was important to the Federation, ways forward, and budget viability for the future. Ms Gilmore said that there was an expectation that governors would consider the budget plan six times each year

At Eliot Bank, a deficit of £266,000 was predicted by year 3 of the budget plan, and it was necessary to make savings of £100,000 year on year. The Working Party had reviewed what had already been done to reduce costs, what was planned for year 2, and what could

potentially be considered for year 3. Ms Gilmore said that there was a great deal of expertise in the Working Party, and the governors had taken a very calm and measured approach to the issues facing Eliot Bank. The Working Party were mindful that it was necessary to make savings, but had agreed that this should not be rushed. It had been agreed that there was no point in creating a fantasy budget for year 3 to balance income and expenditure, and had proposed that a budget should be submitted which showed a deficit in year 3. The Finance Working Party would be meeting again, and would bring further proposals back to the Governing Body.

Staffing costs were the biggest pressure to the budgets for both schools, and the situation changed on an almost daily basis. An update had been received from the local authority on the government's autumn mini budget statement just before the meeting on 24 November, and the Working Party had looked at a range of different scenarios. Ms McAllister had presented information on the impact of the autumn statement, which had improved the position. The 5% increase in staffing costs would almost be covered by the increase in pupil funding, but there were still other costs to consider. The Working Party had agreed that it was not appropriate for the Governing Body to go through the budget on a line by line basis, but governors must be fully aware of the bigger picture, and the Working Party and Resources Committee would continue to review the detailed budget plans.

Mr Bremner said that he had found it extremely reassuring that Ms McAllister and Ms Carter were clearly really on top of the budgets. He pointed out that each year when governors had discussed the budget plan, there had never been an occasion where the situation was not predicted to be significantly worse in year 3, and the position always improved during the course of the three year period; however, with the continuing financial crisis facing schools, it was now important to scrutinise the budgets in even more detail, which had been the reason for setting up the Working Party. Ms Gilmore agreed that it had always been possible to claw back projected overspending in the past, but this was no longer possible. The Finance Strategy Working Party would be meeting again on 25 January to discuss the budget plan at Eliot Bank further.

Governors were reminded that the revised second budget plans had to be submitted to Lewisham Finance before the end of November, and were asked to ratify the budget plans, which included a deficit in year 3 at Eliot Bank.

Ms McAllister explained that an in year deficit of £212,888 was predicted for the end of the current financial year, which would leave an overall surplus of £104,182. In year 2, there was now a predicted in year deficit of £127,612, with an overall deficit of £23,430, which had risen from £6,031. The predicted deficit for year 3 had originally been £214,852, but this had now risen to £266,406, a difference of £51,454.

With the additional information contained in the autumn statement, the budget already included a 1.5% uplift per head in the minimum funding guarantee. The current financial year had also included a supplementary fund payment of £55,000 for the increased NI costs which had been reversed, but schools were able to keep this funding. There would therefore be an uplift of 2-2.5% which had not been included in the budget. The government had also said that there would be an additional increase of 1% in funding, which had not yet been included in the budget. These additional amounts would make a sufficient impact on the budget at Eliot Bank to eliminate the deficit in year 2, but not year 3. Ms McAllister said that the provision in the budget for staff pay increases had already been swallowed up by the 5% teachers' pay increases, which would actually be higher than this for some teachers. In addition, support staff were receiving a pay increase on a sliding scale, with a lump sum for lower paid staff. The budget plan also included provision for rising energy costs.

Ms Carter gave an update on the Gordonbrock budget. The June budget had forecast an in year deficit of £245,000, with an overall surplus of £834,000. However, this had changed because of money spent on teacher costs as a result of resignations and increased supply

costs, as well as a need for additional support for children with significant needs, which had been funded through the supply budget. Supply support had been removed from the budget in years 2 and 3, as well as a reduction of two teaching assistants in each phase. This would mean that there would not be a full time teaching assistant in every class, apart from Reception, and there would be three inclusion teaching assistants to support SEND children. Ms Carter said that the 1% increase may change the picture in March, and it was likely that additional EHCP funding would have been received by then. At the end of year 3, an in year deficit was still predicted, but this had reduced from the forecast in June to £247,000 which would reduce the overall surplus to £400,000. She emphasised that this was based on the worst case scenario.

Ms Gilmore pointed out that the schools were required to keep separate budgets, but the Working Party and Resources Committee had been discussing the issue of more cross school working.

After careful consideration, it was **RESOLVED** that the revised budget plans for Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock be approved.

(b) Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

It was noted that the SFVS documents should be submitted to the local authority by 14 February 2023, and governors were reminded that authority had been delegated to the Resources Committee to consider the questionnaire and documentation. **Ms McAllister said that she would work on the submission with Mr Bremner**, and the documentation would be presented to the next meeting of the Resources Committee. The SFVS report must now be approved formally by the Governing Body, although this could be done retrospectively, and it was noted that the report would therefore be included on the agenda for the March meeting.

7. UPDATE FROM CHAIR ON ANY ACTION TAKEN UNDER THE URGENCY PROCEDURES
Mr Fidel said that he had not taken any urgent action since the last meeting.

8. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES, LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS, VISITS TO THE SCHOOLS, AND TRAINING

(a) Reports from committees

(i) Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 November 2022 had been circulated together with the terms of reference and the Financial Management Policy and Code of Practice. At their meeting, the Committee had reviewed their terms of reference, and had discussed a range of staffing issues, and the audit reports for both schools. The Committee had also received the termly premises and health and safety report, and had reviewed the Financial Management Policy. The majority of the discussion at the meeting had been around the budgets. It was **RESOLVED** that the terms of reference for 2022/23 and Financial Management Policy and Code of Conduct be approved.

(ii) Pay Committee

The Committee had met on 3 November 2022 to carry out the annual staff pay reviews. At that meeting, the Committee had also reviewed their terms of reference, and approved the Appraisal Policy and Pay Policy. It was noted that the Pay Policy must be approved formally by the Governing Body. It was **RESOLVED** that the terms of reference for 2022/23 and the Pay Policy be approved.

(iii) Strategic Group

The minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Group held on 17 June and 23 September had been circulated with the agenda, together with the terms of reference. The discussion at the June meeting had focused on the Head of School recruitment at

Eliot Bank and proposed interim arrangements. An update had been given to the September meeting, and the Strategic Group had discussed 2022 achievement in detail. Staffing and recruitment issues had been discussed at both schools, as well as a range of safeguarding issues. It was **RESOLVED** that the terms of reference be approved.

(b) Review of committee membership and link governor responsibilities

The latest monitoring and evaluation schedule was circulated, which linked to the agenda planning and link governor roles. The schedule outlined the areas which governors were asked to monitor, as well as the frequency. Ms Gilmore said that the areas related broadly to the Ofsted areas. In addition to the monitoring schedule, it was noted that the Clerk received the termly model agenda from Lewisham Governors' Services, which included all issues which governors needed to consider for the term ahead. Governors considered each area of the monitoring schedule in turn.

Attainment and progress – this was monitored by the Strategic Group, and all governors were informed of the items discussed through the minutes of the meetings.

Teaching and learning was also monitored by the Strategic Group. Ms Gilmore reminded governors that the Strategic Group met more frequently than the Governing Body, usually every four to five weeks, and she felt that it was a real strength of the Federation to have a core group of governors meeting so often.

The assignment of governors to the different areas in the monitoring schedule was agreed, and it was also agreed that Mr Jenkins would replace Mr Hale on the Strategic Group. ***Ms Bishop asked for the expectations on governors in respect of arranging visits and their frequency.*** Ms Gilmore said that the Senior Leadership Team would take responsibility for contacting governors to arrange visits. The monitoring schedule linked to different school improvement priorities, and Ms Gilmore was mindful that visits had fallen away during the pandemic. In the past, curriculum leads had attended governors meetings to present to governors and governors had also had opportunities to hear from representatives of the School Councils, and Ms Gilmore said that she wanted to re-establish these links.

(c) Visits to the school, meetings attended, and other activities

No reports were made on visits to either school.

(d) Governing Body training

Mr Fidel had attended the chairs' training to refresh his knowledge and had passed the course notes on to Mr Jenkins.

Ms Knowles had attended the training session on the new exclusions guidance. Although this had been interesting, it was of more relevance to secondary schools.

All governors had completed safeguarding training, which it was agreed had been extremely useful.

9. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(a) Executive Headteacher's report

Ms Gilmore had not prepared a written report for this meeting, and included a strategic overview as part of her Head of School's report for Eliot Bank.

(b) Head of School's report – Gordonbrock

The Head of School's report had been circulated and included items on the summer term performance data, the School Improvement Plan priorities, monitoring and evaluation, parent survey questionnaire feedback, professional development and INSET, inclusion, premises,

personnel, school roll, attendance, mobility, free school meals, fire drills, accidents/incidents, educational visits, special events and visitors.

Performance data

Mr Ridler-Mayor summarised the performance data, which included the statutory assessments from Reception, Year 1 phonics, Year 2, Year 4 times tables, and Key Stage 2 SATs. The outcomes gave a really strong picture of progress and attainment across the whole school. At the last meeting, a governor had asked about the impact of the recovery work, and Mr Ridler-Mayor said that the impact could be seen in this data.

The outcomes for the **Early Years** were really strong, with 90% of children achieving a good level of development (GLD). This compared with 65% nationally, and was back at pre pandemic levels, which was extremely impressive.

90% of children had passed the **Year 1 phonics** test, compared with 76% nationally and 73% in Lewisham. 82% of children had passed the Year 2 recheck, which equated to 9 out of 11 children. This was slightly below the national and Lewisham averages, but the two children who had not passed continued to receive support.

The **Key Stage 1** outcomes were very impressive, particularly the proportion of children achieving greater depth, and Gordonbrock had exceeded the Lewisham and national averages in every area. There had been a slight dip in writing, but in the context of the pandemic, it was clear that this had been the area which had been most affected, and was still an excellent outcome.

The proportion of children getting 15 out of 25 questions right in the **Year 4 multiplication tables** check was 87% for all children, and 58% for Pupil Premium children. It was noted that 71% of all children and 25% of Pupil Premium children had got 20 out of 25 questions correct. Mr Ridler-Mayor reminded governors that this had been the first official year of this test. From the initial statistics released by the government, Gordonbrock had been above the national average of 19.8 correct questions at 21.3.

The **Key Stage 2** results would be excellent in a normal year, let alone immediately after a pandemic, and were an excellent foundation for secondary school. 82% of children had reached the expected standard overall, compared with 58% nationally and 57% in Lewisham. Mr Ridler-Mayor said that it was becoming increasingly difficult to achieve greater depth in Year 6, and he was very pleased at the proportions of children who had reached this level.

The report included the progress measure, and governors were reminded that expected progress, in terms of the Federation measure, equated to four points per year. In most year groups and subjects for all children, this had been exceeded which demonstrated recovery. Mr Ridler-Mayor said that the children who had been most disrupted by the pandemic were in Reception and Year 1, and these children were making clear progress term on term.

Ms Stickland asked for more information on what greater depth in writing really looked like. Mr Hardy Hall said that there was no definitive guidance, and it was necessary to factor in different expectations, but to achieve greater depth in writing, it would be necessary to write at a standard that was close to an adult. Ms Glasheen elaborated on authorial voice, and to understand the impact phrases had on the reader.

Ms Gilmore informed governors that the Early Years framework had now changed to remove the exceeding category, and children would now be assessed on a range of expected. It was likely that this would also happen in Key Stage 2, which would be an issue for the Federation because there were a number of children in both schools who could write exceptionally well. Teachers worked hard to help the children to be the best they possibly could, encouraging them all to write brilliantly. **Ms Stickland was concerned that the change could dampen children's passion for writing,** and Mr Hardy Hall agreed that at present, trying to get

children to greater depth increased expectations and their passion. Ms Gilmore spoke about the role of personalised writing journals in this, and said that it was the intention to roll out some of Mr Hardy Hall's practice across both schools to increase children's passion for writing.

Ms Albert asked about the process for writing assessment. Ms Gilmore explained that teachers assessed their children, and this was moderated by Lewisham. This validated the achievement of children who were really at greater depth, and professional discussions took place around borderline children.

Mr Ridler-Mayor said that Pupil Premium children had been the most affected group by the pandemic; their progress was being monitored closely and they were being targeted to ensure progress and that they were catching up. Cohorts were being tracked year on year to look at how they compared in terms of recovery and last year's Year 2 cohort, which had a very high level of need, had made massive gains. The Year 3 cohort had made significant gains in reading, and the Senior Leadership Team was now looking at how the children were being targeted, and how to diminish the differences.

Pupil Premium children in every Key Stage 2 year group had made additional progress from 2020/21, and staff were really working closely together to move the children on all the time through pupil progress meetings, all staff being aware of the children and trying to target them, and finding ways of being creative to help them to achieve their potential.

Mr Bremner pointed out that the gap between Pupil Premium and their peers appeared to be wider at greater depth than at the expected standard. He asked why this should be and whether anything could be done. Ms Gilmore said that this was aligned with the national picture, and threaded through the Pupil Premium strategy had been how to identify children to get them to greater depth. Ms Barry pointed out that Pupil Premium children had been on track before the pandemic but had been particularly affected during the lockdowns in writing where they had not had time with their teacher. In addition, the children had not had the experiences they needed to draw from in writing for the last couple of years, but this was now happening again. Ms Gilmore explained that if children did not come from homes where reading was prioritised, this would have a knock on effect on writing. The schools worked hard to ensure that the children were having the experiences they needed, and while the children had done very well in meeting the expected level, this had been much more challenging at greater depth, with a different level of expectation. This gap between Pupil Premium and their peers, particularly at greater depth, was not new but had widened as a result of the pandemic.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The SIP priorities were included in the report, and the areas which had been added this year were highlighted in blue. The areas where there had been a deep dive were highlighted in yellow. Mrs Wright said that it would now be possible to remove some of the recovery work from the Plan.

Mrs Wright drew governors' attention to the additions to the Plan, which included work around diversification, and enabling all learners, especially the most disadvantaged and those with SEND, to have the knowledge and cultural capital that they need to succeed in life. The pre pandemic work around more involvement with parents and carers would be ongoing. There would be further refinement to the school's rigorous approach to teaching of reading, particularly early reading, and Mrs Wright informed governors that the school had introduced the Little Wandle scheme this year. Although the school's phonics results year on year were already very strong, there was a new requirement for all schools to have an approved reading scheme in place. The library was being relaunched and it was noted that this work was being led by the English lead who was now becoming an experienced middle leader.

The Plan included work on targeted support for disadvantaged pupils, and it was pointed out that issues arising from the pandemic were still coming up in people's lives.

CPD was being provided for staff at all levels. The school had five ECTs, one of whom was experienced and in their first year, two were less experienced in their first year and two in their second year. Mrs Wright said that it was possible to deploy them across the school, to give them more expertise and to develop their subject knowledge.

Monitoring and evaluation

The report included the profile of the teaching staff, from which it was seen that all teachers were at least good, with 50% outstanding. Mrs Wright explained that there were varying degrees of good, and the ECTs were good for ECTs, whereas there were different expectations for senior teachers.

The report included information on each of the different aspects of monitoring since the last meeting. These included peer observations in geography from Nursery to Year 6, monitoring of learning journeys for Years 1-6, the learning environments and behaviour for learning for all year groups, the Pupil Premium audit for Years 4 and 5, pupil book study in English and maths, the Lewisham Learning green school visit, and specialist PE teaching. Mrs Wright elaborated on the Pupil Premium Grant audit, which had had a strong focus on recovery. The children had spoken about their love for learning and there was a high level of engagement. They had talked about how excited they were about non-core subjects, particularly art, and that they enjoyed being able to have creative freedom. The children had also wanted to talk about marking and feedback and had talked about different types of feedback. Most children had felt that in the moment feedback was better for them and helped them to correct their work immediately, and were able to explain why they preferred this to distance feedback. All of the children had been very complimentary about how staff at the school worked to keep them safe, and 100% said that they felt safe in school, and 100% were able to name several trusted adults in the school, not just their own class teacher or teaching assistant.

Mrs Wright drew governors' attention to some of the quotes from the Pupil Voice, and in particular the comment from a child when asked the best thing about Gordonbrock that "everyone gets the same education and no-one gets left behind", which reflected the ethos at the school.

Areas for development had been identified which included continuing to target disadvantaged pupils in order to make accelerated progress in reading, writing and maths combined, and ensuring that pupils had a wide range of opportunities to attend an after school club or are given further opportunities for enrichment.

Mr Ridler-Mayor explained more about the new approach to monitoring books, which had been developed in consultation with Gulshan Kayembe and included a combination of book scrutiny and student voice. The Senior Leadership Team looked at and agreed questions in a pre-audit scrutiny of books, and the children then came to talk about their learning with the books. This helped to reflect on best practice. Very clear and consistent teaching had been evident in English and Maths, and strong practice had been seen in Reception. Mr Ridler-Mayor said that it was now possible to see the impact of verbal feedback in the moment.

Ms Scott asked if the Pupil Premium children were aware that they were having an additional focus. Ms Barry said that they would not know, and stressed that the school's strategy was to work for all children not just disadvantaged pupils. The Education Endowment Fund had carried out extensive research and had found that this was the best approach rather than having a group of Pupil Premium children working on their own. Ms Gilmore pointed out that there was also a layer of around 90 disadvantaged children whose families were just above the Pupil Premium threshold and who did not qualify for financial support. **Ms Eadie asked if more Pupil Premium children were coming up through the system.** Ms Barry said that the number of Pupil Premium children was reducing and the school had lost 27 children from last year's Year 6 cohort, which had affected the funding. The office team were working with parents to identify any children who may be eligible, and tried to target families if they thought they might qualify for funding.

Ms Gilmore said that the proportion of Pupil Premium children in Years 1 and 2 had been higher in the past, but with the introduction of universal free school meals, the figures had plummeted and parents had not been incentivised to apply because their children received free school meals anyway. The office worked hard at the end of Year 2 to check whether families may be eligible for free school meals going into Year 3, but this must be done in a very sensitive way without causing offence.

Lewisham Learning green school visit

The report from the visit carried out on 1 November 2022 had been circulated. Mrs Wright explained that the review had been carried out as part of the green school offer, and schools had been able to opt into working in school development groups of similar schools. The Federation had already been working in a peer group of six schools, and had been keen to keep this work going. Gordonbrock was now in a triad with Kelvin Grove and Kilmorie, whilst Eliot Bank was working with Horniman and Dalmain. These groups were different to the peer review process because they worked with a primary school improvement officer, who was the lead for the visits by the three headteachers to each other's schools. Lisa Williams, the school improvement officer, and the headteachers from the other two schools had visited Gordonbrock for an initial visit and had identified strengths and areas for development. All leaders had agreed the strengths they had seen at Gordonbrock, and Mrs Wright drew governors' attention to the overarching comment made on page 5 of the report.

The school is outstanding and drives a reflective culture. The focus on school improvement is evident in ensuring that high starting points of children are built upon through high quality provision and teaching and learning. With a drive to implement a highly effective feedback policy, teachers will continue to gain a good understanding of the position of learners in their class. As a result, all groups of learners' needs will be met.

Mrs Wright highlighted the development points. The first of these was around the transition from Nursery to Reception to ensure that the provision builds upon prior learning. Mrs Wright said that while the Early Years was strong, she felt that Reception was a little stronger than the Nursery. There was a new member of staff in the Early Years, and she was confident that this area would continue to develop.

The second development point related to embedding the new Feedback Policy, which Mrs Wright said was working very effectively. The final point was around the consistency of provision across all phases. She pointed out that when a school was outstanding, there would inevitably be pockets which were not quite as outstanding as others. Ms Gilmore added that the bar was set exceptionally high at Gordonbrock and this had been recognised by the other heads and Lisa Williams.

The report included details of a number of other events which had taken place over the term. These had included World Afro Day, Jeans for Genes Day, Differences Week, European Languages Day, Black History Month, National Poetry Day, Buddy Week, Lewisham Foodbank Harvest, Show Racism the Red Card, Cake and Fruit Day, the autumn disco. Switch Off Fortnight, Remembrance Day, Children in Need, and a visit from the Primary School Improvement Team and the Deputy Head from Horniman Primary School. Mrs Wright informed governors that the Spooky Disco, which had taken place in previous years, had been replaced by the autumn disco to encourage more inclusivity. This decision had been controversial among some parents, but she felt the event had been more diverse and had attracted a more diverse group of volunteers. Ms Scott said that her child had really enjoyed the disco, and Ms Barry said that a number of other children, who had not attended before, had said that they had found this an enjoyable event.

The school had hosted the first meeting of Lewisham's Primary School Improvement Team in September and there had been a great deal of positive feedback.

Mrs Wright said that Gordonbrock's school improvement work was continuing, and she was still working with another local school. However, Gordonbrock was still really committed to working with Eliot Bank.

Parent questionnaire

The results of the parent questionnaire had been circulated with the report. A total of 177 responses had been received, and Mrs Wright was very pleased by the very positive responses; in many cases, over 90% of parents had agreed or strongly agreed with the statements made. Parents had also been able to add comments to their questionnaires, and a number of questions had been received about clubs. Mrs Wright said that more clubs were now running than ever before, and the school was using all possible space. She recognised that working parents were keen for their children to be involved in after school activities, and she was discussing with Anne-Marie Kucukkaramuklu and Mr Ridler-Mayor the options for adding further clubs. ***Ms Scott said that some parents had found it difficult to sign up for clubs in the window given, and had found that all spaces had been filled by the time they tried to book.*** Mrs Wright said that there would always be an issue around the number of spaces available, whatever time window was used, but Ms Gilmore accepted that this was an operational issue that would be considered further.

Mrs Wright said that the proportion of parents who said that their children had been bullied and the school had dealt with this effectively had been 83%, which was broadly in line with previous years. While bullying had happened at Gordonbrock in the past, this had been dealt with very well, and there was now much more understanding among children of what bullying was. However, there was still more work for the school to do, in raising awareness with parents and getting them more involved.

Ms Bishop pointed out that 177 responses equated to only 25% of the school population; assuming that the sample responding was representative of the school as a whole, she was concerned that this indicated that equated to a very high proportion of children who had been bullied. Ms Gilmore said that it was often the case that parents who were happy did not feel the need to respond to surveys. However, the sample was much larger than when questionnaires had been carried out in the past, when around 80 responses had been received.

Mrs Wright drew governors' attention to the final question on the survey, which indicated that just over 96% of respondents would recommend Gordonbrock to another parent and governors agreed that this was extremely pleasing.

A governor asked if it was possible to do anything to incentivise more parents to complete future surveys, and Ms Eadie stressed the importance of having a representative sample of parents. Ms Gilmore said that the school took the findings very seriously, and worked to reassure parents who expressed concerns. ***Ms Eadie asked if the questionnaires were completed anonymously, and if not, whether it was worth contacting parents who strongly disagreed with any of the statements.*** Ms Gilmore said that the questionnaires were not anonymous and parents were contacted to discuss their responses if appropriate. She said that in doing so, it was important to consider first whether the family concerned was one that the school was already working with and if it would cause further issues by contacting them.

It was agreed that overall, the survey had been extremely positive and complimentary about the school.

Professional development

The report included details of the very wide range of training sessions attended by staff and professional development meetings, many of which had taken place jointly with Eliot Bank.

Inclusion

The report gave an update on the SEND statistics and included anonymised case studies of some of the children who had been discussed by the Strategic Group. Governors were invited to email Mrs Wright with any specific questions.

Staffing

It was noted that there were currently six teaching assistant and six learning support assistant posts which were covered by supply staff, as well as part time nursery nurse supply cover.

School roll

Mrs Wright informed governors that there were currently ten more pupils on roll than this time last year, which was encouraging as families continued to move out of London following the pandemic.

Mobility

Three children had joined the school from other Lewisham schools and three from overseas. They were offset by three children moving within the Borough, two moving out of borough, and one moving abroad. It was noted that three of the children who had left had moved to public schools.

Accidents

The report included a list of accidents involving children and staff. Mrs Wright informed governors that the last four accidents involving adults had all involved the same Reception child, who was receiving 2:1 support and had been discussed in detail at Strategic Governors meetings.

Educational visits, special events, and visitors

Governors were pleased to see the list of visits since the last meeting and that children were now getting out of school a lot more following the pandemic.

Mrs Wright was thanked for her report.

(b) Head of School's report – Eliot Bank

Ms Gilmore gave an update on the strategic picture. She was pleased to inform governors that Eliot Bank was going from strength to strength and there had been significant improvements in all areas of the school compared with this time last year. Many discussions had taken place around concerns about the quality of teaching and learning, and there had been a substantial improvement since November 2021.

Ms Gilmore's Head of School report had been circulated and included items on summer term performance data, the School Improvement Plan priorities, monitoring and evaluation, professional development and INSET, inclusion, premises, personnel, school roll, attendance, mobility, free school meals, fire drills, accidents/incidents, educational visits, special events and visitors.

Performance data

Ms Gilmore highlighted the summer term data, which was extremely strong, and showed significant improvement. She particularly referred to the Key Stage 2 data, and it was noted that the proportion of children at Eliot Bank who had achieved the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths combined was 88%, which was significantly above the national and Lewisham averages of 58% and 57% respectively. Ms Gilmore said that this was a phenomenal achievement considering the challenges that the school had faced over the last academic year, and staff had worked incredibly hard to achieve these results. Despite the impact of COVID, both schools had achieved exceptionally well, and the results were substantially higher than the national average in all key areas. Ms Gilmore said that there had been a build-up among schools to expect a big fall in the results following the pandemic, but the Federation had implemented the recovery curriculum, with determined leadership and high

expectations. Staff had worked to ensure a happy, safe, and secure learning environment with the children, and had focused on their learning when they had returned to school following the lockdown. However, there were some groups/individuals who had not achieved as well as others and where some catch up work was still needed, for example writing, particularly in Year 3, and these areas had fed into the School Improvement Plan priorities. It could be seen from the report that the school's progress measure at Key Stage 2, which was a national performance measure, was +1.3 in reading, -0.6 in writing, and +1.6. Ms Gilmore reminded governors that Eliot Bank was now in an extremely good position having such strong data coming out of the pandemic.

School Improvement Plan priorities

Ms Gilmore urged governors to read the progress towards the SIP priorities, and said that the improvement seen in the quality of teaching and learning was incredible. She was extremely proud of the progress made and the successes achieved, while recognising that there was still much to be done.

Monitoring and evaluation

The profile of the teaching staff was now 90% good/outstanding, with 45% outstanding. The teachers who were not yet rated as good were ECTs, and they were all at the appropriate level in terms of their career expectations. Ms Gilmore said that Eliot Bank had a strong core of outstanding teachers, but she was pleased that the new teachers were all excellent, and were receiving support from existing colleagues. She said that the feedback received from parents about the new teachers was very strong.

The report from the Lewisham Learning green school visit had been circulated. The visit had been led by David Lucas, the school improvement partner, and had been attended by the Headteacher from Horniman as the Deputy Head from Dalmain. Ms Glasheen, Ms Gilmore, Ms McGuire, and Ms Osmond had all also been involved. The report talked about the level of challenge that was being developed at Eliot Bank and the improvements in consistency. The group had agreed that the 50% change in staff had strengthened the standard of teaching and learning and the improvements being made, which had given validation to the work that had been carried out. The report commented very positively on the quality of displays and behaviour, and had referred several times to the consistency that had been seen, and routines in place to support the new teachers, which the Senior Leadership Team had worked very hard to establish. The last paragraph in the report was extremely powerful, and referred to the clear vision and expectations of the school. Ms Gilmore said that she was very proud of the report and hoped that this reassured governors that, even with all the changes, it had been possible to hold the school steady. Although a huge amount of hard work had been involved, Ms Gilmore said that the school now had an excellent group of teachers who were happy, well planned, and organised. However, she recognised that there was no room for complacency and there was still further work to be done. In particular, the induction process must continue and some degree of support must remain in place for the new teachers throughout their first year at the school. ***Ms Albert asked how this report was likely to influence Ofsted when the inspection was carried out.*** Ms Gilmore said that they would look at the report and this would be very good evidence. In addition, the school improvement officer would talk to the lead inspector. She emphasised that the quality of education at Eliot Bank had never been poor compared with most schools, but had not been as good as expected.

Mr Bremner said that the school should be extremely proud of what had been achieved and congratulated everyone concerned on a hugely impressive report. Ms Gilmore acknowledged the support that had been received from Gordonbrock, which had been instrumental in the progress made.

Ms Gilmore was thanked for her report.

(d) Peer review / school improvement visit report

This item was discussed under the Head of School reports above.

(e) Lewisham Learning School Improvement Framework 2022/23

The agenda included information on the updated Lewisham Learning School Improvement Framework for the current academic year, and governors were urged to follow the link given to find out more about the framework. *The Chair was familiar with the framework, and the level of support available to Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock as 'green' schools.* Both schools were graded as high performing, self evaluating schools, and as noted above, were working in school development groups with other schools.

(f) Pupil Premium and Strategy Statement

Governors were reminded that the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement must be updated and published on the school websites by 31 December. Schools were now required to demonstrate how their spending decisions were informed by research evidence, and an evaluation of the expenditure on Pupil Premium pupils for the previous academic year must also be published on the websites. Ms Gilmore said that Lorraine McGuire and Marinda Barry were working across the Federation to update the data for last year, and once she had reviewed this, the information would be published before the deadline. She reminded governors that schools were not required to publish their data this year, but she was keen for Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock to showcase their strong outcomes; she had been considering how best to make the performance data accessible and had drafted a letter to parents to share the headline outcomes in both schools.

(g) Ofsted

Ms Gilmore reminded governors that a number of outstanding schools had been downgraded under the new framework, with some falling to Requires Improvement, and it would be a challenge for schools to retain their outstanding grading. While she was confident that Eliot Bank would definitely be at least good with many strengths, it was unclear whether the school would continue to be judged as outstanding under the new framework. *Mr Fidel emphasised that if this was the case, this would not necessarily be as a result of falling standards but because of the DfE policy to have fewer outstanding schools than in the past.*

(h) Progress update on Tackling Race Inequality in Education

A training session had been organised earlier in the term on using the Governors' Tackling Race Inequality in Education toolkit. Ms Gilmore reminded governors that the Head of School reports included information on race equality and the work that was taking place in the schools.

(i) New induction arrangements for Early Career Teachers (ECTs)

Ms Gilmore outlined the arrangements for the induction of ECTs and it was noted that there were currently four ECTs at Eliot Bank and they had all made an extremely positive start. Lesson observations were taking place this term, and reports on the teachers would be submitted to Lewisham in due course. She said that the induction arrangements were working very well.

10. ITEMS RELATED TO GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

(a) School suspensions and permanent exclusions

New guidance on the suspension and permanent exclusion of pupils from local authority maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units had been introduced from 1 September 2022 and had replaced the 2017 guidance. Ms Gilmore highlighted the key changes in the guidance, and governors noted that fixed term exclusions were now known as suspensions. It was recognised that the guidance would have far more of an impact on secondary schools, and it had been a very long time since there had been any permanent exclusions in Lewisham primary schools, although they still suspended children when absolutely necessary.

(b) Statutory guidance on school uniforms

Governors were reminded that the statutory guidance on school uniforms should be available on the school websites, and governors were responsible for monitoring compliance with the new guidance. Ms Gilmore confirmed that the guidance was available on both websites, and the schools met all the requirements.

(c) Attendance

Governors were advised that they should monitor the schools' preparedness for compliance with the new attendance guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'. All schools were expected to follow the guidance from September and implement the strategies, with full compliance by September 2023. Ms Gilmore said that the new guidance had been delegated to the attendance officers in both schools, who had updated the Attendance Policy in line with the guidance, for approval by senior leaders.

(d) GDPR compliance

The agenda included a link to the government's data protection toolkit for schools, and governors were reminded of the need to ensure that the schools were GDPR compliant. Ms Gilmore confirmed that Ms McAllister was conversant with the requirements of the GDPR and the schools were fully compliant. It was noted that there had been no significant data breaches.

11. SAFEGUARDING

(a) Safeguarding report

The Head of Schools' reports had included a range of information on inclusion, SEND, and safeguarding issues, and had included detailed anonymised updates on a number of key children who had previously been brought to governors' attention.

The termly statistical reports gave details of the number of concerns forms completed, referrals to Children's Social Care, initial Child Protection conferences, the number of children on Child Protection and Children in Need plans, meetings attended, looked after children, PEP reviews, attendance, and behaviour issues. The reports also included details of reportable accidents, training, and designated safeguarding leads.

It was noted that Ms Stickland had checked the Single Central Records at both schools recently.

(b) Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (KCSIE)

Governors' attention was drawn to the link on the agenda to the statutory KCSIE guidance, which had been updated from 1 September 2022. It was noted that everyone who worked in a school or college understood their safeguarding responsibilities and governors and proprietors should ensure that staff who worked directly with children read at least Part One of the guidance. Staff who did not work directly with children should read either Part One or Annex A of the guidance.

From September 2022, the guidance contained a requirement that all governors should complete safeguarding training as part of their induction, which should be updated regularly. All members of staff who were governors had attended the school based training at the start of the term, and a safeguarding training session had been arranged with John Guest for all other governors, which had been recorded for later viewing for governors who were unable to attend in person. This had taken place on 7 November 2022, and the Clerk confirmed that the majority of non-staff governors had attended the training session in person, and the two governors who had been unable to do so had or had provided written confirmation that they had subsequently watched the recording.

The trainer had taken governors through the KCSIE guidance, and the Clerk reminded all governors that they were required to provide written confirmation to the effect that they had

read and understood at least Part One of the guidance. A sheet was circulated for signature at the meeting, and any governor who had not yet read the guidance was asked to email the Clerk as soon as possible to confirm that they had done so.

12. EQUALITIES DATA AND OBJECTIVES

Governors were reminded that schools were required to publish equalities data online and set equalities objectives for the next four years. The data and objectives should be updated annually, and the policy should be reviewed every four years. Ms Gilmore confirmed that objectives had been set for both schools which included objectives around the Tackling Race Inequality Pledge, raising the achievement of black Caribbean children at Gordonbrock and raising the achievement of black boys at Elliot Bank, and increasing the number of girls reaching greater depth in maths and the number of boys achieving greater depth in reading. She said that the objectives would be uploaded to the websites the following day, and she would bring the Equalities Policy and objectives to the Strategic Group in the spring term.

13. POLICY REVIEW

(a) To agree the schedule for the update of statutory policies and agree any delegation of this responsibility

It was noted that Ms McAllister and Ms Carter had responsibility for timetabling the review of statutory policies, and these were brought to governors for consideration as appropriate.

(b) Behaviour Policy / Safeguarding Policy review

Governors' attention was drawn to the updated behaviour guidance which included a new section on responding to the behaviour of pupils with SEND from 1 September. Ms Gilmore said that she would be bringing the draft of the new Behaviour Policy to the next meeting of the Strategic Group, and the Governing Body would also be required to agree the Behaviour Principles Statement, which must be included in the Home School Agreement. It was **RESOLVED** that the Strategic Group be asked to review the Behaviour Policy and the Behaviour Principles Statement would be brought to the spring term meeting of the Governing Body.

The revised Safeguarding Policy had been circulated to all governors for consideration, and had been updated in accordance with the principles which had been discussed in the safeguarding training session on 7 November. No comments had been received on the Policy so far, and it was **RESOLVED** that the revised Safeguarding Policy be approved, subject to no adverse comments being received by 8 December 2022; in the event of any further changes being needed, the Policy would be brought back to the next meeting.

14. URGENT BUSINESS

No items of urgent business were raised.

15. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Governors were reminded that the following dates and times had been agreed for meetings of the Governing Body and Resources Committee for the remainder of the 2022/23 academic year.

Governing Body

Monday, 13 March 2023

Monday, 12 June 2023

Resources Committee

Thursday, 23 February 2023

Monday, 15 May 2023

All meetings to start at 6 p.m.

Chair 

Date 15th MARCH 2023

