

Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation

Executive Headteacher: Luke Page

Holmewood, Maytree, Triangle, Effra and Ethelred Nursery Schools
with Maytree, Tree House, Clapham Manor, Effra and Ethelred Children's Centres



Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation

2022/2023 Governance Statement

The Department for Education suggests that each year all schools explain what their governing body has done in their Annual Governance Statement.

THE GOVERNING BODY?

Maintained nursery schools have school governors; these are unpaid volunteers. The Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation can be made up of fifteen members, which includes two governors elected by parents, one appointed by the local authority, the Executive Headteacher, one member of staff elected by the staff, and ten people who have been 'co-opted' (selected) by the governing body because they have skills or experience that can help the schools. We currently have 2 co-opted positions vacant. You can see information about the governors and their attendance records on our schools' websites.

The key role of the governing body is to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold the Executive Headteacher to account for the well-being and progress of children and staff at all of the federation's nursery schools
- Oversee the financial performance of the federation and make sure its money is well spent.

It also appoints the Executive Headteacher, who oversees the whole federation, and is involved with the recruitment of the Heads of School at each nursery school.

The governors work with the school's leadership team to provide strategic leadership and hold them to account.

The full governing body meets to discuss the federation as a whole and to receive information from the Individual School Committees (ISC) and the Resources Committee. There is an ISC for each of the nursery schools (5 in total - Effra, Ethelred, Maytree, Holmewood and Triangle) and the Children's Centre which focus on each individual school's/setting's needs and development. These committees include members of the governing body, and either the Executive Headteacher or the Head of School/Better Start Area Manager. They also welcome the input from staff and parents/carers and other stakeholders. In addition to these committees there is the Resources Committee which focuses on all financial, health and safety, human resources and premises matters.

WHAT HAS THE GOVERNING BODY DONE IN 2022/23?

We met as a full group three times during the school year (termly) as have the Resources Committee and Individual School Committees. We continue to meet in person for most of our meetings.

The sections below explain what we've done this year for each of the key responsibilities we have.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The key focus of the governing body has been to ensure the long-term future for the nursery schools and children's centres. There has been extensive review of each of the five nursery schools finances and projected budgets. The Resources Committee has met several times to discuss each school's budget. We strive to seek a way forward, whilst maintaining the 'Outstanding' standards of the Federation. We question and draw attention to budget requirements where they seem untenable, and campaign for funding where appropriate.

Finally 2022/23 continues to be a challenging year for the nursery schools and children's centres as they have had to adapt to the ever changing safeguarding and wellbeing concerns for both staff and children that Covid 19 has created. There are long term challenges we continue to manage, which includes a drop in paid provision and increased sickness absence for staff and children.

The children's centres have again been a key part of also providing outreach support and services to the families of Lambeth. The governing body is incredibly proud of the work achieved by all the nursery schools and Children's Centre staff. Support is being provided by Lambeth's Human Resources department to ensure we effectively follow policy and procedure.

HOLDING THE NURSERY SCHOOLS TO ACCOUNT

An important part of the governing body's role is to ask questions. There is a lot of information for governors to look at about children's achievement, staffing and attendance. We look at children's assessment data to see whether any group, for example, gender, children with special educational needs or ethnic group, is not making as much progress as other groups. If they are not, we ask what the school is doing to address this. Our aim is always to provide the best possible care for all the children attending each of our nursery schools.

In 2022/23 we have monitored the schools attainment and policies and supported a return to a more typical offer of childcare and education. Some governors have visited the schools and children's centre sites to monitor and review practice.

In 2022/23 the huge safeguarding and wellbeing challenge for both staff and children continues, as we learn to live with COVID and the current cost of living crisis. We understand the importance of all the nursery schools and children's centres in the local community, especially to those who are most vulnerable. The schools and children's centres continue to act quickly and effectively to seek additional support for children and families and this is detailed in ISC meetings.

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING OF THE NURSERY SCHOOLS

The Resources Committee meets three times a year to discuss funding and spending of all the nursery schools, together with applicable policy and health and safety matters. It feeds back relevant items to the full governing body.

Funding of nursery schools continues to be challenging, as funding levels from the Department of Education (DfE) have remained static or with very limited increase for several years, while costs, in particular staffing costs, and demand for SEN support continues to increase on an annual basis. A key concern of the governing body looking forward is to ensure that each school is able to continue to provide this outstanding provision to the children and families it serves, despite the ongoing financial pressures. Charitable status has been secured to allow access to broader funding sources for the nursery schools as a whole. Campaigning to seek better funding, to local councillors and MPs as well as central government has also taken place. This remains a crucial element of the governor's remit.

We are aiming to launch a nurture provision at Effra Nursery School and are planning for similar launches at Maytree and Ethelred Nursery Schools. This is being done to help manage the numbers of children with additional needs and to provide effective education and support. The Local Authority has agreed additional funding to increase the number of places we can offer from 10 to 20.