

Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

The Department of Education recommends that schools report on what the governing body has achieved and publish it on the schools' website.

The Governing Body

The Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation is made up of the 5 Maintained Nursery Schools in Lambeth; Holmewood, Maytree, Triangle, Effra and Ethelred. The Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation has fifteen governors, which includes two governors elected by parents of children attending the nursery schools, one appointed by the local authority, the Executive Headteacher, one member of staff elected by 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. 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 the children and staff at all of the federation's nursery schools.
- Oversee the financial performance of the federation and make sure it's 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 Schools. 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, focusing on each individual schools' needs and development. This committee includes members of the Governing Body, the Executive Headteacher and the Head of School. They also welcome the input from staff and parents/carers and other stakeholders. The Resources Committee focuses on all financial, health and safety, human resources and premises matters.

What has the Governing Body Done in 2018/19?

We have met as a full group for our regular termly meetings, as have the Resources Committee and Individual School Committees. This year we have also held some further 'Extraordinary' meeting, as 2018/19 has seen the growth of the Federation to include all Lambeth maintained Nursery Schools and become the Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation.

Governors have also been involved in recruitment interviews, safeguarding reviews and the Executive Headteacher's appraisal. They have made school visits to monitor the attainment and progress of all the children with specific attention to children with special needs and looked after children. Governors also attended Ofsted inspections at Maytree (November 18), Ethelred (April 2019) and Effra (July 2019).

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

Strategic Direction

2018/19 saw the formation of the 'Lambeth Nursery Schools Federation', the joining of the 'Holmewood, Maytree and Triangle Nursery Schools Federation' and both Effra and Ethelred Nursery Schools. The 5 nursery schools have now formed a hard federation to optimise the sharing of knowledge, administration and cost of running of the nursery schools in these difficult financial times. This strategy has been taken to ensure the long-term future for the nursery schools and children's centres and joining forces as a federation has been a key part of this.

Maytree and Ethelred have both moved into new premises.

Maytree, Ethelred and Effra have all had Ofsted inspections in 2018/19. Maytree and Ethelred continue to be 'Outstanding' and Effra is awaiting another inspection with a view to be up-graded from Good to Outstanding.

The three Governing Bodies of Effra, Ethelred and 'The Holmewood, Maytree and Triangle Federation' were disbanded and a new 'Lambeth Nursery Schools' Governing Body was formed. The new Body is made up of co-opted governors from the previous three bodies, newly elected parent Governors and a Lambeth appointed Governor.

We have kept the same structure of Full Governing Body meetings along with ISC meetings for each Nursery School and one Resources Committee. The ISC meetings continue to be the success to the federation, and have enabled the Governing Body to more closely monitor each individual nursery school and ensure vision, ethos and strategic direction is working for all the nursery schools.

There has been great change for the Children's Centres throughout Lambeth and the Governing Body has supported the bid for Maytree to become the Lead Provider for Clapham and Ethelred for North Lambeth, the bid for Clapham was successful.

Holding 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 the children's achievement, staffing and attendance. We look at children's assessment data to see whether any group (for example, gender, children with SEN, high achieving children or an ethnic group) is not making as much progress as other groups. If they are not, we ask what the nursery 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.

We make regular visits to the schools to monitor what has been discussed at meetings and see the schools in action.

We are also now able to assess the data of each school and assess each nursery school's strengths and encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills between them.

Currently four schools are rated 'Outstanding' with the exception of Effra which we anticipate will become Outstanding at the next inspection. The comments and feedback from these inspections inform our improvement plans for the future.

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 contributions from the local authority have remained static for several years, while costs, in particular staffing costs, continue to increase on an annual basis. The federation of five schools enables us to continue to offer Outstanding provision to the children and families on the roll. More creative approaches to funding have also helped, we now offer parents extended hours and holiday provision and places for children from the age of 2 years old. The quality of our 2 year old provision was particularly highlighted as part of the 2018/19 Ofsted inspections.

Giving the Heads of Schools the resources of the federation to create new initiatives to improve numbers on role has continued to prove fruitful.

The key concern of the Governing Body looking forward is to ensure that each school is able to continue to provide outstanding provision to the children and families it serves, despite the ongoing financial pressures. The expansion of the Federation to include Effra and Ethelred Nursery Schools has created some organisational challenges and some restructuring but the governing Body believes very strongly that it is in the best interest of all the nursery schools. We also hope this larger federation will have some impact on the stability of the Children's Centres that work along-side them and are very pleased with the Lead Provider result for Maytree.