

LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

Minutes of the

GOVERNING BOARD OF AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Virtual meeting held on Thursday, 14 July 2022 at 6pm

Present:	Abu Abdullah	Co-opted
	Shahanara Ali	Staff
	Benedicta Asare	Co-opted
	Iqbal Hussain	Parent
	Sayesta Miah	Parent
	Hafise Nazif	Headteacher
	Soyeb Patel	Parent (vice-chair)
	Denis Shea	Local Authority (chair)
	Neha Shivhare	Associate Member
	Iqbal Singh	Co-opted
Geetha Unnithan	Co-opted	
In attendance:	Julie Ammi	Clerk
	Peter Gibb	LBN (Head of Access and Infrastructure) minute 378
	Manpreet Chhabra	Deputy Headteacher
	Lee Franklin-Lewis	Deputy Headteacher

The meeting commenced at 6.03pm.

375. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The governing board were quorate.

Nisha Ramanathan and Sara Wilson were absent.

376. Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

377. Membership of the governing board

There were no items.

378. Presentation on PAN (Pupil Admission Numbers) by the Local Authority

Peter Gibb, Head of Access and Infrastructure for the London Borough of Newham shared a presentation on external factors in Newham influencing the pupil admission numbers.

Forecasts based on January 2022 census data had recently been updated across the borough. Factors including births, migration and property building appeared on this data. Demographic trends showed continued birth reductions since 2015. This was now levelling off, but not increasing. The forecast was broadly stable for the next few years. Pupil mobility by year group from January to January showed pupils moving in and out of the borough. In years 4, 5 and 6 in particular, between 70 to over 100 pupils had left which was an a typical

pattern compared to previously. The LA would meet with groups of headteachers and chairs of governors again in the Autumn.

Migration continued with significant net migration into the borough although this is a bit slower than 6-7 years earlier.

In addition to the external factors specific to Avenue Primary, for the Manor Park area there is not much new housing development. There is not lots of space to build, unlike other parts of the borough and therefore it does not look like there will be an increase in pupil numbers. The overall forecast for Newham is a slight dip in numbers. Avenue is already considering options so now is a good time to look at the options of permanent caps.

Lots of schools including Avenue had been capping temporarily. The whole-school capacity of 800 pupils would not change. The projected reception intake is forecast to drop slightly over the next 3-4 years. Not a drop that would lead to closing schools but may require some changes in the organisation of schools. For comparison it is quite a difference to other parts of the borough where there is much less spare capacity. The data predicts E12 numbers would drop a bit further, therefore if schools have vacancies it is reasonable to assume those vacancies would continue.

There are options for schools with surplus places. The LA would continue to offer short term capping, so temporary reductions are possible. Avenue has taken that up for some year groups so it can ensure there is an affordable complement of staff working in the school. Schools could also consider partnerships with other schools to reduce costs such as a federation. Cost reduction in a federation is limited as the majority of costs are on staffing. The longer term option is one that the school is considering as a governing board to make a permanent reduction to the admission number. This would give greater stability to reorganise on a permanent basis. This could be a move from 120 (4fe) to 90 (3fe) pupils per year group based on the reality of numbers being offered to Avenue each year. Each school that wants to do so would work closely with the LA, SLT and the governing board. Normally this is a 1-2 years' process and a formal consultation but can be preceded by formal capping of numbers. This is an option that would make sense but the governing board would need to carefully consider this.

The LA updates the forecast every year and Peter Gibb was in attendance to answer questions.

Governor's question: You have mentioned in comparison with other schools in Newham. What is it like on a national basis?

I think there is a fall in the birth rate as well. I do not have the national figures to hand. In London we are seeing areas of significant housing growth offsetting the birth rate but it is very variable compared to other boroughs. The reason Newham as a whole is more stable is because Tower Hamlets and Newham have the highest number of new homes planned.

Governor's question: It seems to me that you are leaving the schools to do what they want. Is that true? Is there anyway the LA can make this more structured?

I think there is a case for some permanent PAN reductions. Perhaps the difference is the borough does not have the same control over schools that it used to. It is not within our power to make academies change. We want to work in partnership with schools so we want to come to a shared view. The LA would be there as a team to support the school in making that change. The data is showing probably 1 or 2 schools in the Manor Park area might want to make a reduction and I think that Avenue by already considering this has put itself in a strong position to plan for the future.

We are in a position to support you with HR advice, finance advice and coming to meetings like this. We will work with you every step of the way if that is what you decide to do.

Governors needed to be asking questions about timescale, what happens next and what are the steps, how much deficit and when does restructuring start. The school still has 700 children that need the best education that can be offered.

The school pointed out that they were seeing a high number of families on the housing waiting list and bidding for new housing in other parts of the borough so whilst there were particular forecasts, this would worsen the situation.

The school advised that although they had 2 classes worth of children for reception 2022, it had opened 3 classes so the children will get a better provision. Next year the budget would prevent the school from being able to do this again.

Governor's question: Is there a due diligence checklist for this process? Is there a criterion we are supposed to be following? Does PAN restructuring have a different criterion?

The school has restructured before but never because of PAN. It will have implications for redundancies.

We have to show how we are going to go into a deficit after next September so we have to start this from September to show how that deficit can be diminished. In year 2 we have to show how a reduction of staff will reduce the deficit. There are other options that as a school we can look at.

Governor's question: What assistance can you and your department offer us?

The process of moving forwards to a permanent 3fe school in the next academic year. We go through a process of redesigning the staffing structure and going through a consultation supported by HR (NPW). Newham corporate finance team are involved in supporting the costings. I think the process will be more manageable as the school has been more prudent in how it has been managing the next few years.

In terms of the formal process there would be Peter Gibb, Tom Alexander (NPW) and colleagues from the finance team. Tom said we have some good examples from other schools in the borough and modelled approaches that were favoured by trade union colleagues so we can do this in a way that will be as favourable as possible. We will do it over the following year. We do not need to rush it.

Governor's question: I would like to see these different approaches. Can they be made available to the governing board as some sort of checklist so we can see the steps, so we insert the dates on the one we would like to go with? Can we have an action plan with milestones?

It is something we can work with you on. We can carry on meeting with the headteacher, HR and finance. We could then bring back the details to one of your autumn meetings.

We can meet straight after the summer break with chair, vice-chair and committee chairs.

Governor's question: At what point do we give the restructure to staff, entering into voluntary redundancies etc ?

Peter Gibb is very happy to work with the school on that. When we get into the details it will be Tom Alexander rather who supports and I know that he does very often come to governing board meetings.

Governors commented that they needed to be mindful that word could get out to staff about what is going to happen and it is quite sensitive and can be a bit daunting. The correct type of communication should be passed onto staff about consultation. Staff are aware that there are some changes on the horizon because the school has reduced its PAN in most year

groups. The balance would be crucial because the school does not want to lose good teachers, staff and parent confidence.

Governor's question: Which 3 schools in Newham have gone through that process? Is there going to be a parent's consultation or just staff?

Southern road, Odessa and the PRU at Tunmarsh. There would need to be wider community consultation at the later point of the permanent PAN reduction. You would carry out a statutory consultation.

Decision: Governors agreed they had established the way forward from 4fe to 3fe permanently.

Actions:

1. **An initial meeting to take place in September with the headteacher and relevant colleagues from NPW and the LA.**
2. **Bullet points of the process, in date order, to be prepared by the LA.**
3. **The outcomes of 1 and 2 to be brought to the governing board at the next governors meeting.**

The chair thanked Peter Gibb for attending the meeting.

Peter Gibb left the meeting at 6.49pm.

379. Minutes of the last governing board meeting (appendix A)

- a. **The minutes of 19 May 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.**
- b. **Matters arising**

The chair went through the action register. Except for the following all actions were either complete or would be covered at the meeting.

Minute 359. The Education Space to write to Sara Wilson and ask whether she wishes to continue as a governor. The clerk to follow up whether this action has been completed.

380. Governing board committees

- a. **Governors to note minutes/reports of committee meetings held since the last board meeting**
- b. **Finance and resources 9 June 2022 (appendix B)**

Governors noted the minutes

- c. **Human resources 5 May 2022**

Governors noted the minutes.

381. School budget monitoring

Period 3 had been presented and within that report the school business manager and headteacher had put together another appendix where all other implications of the budget were explained thoroughly.

Decision: Governors approved the school budget monitoring report for period 3.

382. Headteacher's report

The headteacher's report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

a. Capping of pupil numbers

With the current pupil numbers, it has been highlighted that this needs to be a standing agenda item.

The temporary capping of numbers in Reception, year 1, year 2 and year 3 had been agreed by the authority. It is important that governors are in agreement that this happens. Before the capping is permanent the LA can still ask the school to take more children, but they would be given a term's notice so that staffing arrangements etc. can be put into place.

Approval: The governing board approved the temporary capping of Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3.

b. Data

The school results were headlines at this stage. The detailed reports would be provided at the autumn term meeting. The headteacher advised the school was pleased with the initial data.

Reception data is above national and a good GLD was achieved. Year 1 above 80% in phonics and above national. Year 2 data was positive particularly considering these children had no reception or year 1 education due to the pandemic. Year 2 teachers worked incredibly hard with the children and had done particularly well with greater depth. For year 3 there is no statutory end of year data. Year 4 for the first time did multiplication checks and Avenue scored highly. Year 6 SATS results – the school had done well this year. The data would be shared in the autumn after the disapplication process.

c. Leadership and management

At the end of the report under leadership and management there was a governors' section and RAG rated areas. There was also a governance grid of responsibilities. This needed periodic reviewing. There were some good actions from the away day which the headteacher had made into a powerpoint. It would be good to go through this in the autumn term.

The headteacher highlighted how the school had recovered well from the covid disruption and as a school went headstrong into the year with a focus on learning. The whole school had some key objectives and the staff had delivered a very successful year of learning and attainment. Ofsted is expected in February and the School would be keen to discuss its outcomes and the start of their new curriculum.

A number of staff were leaving but there was no need to recruit new staff. There were some very strong year groups at the moment.

The governing board extended thanks to all staff and wished them well for their holidays.

383. Safeguarding

This item was covered in the headteacher's report.

384. Compliance calendar items

This item is work in progress and is rag rated between the headteacher and the headteacher's PA. The headteacher's PA, Maria, is retiring at the end of this academic year.

385. School policies for review

This item is linked to the compliance calendar.

386. Mental health and wellbeing

This is a standing item that has been placed on the agenda by governor services. Lee Franklin-Lewis is the senior mental health contact, as required by the DfE and has completed the training. The headteacher asked governors to consider what they would want from this agenda item in the future.

After some discussion it was agreed that Geetha Unnithan would put something together and come back with a report at the autumn term meeting.

Action 1: Geetha Unnithan to look at what governors require from the item mental health and wellbeing and come back with a report in the autumn term.

Action 2: Mental health and wellbeing to be on the agenda for the next HR committee and to come up with some key items to support.

387. Governor education and training

Governors had agreed they needed board training about Ofsted inspections. They discussed the different ways this could be delivered and when. The possibility of some kind of crib sheet was also put forward.

The headteacher urged governors to visit the school regularly and ask pupils what it was like to attend Avenue. The headteacher would ensure visits were valuable to governors.

It was agreed that governors would have bite size training sessions on Ofsted delivered by the headteacher which were as interactive as possible.

Action: All governors to arrange their visit to the school in the autumn term.

388. Governance review

The governance review by Sarah Beaumont, head of governor services had been gratefully received by the governing board.

389. Future meeting arrangements

Autumn:

Thursday 13 October 2022
Thursday 8 December 2022

Spring:

Thursday 2 February 2023
Thursday 23 March 2023

Summer:

Thursday 18 May 2023
Thursday 13 July 2023

All meetings to commence at 18:00 unless otherwise stated.

There was a discussion around whether to have face to face or online meetings. It was agreed as virtual at the moment. The meeting dates were provisionally agreed.

The meeting dates needed to factor in Peter Gibb attending.

390. Any other business

Governors discussed whether paper copies of documents should be available, as there was a lot to read. The headteacher’s reports were very thorough and it was best to make all the information available to governors, as opposed to having too little.

Action: Should a governor require a paper copy of documentation; they are to email the headteacher’s PA for a copy.

Governors requested that if a report/document was complete that it be uploaded to GovernorHub in order that there would be more time to read it before the meeting.

391. Agenda items for the next meeting

- Data
- Pupil numbers – standing item

The chair wished everyone a good summer break.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Action register:

Minute	Action	Action allocated to	Update	Action completed/date
378 1 2 3	An initial meeting to take place in September with the headteacher and relevant colleagues from NPW and the LA. Bullet points of the process, in date order, to be prepared by the LA. The outcomes of 1 and 2 to be brought to the governing board at the next governors meeting.	HT/chair		
379	The Education Space to write to Sara Wilson and ask whether she wishes to continue as a governor. The clerk to follow up whether this action	Clerk		

	has been completed.			
386 1	Geetha Unnithan to look at what governors require from the item mental health and wellbeing and come back with a report in the autumn term.	GU		
386 2	Mental health and wellbeing to be on the agenda for the next HR committee and to come up with some key items to support.	BA		
387	All governors to arrange their visit to the school in the autumn term.	GB		
390	Should a governor require a paper copy of documentation; they are to email the headteacher's PA for a copy.	All governors		