Minutes of Diptford School Ethos Committee Meeting, 11 July 2022 (adited 10 October 2022)

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| **Present** | Roger Knight (chair) | Kingfishers Class Rep |
| Holly Edgington | Academy Head |
| Lucy Carroll | Parent Governor |
| Rev David Sayle | Diptford Parish |
| Helen Price | Hawks Class Rep |
| Rebecca Filtness (sec) | Dippers and Little Dippers Class Rep |
| **Apologies** | Robin Tugwell | Foundation Governor |
|  | Janet Watts | Governor |

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| **Item** | **Minutes** | **Action /** **lead** |
| 1. **Opening** | 1. RK welcomed HE as acting academy head. |  |
| 1. **Matters arising** | 1. The **minutes** from the 7 Mar 22 meeting were adopted, as the 9 May 22 meeting had been an informal discussion due to the number of late absentees, with no formal business conducted and no minutes taken. 2. Since the last meeting the **playground lines** have been repainted, this was funded from a Trust budget, with a top-up provided by school to cover the extra time of jet washing. All welcomed the new lines – a positive addition to the playground. 3. **Declining attendance at ASC** has been addressed with a broader offering of activities (not just sport) providing greater appeal. The school has secured Premier to cover the Thursday session every alternate half term from September (alternating with a teacher-led offering). A preschool staff member is now available to cover ASC providing a familiar face for Little Dippers who need to attend. No feedback has been received about the cost of ASC provision being too high. Parents can use childcare vouchers provided by their employers to pay for ASC. 4. RK attended a **PEGS meeting** immediately after the Buckfast Abbey trip. The PEGS were enthusiastic about the experience at Buckfast and about the PEGS group but were perhaps unclear about the ambassadorial aspect of their role. However, PEGS were prominent at the Easter service. LC asked how PEG members are selected and suggested refreshing the PEGS group, rotating the roles amongst different children which would increase understanding of the role, school vision and priorities, and maybe encourage less confident children to participate. | **HE** to communicate to parents about using childcare vouchers for ASC.  **HE** and **Miss Pritchard** to review current PEGS arrangement. |
| 1. **Holly’s update** | **‘Top of Holly’s Mind’** was the discussion surrounding the classroom set up for September.  With the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the new classroom build, HE is aware that although the children are seen as resilient, they are experiencing difficult circumstances.  Although the staff are tired and disappointed they have been doing a fantastic job and been flexible and resilient in dealing with the classroom situation. They have been unable to make definite plans for the classroom bases and are looking at the ‘least worst option’ based on the space available.  No timeline has yet been received for a decision re building and this is out of the school’s hands – the staff have to deal with the resources and space they have available. The plan for September’s classes is hampered by lack of a classroom due to storm damaged building; skewed year group sizes; no preschool lead.  Theproposed **staffing arrangements** for next term are an improvement with Miss Pritchard extended to full time for Hawks class, and Miss Reid extended to 0.8 so she can make use of her EYFS skills. Mrs Scholz will work alongside Dippers class. There is some capacity to increase the TA provision next year.  The **classroom arrangements** for preschool, reception and Y1 were discussed. The three groups will be in the current preschool building to ensure continuous provision (this would not be achieved by splitting the group and using the village hall). There will be 3 or 4 max in preschool (with no extra capacity), 14 in reception and 6 in Y1. The R to Y1 transition will continue into the autumn term with continuous provision. There will be 1 member of staff for preschool, 1 TA and 1 teacher (Miss Reid). The upstairs library will be available as a teaching space for Y1 for phonics and reading/maths. This is a temporary use of space until the building work is complete when R/1 would move to the new building and have their own classroom.  The **historical background to preschool** was outlined by HP (there has been a complete change in personnel at the school since it began). Originally a parent-led, 1 day a week provision in the village hall, this became a 2 days a week provision run from the den before a significant fundraising effort resulted in the current preschool building and five days a week provision. The majority of funds came from a family trust, with the remainder raised by parents. The preschool was an independent charity until it was adopted by the school when the school became part of the academy. HP’s recollection is that there was an understanding at the time that the preschool building was not to be commandeered by school as extra classroom space. HE has approached the Trust about a legal letter detailing this agreement, and RK has asked Matt Matthews and Nicky Dunford at the Trust whether they are aware of any such restriction. Such a legal agreement could not be sourced or clarified when HE spoke to the Trust.  **Parents’ concerns** about the proposed set up arise from these two issues: the legal status of the building; and the proposal to run preschool, reception and Y1 from a single classroom. Parents are concerned that preschool children will ‘get lost’ in a large group of mostly older children and without a dedicated preschool lead. Parents are concerned that Y1 will not be adequately challenged. HE reported that the class structure had been carefully considered and there seemed to be a misunderstanding amongst parents about the length of the arrangement and how it would look in practice. Miss Reid, a very experienced Early Years practitioner would be leading the unit as a FSU with the small number of preschool accessing the high quality continuous provision and the conversion of the upstairs library into a dedicated teaching space for Year 1. HE asked that the parents put trust in the teaching staff to facilitate this arrangement in the short term.  HE said that she would immediately write a letter to parents to address any misunderstandings  There is ~~a~~ concern that there will not be capacity in the preschool building to admit new preschoolers or in-year admissions to reception and Y1. This threatens the future success of the school as preschool is a vital feed into reception, and is a worry to parents who may need to find alternative preschool provision for younger siblings. Parents concerns were noted, and those present involved in the parental discussions made it clear that dissatisfaction was directed at the Trust rather than at the school or its staff.  The committee discussed the **Trust’s response to funding** a proposed new build. In the latest communication with parents, the trust stated that they were waiting to hear if public funding would be available, rather than committing to using reserve funds. LC queried why reserve funds could not be used. Following the request in the CEO’s letter of 8 July for parents to consider how they might support theTtrust’s efforts to secure external funding, RK noted that he is hoping to attend the open forum at the beginning of the Diptford Parish Council meeting on 12 Jul, possibly with the CEO of the Trust, to discuss how the PC might support lobbying for grant funds.  Rev David counselled that this committee should not over discuss issues such as these; they are for the School and the Trust to address. The committee’s brief is to assist in the surfacing of parents’ concerns for attention and not for promoting and/or trying to resolve such concerns.  All agreed that these matters should now be left to allow the Trust to respond, in conjunction with HE.  HE outlined recent **SATS results**. 100% of KS2 children met their age-related expectations, the performance at KS1 was not as strong. HE detailed securing money from the national tutoring fund for small group focussed tutoring support during school hours as an intervention for some KS1 children. The underlying impact of disruption due to COVID, particularly on the KS1 children whose entire scholl carreers had been impacted, should not be underestimated. It was encouraging that since school attendance has resumed KS1 children have been making appropriate progress. | **HE** to address need for better communication with KS1/EYFS parents about plans for September  **RK** to report back to the committee. |
| 1. **SIAMS** | 1. HE held a meeting with Sharon Lord and Rev David to try to get up to speed with SIAMS, identify areas to develop (including ‘Global Neighbours’, revitalising PEGS). HE shared her idea to ‘live’ the vision and values to stabilise vision and values threads through all aspects of the school – behaviour, relationships, teaching. The SEF will be relaunched next term. RK asked how this might involve parents. HE described a children-focussed approach and rebranding of PEGS, examining how ‘Let Your Light Shine’ could be linked to building learning power. There is no indication when the SIAMS inspection is likely to happen – other diocese schools have been inspected recently it is thought. LC suggested getting hold of a recent inspection report to inform areas of SIAMS interest.   HE noted that the committee’s terms of reference envisage the committee taking ‘deep dives’ into the individual SIAMS strands, and asked what plans there are for this. RK noted that the committee had reviewed RE and CW in some depth and could now move onto other strands in the new school year. | For the 22/23 committee to discuss. |
| 1. **FODS update** | The FODS stall at the Diptford Fete was successful, and plans are well underway for Diptfest this week.  At the last FODS committee meeting a request for funds, to construct raised flower beds outside the pre-schol building, was declined as it was doubted that the School would have the means to maintain such beds properly. The FODS committee has become increasingly concerned that projects and facilities funded by FODS have not been maintained well, in large part because of an absence of budget. FODS continues to raise money and will be contributing to new forest school equipment. All agreed that equipment or facilities provided by FODS needed to be looked after. | RK to discuss concern with Matt Matthew at the Trust re budget |
| 1. **AOB** | 1. Hawks class parents have generously offered to purchase **HEPA filter equipment**  for all classrooms, but these would need new filters to be purchased and fitted annually as an ongoing cost (approx. £800pa). The School budget cannot support this and FODS has decided it is not something they can commit to fund The parents involved have now suggested that current and future parents of the School might be asked if they would be prepared to contribute to the maintenance of HEPA equipment (perhaps at around £20pa per family per year). All agreed that, whilst this is a possible avenue of funding, any request to the wider group of parents should not come from either the school or the ethos committee and should be initiated by the concerned parent group itself. 2. Parental feedback on new **behaviour incentivisation** techniques was positive (class dojo). The staff are also keen to move away from previous methods (cloud/ sun) as this is seen as shaming poor behaviour rather than rewarding good behaviour. 3. Further to the discussion at the meeting of 7 March and Jodie’s subsequent communication, HP raised the matter of **Drop-off times** not reverting to their pre-COVID times. Currently parents can drop off at 0850, or 0830 for a £1 early bird fee (breakfast club available from 0800). Pre-COVID parents could drop off at 0830 to the playground. HE explained that this was now due to staffing differences and permitting staff to have preparation time in the mornings. By 2023 the school day will need to extend by 5 minutes to meet statutory guidelines, but this may be at the beginning or end of the day, as yet unconfirmed. 4. Concerns over **parking and cars driving past the school** gates at pick up time were raised after a recent near miss. The school has no control over parking but will ask parents to take care at pick up and drop off time. | RK to feed back to the parents raising the request  **HE** to add note to newsletter. |
| 1. **Preliminary discussion of future committee arrangements** | Not discussed – to be covered at next meeting. |  |
| 1. **Date of next meeting** | To be confirmed, but in accordance with current twice termly rhythm. |  |