

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

2023/2024 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 Executive Headteacher position remains an acting role for the time being, as mandated by the LA.

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 2023/24

We met as a full group three times during the school year (termly) as did the Resources Committee and most Individual School Committees. The Individual School Committee meetings for Effra and Triangle did not happen consistently. 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 remained working towards ensuring 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.

Due to ongoing budget constraints and some staff vacancies, it was agreed that Triangle Nursery School would temporarily relocate to the site of Effra Nursery School from January 2024. This was a complex and emotional process overseen by the EHT and SLT and the chair of governors attended meetings with staff explaining the reasons for this move.

We have agreed this temporary arrangement until July 2025. Whole school restructures were completed for Effra and Triangle Nursery Schools in the Summer term. This process was managed by the staffing sub committee (made up of three governors), the EHT and two members of Lambeth's Human Resources Team. The restructure has resulted in new staff teams at both schools. As part of this process, we have now appointed a new Head of School and senior leadership team to work at Effra and Triangle Nursery School. The EHT is no longer a named Head of School and can now focus on strategic planning for the Federation.

Triangle Nurture Space moved to the site of Effra Nursery School, as detailed above. This allowed for an expansion of full time places we could offer, increasing from 10 to 12. The LA also agreed to fund additional nurture provisions at Maytree and Ethelred Nursery Schools, with 5 full time places created at each. The LA continues to provide additional placement funding to the schools to part finance the support in the nurture provisions.

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. Due to a change in use of the Clapham Manor Children's Centre site, it was not financially viable for the Children's Centre to continue to operate from this site. In the Summer term, the Local Authority supported a temporary relocation of services to move services to Triangle Nursery School. The services will now run under the name "Clapham Manor at Triangle Nursery School". This has been agreed until July 2025.

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.

During 2023/24 we had 2 Ofsted inspections. The outcome was positive, and development points were set for both schools to review the curriculum and how teaching and learning is planned across the year. The EHT will support Heads of Schools in developing curriculum documents over the next year and the focus of School Improvement Advisor visits will be on curriculum.

In 2023/24 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. We are seeking to include a walk around the school sites as part of each ISC agenda.

In 2023/24 the huge safeguarding and wellbeing challenge for both staff and children continued, as we learned to live with the after effects and ongoing effects of COVID and the ongoing 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.