

Torriano Primary School

Minutes - SLT Coffee Morning 07.06.16



Present: Helen Bruckdorfer (Head of School), Luca Salice (Chair of Governors), Jim Grant (Acting Deputy Head) Eleanor Fagan (Assistant Head), 10 parents

1. Apologies: None

2. Minutes of the previous coffee morning: None to discuss

3. Welcome: Helen Bruckdorfer welcomed the parents and thanked them for attending the coffee morning. She introduced Luca Salice and Eleanor Fagan who had returned following maternity leave. Following this she outlined Eleanor's role as Assistant Head and responsibility for assessment and literacy.

4. Discussion of Letter: Helen explained that the aim of the coffee morning was to discuss the letter Luca had sent out to all parents on Friday 27th May. The letter was regarding the resignation of Bavaani Nanthabalan as Executive Headteacher of Torriano Primary School. Luca explained that Bavaani had decided to hand in her resignation as she was now spending little time at Torriano Primary School and more time at Netley Primary School. She felt that her role as Executive Headteacher had come to a natural end and that the school had been managed effectively during her absence by Helen Bruckdorfer. The governors and the Senior Leadership Team felt that the merger of Torriano Infants and Torriano Juniors had gone extremely well and due to the demands of the job at Netley, Bavaani felt it was the right time to move on. Helen explained that the partnership between Netley and Torriano would continue, and along with the teaching alliance that the school is currently a part of, the schools would continue to share their expertise to develop teaching and curriculum.

5. Questions from Parents:

- *Does it reflect poorly on the school if the Executive Head moves on?*
 - Luca explained that an Executive Head is not an essential role in a school, it is a decision the school takes to appoint someone to that position. He said that it was beneficial for Torriano and Netley at the time to create the partnership and it supported the development of Bavaani's career, enabling her to manage two schools at once. It was never intended to last forever and had come to a natural end. It was an amicable agreement for Bavaani to move on and both schools benefited from the partnership.
- *Will a new Executive Head be appointed and Helen remain as Head of School?*
 - Luca answered the question and said that this would not be the case. Governors were seeking a Headteacher for Torriano Primary School only.
- *How will the new role be advertised, what will the governors do to recruit someone?*
 - Luca told the parents that the school was legally obliged to advertise the role nationally. Advice had been sought from Camden HR regarding the correct procedure to follow for recruitment. He explained that he could not say anything more as it was a formal recruitment process that would be taking place and the governors were to keep an open mind about all applicants.
- *If you (Helen) were successful in your application for the job, what would your plan for next year be?*
 - Helen explained that she felt the school had made great strides following the merger and would like to further develop continuity in pedagogy and the curriculum and would hope that an Ofsted inspection would help to validate that the practice is outstanding throughout the whole school. She hopes that children would increasingly feel that they are a part of a primary school and not two separate schools, and explained how they have already begun to feel more connected through increased collaboration between children across all year groups.

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- *When will parents find out about the outcome of the recruitment process?*
 - Luca informed parents that they would be told of the outcome before the end of the school term.
- *What other staff changes would be taking place next year?*
 - Helen informed parents that there were new recruitments for the next academic year. The recruitment process was implemented early in the spring term to ensure the school recruited a high calibre of teachers. There were many applications for the various roles that were advertised, the new staff are highly qualified and Helen is very optimistic about staff for next year. She explained that the attitude amongst staff currently at the school is also positive. She also told parents that permanent cover teachers had been recruited in order to ensure the school has fewer temporary supplies in, this ensures stability for the children and reduces costs.
- *When will parents find out about the staffing structure for next year?*
 - Helen explained that she cannot currently provide parents with that information, but that a transition programme was being developed in order to inform both the children and parents about the staff for next year. Class handover sessions will be taking place early July and parents would be informed of the teachers for next year prior to those sessions.
- *Could you provide more information regarding the possibility of academies?*
 - Luca said that the government has recently changed their attitude regarding academies; whilst there still is a focus on schools becoming academies, they are now concentrating on the schools that are not achieving as well, compared to those that are. He explained that he is opposed to academies and hopes that schools within the borough will continue to work closely together to develop the Camden Schools-Led Partnership and other alliances that will prevent them from relying too heavily on the Local Authority (LA) as its funding has been cut. This would reduce the risk of becoming an academy. However, he wanted to point out that the risk of being forcibly converted into an academy is still present and if there were very few schools left within the LA and the LA did not have a viable system to support them, then there was still a possibility of schools being forced to become academies. Luca referred parents to an organisation set up by parents called Rescue our Schools which works nationally but is actually based in Camden.
- *When would Ofsted come in?*
 - Helen answered that there would be no control over if and when Ofsted would visit the school, but following a helpful discussion with a Ofsted HMI the aim would be to continue to improve KS1 and ensure continuity in practice and provision in order to raise the standards across the whole school. She said the school may receive a letter to say that Ofsted would be visiting in the next year, but that this had not happened yet and she had no information to suggest it would.

6. Closing: Parents were thanked for attending the meeting; they were told if they had any other questions that they could speak with Helen or Luca.

Meeting start time: 9.20am

Meeting end time: 10.00am

Minutes taken by: Maria Lewis