

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames



Sheen Mount School

Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting

Held at School on

5th February 2020 from 7.00pm – 9.45pm

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

Local Authority Governors - 1	Maria Widdowson (MW)
Parent Governors – 2	*Nikki Christmas (NC) Justine Hebert (JH) (Chair)
Staff Governors – 2	Avani Bakrania (AB) Ian Hutchings (IH)
Co-opted Governors – 10	<i>Vacancy</i> Kelly -Ann Cahillane (KAC) Helen Edward (HE) Anna Hare (AH) Kathryn Higgins (KH) (Standards Committee Chair) Dan Jameson (DJ) Pukar Mehta (PM) Catherine Riley (CR) (Pastoral Committee Chair) Julia Sandell (JS) Tilly Walters (TW) (Resources Committee Chair)
Associate Governors – 3	Laura Jeffery (LJ) Maria O'Brien (MOB) *Marianne Paemen (MP)
Clerk to the board	Sarah Bellingham (SB)

* Absence(s) in Bold

Signed.....

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Minutes

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 JH welcomed governors to this third FGB meeting of the academic year.
- 1.2 It was noted that due notice of the meeting had been given to all members of FGB, a quorum was present and that the meeting could proceed. NC and MP had given their apologies.
- 1.3 No-one had any personal or pecuniary interests to declare.
- 1.4 It was noted that all the documents to be referred to in the meeting had been posted onto Governor Hub prior to the meeting for governors to read.

2. Minutes and Action List from 27 November 2019

Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes from the meeting of 27 November 2019 were approved and signed by JH.

Actions

2.2 Actions from previous minutes:

- The recent SIP visit took place on Monday 3 February 2020. IH and JS would update us as part of the Head Teacher's report.
- The Committee Chairs signed the minutes of the meetings dated 22 January 2020.
- The Policy review items would be discussed later under the Ofsted item on the agenda.
- JH confirmed that no governor had contacted her asking for a discussion about governance at Sheen Mount.
- In relation to SEND support, AH and LJ would discuss this item later in the meeting (see minute 7).

2.3 Actions from the minutes of 27 November 2019:

Governor skills and training:

- CR asked that governors attend the next AfC safeguarding training course on the evening of 10 March 2020 if they felt there were gaps in their knowledge. Following completion of training, CR would be happy to discuss safeguarding at Sheen Mount in more detail with governors who would find this helpful. **ACTION - ALL**
- JH confirmed she knew that AH was intending to follow up with those governors who indicated on the skills audit that their knowledge around SEND was low.
- MW will be reviewing the induction process later in the year. **ACTION - MW**

SDP:

- JH thanked IH and MOB for organising a successful and informative curriculum evening on 23 January 2020 and thanked governors who attended. MOB said that there was lots of positive feedback from parents.
- **Q:** Was there any constructive criticism which it would be useful for the governors to hear?

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A: MOB said that some parents wanted a longer session, and some had missed the introduction so had asked questions later in the evening about what that covered. Lastly, there were some comments about providing signposting within a phase, similar to the year-group curriculum map.

New Ofsted Framework:

- JH recommended that governors book the next AfC training course tomorrow night if space was available. Calling Lyn Barnes at AfC was often helpful for last minute bookings where courses were advertised as full.
- SB would re-count e-mails from governors confirming availability for a re-scheduled Committee meetings evening on 5 May 2020 and if a majority could attend SB would book Ofsted training as part of that session. **ACTION - SB**
- JH would speak with IH about the format of the SIP governor review meeting due in March 2020. **ACTION – JH & IH**

Swimming Pool, Staff Pay Policy & Communication:

- These items had been actioned or would be actioned via discussion at this meeting.

E-Vote: Staff Pay Policy - re-sent by e-mail from SB with clarification on 28.01.2020

- 2.4 JH confirmed that this was being taken back for additional review and would be re-circulated for a vote when ready. TW agreed to rectify the missing appendix. MW would review how to pick up the unallocated governance responsibilities at committee level. **ACTION – TW & MW**

E-Vote: Data Protection Policy – sent by e-mail from CH on 02.12.2019

- 2.5 It was noted that there had been 12 votes (out of 17) in favour, which provided the majority needed to approve the policy. The policy was noted as approved. SB noted that the policy would need uploading onto the website. **ACTION – SB**

3. Governing Body Membership

- 3.1 KH updated the governors about the search for a governor to fill the current vacancy in the Standards Committee and confirmed that the advert was live on the website 'Inspiring Governors'.

4 Governor Skills, Training and Induction Update

Joint Partnership Meeting December 2019

- 4.1 JH asked if there were any questions about the notes and presentation from this event, which she had circulated prior to the meeting.

- 4.2 **Q: Does SEN have a high profile in the provision of the school's CPD training? It would be useful to understand how the proportion has changed from general CPD to CPD with this in mind.**

A: IH said that SEN training was offered to meet the needs of the teachers and assistants of a particular year group, who needed to work effectively with individual SEN children moving into their class in a new academic year. LJ explained that an 'Autism In Girls' course and an 'Emotional Resilience' course would soon be offered to all staff. SEN training would also be offered to TA's soon, if the outcome of a training choices questionnaire showed that this was a preferred training topic for them. JS added that she had asked staff during her recent visit if they felt they had access to training. Many staff responded that not only was there good access to training but that they also felt well-equipped professionally.

- 4.3 **Q: Do SEND parents have a voice?**

A: LJ said that in addition to ad hoc meetings with parents of SEN children, this year regular coffee mornings are being held at the school. It tended to be parents of children with an EHCP who attended these coffee mornings rather than parents of SEN children without an EHCP. AH said she had it on her list to look at ways to better connect with parents of SEN children.

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- 4.4 JH said she would like to see a questionnaire designed for both parents of SEN children as well as parents of children with an EHCP, to allow for feedback from each in the same exercise. There could be a tick box or boxes to help the school identify which type of child the parents were responding about, as well as which gender and which year group. **ACTION – LJ & AH**

Core Documents Folder

- 4.5 SB and MW would continue to work on this folder in Governor Hub. JH would discuss progress with them in February, prior to a short Ofsted training session pre committees in March, and would ask for governors' feedback at that point. MW and SB would also continue to work on ensuring that Governor Hub contained up to date versions of policies in pdf and word versions, and then SB would assume responsibility for ensuring timely reminders to governors on upcoming policy review requirements.

Training Log

- 4.6 SB asked governors if they were happy to rely on the AfC training record rather than have SB produce and update a separate record in a word document. All agreed this was sensible, subject to checking with Lyn about the possibility that the AfC record would include online training with NGA and other online providers. **ACTION - SB**

5 Headteacher's Update

Headteacher's Report

Sections 1 & 2:

- 5.1 **Q:** In relation to pupil mobility, what could we do to reduce the number of children leaving for the independent sector?
A: IH said that often a parent's decision to remove their child from the school is only communicated to the school at a late stage after a long period of family discussion. Whilst IH speaks to parents about such a decision, it is hard to say or do anything meaningful at that point to encourage a change of mind.
- 5.2 **Q:** Do we know why pupils who have left the school return to Sheen Mount (as IH shared that two pupils had recently returned within several weeks!)?
A: IH said he could only assume it was a testament to the culture and quality of teaching at the school.
- 5.3 **Q:** Does the school carry out exit interviews and could governors usefully help with those?
A: The governors discussed the various legitimate reasons why children would be moved from the school, including moves out of the borough or the country in relation to jobs or family. IH indicated that the pupil movement figures were in line with the national average. The governors agreed that a survey sent to parents who were taking their child out of the school would be very useful to help spot trends.
- 5.4 After discussion with the governors, JH identified two possibilities for this type of survey: a general exit survey and a survey for all Year 6 leavers.
- 5.5 In relation to the general exit survey, it was agreed that IH would design it and would discuss his design and ideas for implementing it with the Pastoral Committee at the meeting on 11 March 2020. Feedback would be given at the subsequent FGB meeting. **ACTION – IH & CR**
- 5.6 In relation to the Year 6 leavers survey, a majority of the governors agreed by a show of hands to implement this in addition to the general survey. There was a discussion about frequency and timing. IH was asked to design this during the summer term in conjunction with the survey committee and in time for distributing to leavers at the end of that term. DJ agreed to input based on his experience of a Year 6 leavers' survey at his school. It was also agreed that this could be a useful opportunity to include a reference to the school fund for donations. **ACTION – IH & DJ**

Section 3:

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5.7 Q: Year 2 stood out in the Target Tracker data. What was the driver for that?

A: IH and AB explained that the transition from Year 1 to Year 2 was bigger than for other years.

5.8 Q: Do we have last year's tracker data for the same age group at this point in the academic year to compare against?

A: IH agreed to find this and to establish if there was a trend for this age group or if this year's data was an isolated event. IH would take his findings to the Standards Committee. **ACTION – IH**

5.9 Q: If this proved to be a trend, was there a benefit to adjusting the progress required for this age group to be more realistic about the transition for this year group achieve a positive rating?

A: IH said that the school controlled the rating threshold and that it was important to be realistic about what the children could achieve over this period.

Section 4:

5.10 Q: How worried was IH about attendance at this time of year?

A: IH said that he was more worried than normal because the school was hovering at 97%, whereas normally it was above that.

5.11 Q: Was this connected to family holidays being taken outside of term time?

A: IH said that this term there had been lots of flu-related absence.

5.12 Q: Please tell us about the 31 unauthorised reception class absences.

A: IH replied that this data was an error and the real number was 13.

5.13 Q: In relation to attendance at Reception and Year 1 level, was illness an adequate explanation for the higher than normal rate of absence, or was there a pattern of absence from families that needed addressing before it filtered into subsequent years?

A: IH confirmed that the absences in those years were mostly authorised.

5.14 Q: Has any bullying been reported this term?

A: IH confirmed none had been reported.

5.15 Q: Has feedback about the school's monitoring of incidents system gone to the Pastoral Committee yet?

A: JH confirmed that regular reporting on behaviour monitoring was due to go to Pastoral for the first time in January and was an action in the SDP. IH agreed to do this for the March committee meetings evening. **ACTION – IH**

5.16 Q: How are lower level behavioural issues tracked, which don't meet the threshold for bullying?

A: The staff governors discussed how a number grading was applied to recorded incidents to reflect the level of seriousness. JH asked that Pastoral ensure that the system was appropriate for its purpose and in order to meet the SDP action around this. This would be an item to discuss at the March committee meeting, with feedback to be provided at the subsequent FGB meeting. **ACTION – CR**

Section 5:

5.17 There were no questions from governors in relation to this section of the report.

Section 6:

5.18 Q: At paragraph 6.2 in the report, there was data showing that 11 out of 28 teachers were awarded an increment – was that good or bad or not something requiring comment?

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A: IH said that this data concerned staff members who had reached the top of their pay scale with no room to move higher. It was good at this time but could eventually lead to the school having a top-heavy model.

SDP 2019/20 Update

Objective 1 – Curriculum

5.19 MOB confirmed that all actions were on track. IH and MOB had attended high-level training and were cascading learnings to staff. Today IH had been at the School Improvement Forum learning about 'deep dives' into curriculum areas.

Objective 2 - Communication

5.20 IH said that although the least activity was taking place under this objective, he was aware of that and he would be focusing on this next. The annual report to parents had been issued in October so this action had been met.

Objective 3 - Mental Wellbeing

5.21 LJ provided a summary of the many initiatives which were taking place. These included:

- CPD courses for staff on difficult conversations and emotional resilience,
- **ACTION – LJ to send slide pack to JH** on difficult conversations;
- a course on emotional resilience for identified groups of pupils;
- a session for parents with Sarah Burrell, trainee wellbeing practitioner, to provide them support in helping their children manage emotions; and
- the use of a therapy dog after half term, which would be a weekly feature for the pupils.

Objective 4 – Behaviour

5.22 IH discussed the outcome of AfC's inspection of the school on Monday 3 February 2020. There was much positive feedback. JH thanked IH, LJ and MOB for their hard work in relation to this.

5.23 IH reported that there were three main points to work on. Firstly, IH would be investigating the low-level disruption caused by some groups of boys at the school. Secondly, IH would be reflecting on how better to record and circulate positive feedback to the children. There was some discussion about how this could include enhancing the school's existing system of rewards and praise for pupils, as part of a motivational strategy for good behavior. Thirdly, IH would be exploring how to add a quiet outdoor space separate from 'the Nest' in the outside play area, such as a sensory garden.

5.24 An additional action point was to improve how the school could better 'close the feedback loop'. This would ensure that parents who had asked for a response to feedback were informed about action taken. This could be included in the SDP.

5.25 JH asked that the inspection outcomes be discussed at Pastoral Committee in conjunction with the feedback from JS's recent visits to school as our Behaviour link governor, with key recommendations from that discussion brought to the governing body. **ACTION – IH, CR & JS**

Objective 5 – Greater Depth

5.26 Pupil progress meetings were taking place this week and next. Outcomes would be fed into the next Standards Committee. **ACTION - IH**

Objective 6 – Income Generation

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5.27 TW, IH and JH confirmed that the swimming pool work was on track. The building contract had been signed and we would soon be signing the licence. It was confirmed that the licence would have a ten year duration. There had been a request by Swimway to extend this and a change of control clause was still in the agreement.

5.28 JH and IH discussed the availability of money in the budget for meeting the school's strategic needs and the need to include this in the box on the SDP plan. It would be helpful if we could identify these numbers for this year's SDP at Resources Committee and then ensure we did the same going forward. **ACTION - TW**

6 Financial Management Update

SFVS

6.1 TW clarified what the SFVS submission was and explained how the format had changed this year. TW confirmed that the SFVS had been discussed in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting and had received challenge. TW added that there was some time before the submission deadline to the local authority and that the document would be updated with up-to-date pupil numbers in March prior to submission.

6.2 JH explained that because the percentage change in pupil numbers in March would not result in a material change to the submission, she would like the final sign-off to be delegated to Resources without further discussion at full governing body level. By a show of hands, all governors indicated that they were happy with this proposal.

6.3 **Q: If the spend on teaching staff is in the lowest 2%, why is our spend on educational support staff in the highest 10%?**
A: IH said that this related to the number and time required (ie complexity) of TA's supporting EHCP plans.

6.4 **Q: Is it correct that the school has fewer children with EHCPs than other local schools?**
A: Not all EHCPs required the same number of additional teaching hours. It depended on the complexity of the needs of that child. Most of the school's children with an EHCP had complex needs. IH had challenged the borough about the number of EHCPs requiring over 25 hours of support and the borough confirmed Sheen Mount had more of this type of EHCP than most schools.

6.5 **Q: Why was there such a low cost for the teaching staff?**
A: There were many more junior teachers given the three-class intake. London weighting also did not apply in this area. .

6.6 The governors approved the SFVS by a majority with a show of hands and given final sign-off by the Resources Committee (as already approved).

Budget Update

6.7 TW discussed the outturn for the financial year ended 31 March 2020. TW said that the Resources Committee were pleased because the school was where they thought it should be. This included the £26k in-year deficit and the carry forward of £180k. Whilst the £180k was higher than the proposed figure of £100k, TW was comfortable that it was not so high that the school risked claw-back by the council.

6.8 TW identified two possible areas for movement in the figures: firstly the timing of the swimming pool costs, as when money is received from Swimway and payments are made to the contractor will alter the end of year position; secondly the cost of TA support. PM and JS discussed the need to watch closely the level of TA support, as this could also link to the monitoring of the behavior of groups of boys in the playground raised in the SIP visit. IH commented that playground supervision was at the correct ratio. The school was currently engaging its 'Fit For Sport' team to help supervise in the playground, now that more TA's had been assigned to individual children based on special needs.

6.9 **Q: What was the rationale for using 'Fit For Sport' staff?**
A: IH explained that these individuals were well-known to the children and that it was an interim measure while the school adjusted to the new model of TA allocation.

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6.10 **Q:** Please can we explore whether there is adequate supervision in the playground at lunchtimes and whether teachers are receiving enough support in the resolution of and feedback about lunchtime issues, to permit uninterrupted teaching time.

A: IH explained that the TA support model was five years' old and had been implemented gradually. The youngest children were receiving the most support.

6.11 **Q:** Was it timely to test the model and assess if there is anything the school could do differently?

A: JH replied that now would be a good time because the school was full. JH would discuss this with IH and MOB after the meeting and would do so before the next budget round in case an allocation of finance was required. **ACTION – JH, IH & MOB**

6.12 Questions to include in this discussion were:

- Did the staff feel well-supported by the TA's?
- Would more floating TA's help reduce low-level disruptive behavior in the playground?
- More generally, how could TA support be used most effectively? This required an assessment of 'what' and 'when' as well as pure numbers.
- Were the 'Fit For Sport' staff adequately communicating with teachers about playground issues?
- What were the key risks if this TA model did not work as envisaged?
- Could the model cope with the predicted increase in children with SEN and EHCP needs ('future-proofing')?

Swimming Pool – progress update

6.13 IH confirmed that the build contract was in place and that the school was close to signing the 'Swimway' contract. Items such as ventilation, walls and flooring finish were the big variables in terms of cost. TW said that the school was still within its contingency, but that this money was being used up and she would keep the group updated.

6.14 **Q:** If the contingency were used up what would the school do?

A: TW said in this event, the Resources Committee would come back to the governing body for discussion and approval of next steps.

6.15 **Q:** When will the pool be completed and ready for use?

A: JH said she was hoping for 1 June 2020.

6.16 KH flagged the 25-metre swim requirement on the curriculum. IH would find out if any pupil was at risk of leaving the school without that requirement having been met and would feed back to KH. **ACTION – IH**

6.17 **Q:** Have parents been updated recently about when the pool will be ready for use?

A: IH replied no, and that he would prefer to wait until the opening date was a certainty before sending a communication to parents.

7 FGB Standing Items

SEND

7.1 The governors discussed the report produced by the SEND link governors AH and JS.

7.2 **Q:** In relation to the budget, is the school keen to attract children requiring an EHCP or are you concerned about the pace with which the school is being awarded EHCPs for SEN pupils?

A: IH replied that the school only applies for an EHCP if the child happens to meet the threshold. LJ confirmed that the application process requires a report on the child from the educational psychologist and potentially other professionals.

7.3 **Q:** Do you feel that you have the resources to cope with an EHCP once the child has met this threshold?

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A: LJ said that funding was typically delayed because the school waited a long time for professional medical diagnosis required for the EHCP submission.

7.4 Q: Has the school advertised for another TA?

A: LJ replied that this was correct. The TA would provide 20 hours of support to LJ weekly, but on a flexible hours basis, and would also be available to cover classes when teachers needed to attend reviews of children with EHCPs.

7.5 Q: Are TA's insured?

A: LJ said that some TA's are insured and some not.

7.6 Q: Would it help to relieve the pressure on LJ to shift the second safeguarding lead to another governor?

A: JH asked CR to discuss this with LJ and report back to her after the meeting. **ACTION - CR**

7.7 Q: What was the 'initial concern sheet' in the report?

A: AH said that this relates to the school's Record of Concern, which lists the pupils whom the school monitors based on initial social or educational concerns, but whom are not within the SEN or EHCP category.

7.8 Q: How do governors know what interventions the school has taken in relation to children for whom there are concerns and how is impact evidenced?

A: JH and LJ clarified that the school carried out provision mapping. This system involved categorising children in three ways, based on the extent of the concern: EHCP, SEN Support and Record of Support.

7.9 JH confirmed that she would like to understand better how this internal system was working before seeking any external validation of it. JH asked AH and JS to review this and to report back to the governing body at the next meeting. **ACTION - AH & JS**

8 Link Governor Update / Policies Update

SEND Policy - for approval

8.1 A majority of the governors approved this by a show of hands. SB would upload this onto the school website. **ACTION - SB**

Sports Premium Annual Report – for approval

8.2 A majority of the governors approved this by a show of hands. SB would check with MP about the need for this to go onto the website and would upload if needed. **ACTION - SB**

Complaints Procedure – for approval

8.3 A majority of the governors approved this, subject to CR adjusting the placing of the unreasonable complaints wording and correcting the typo concerning the three-month window for making a complaint. CR would send SB the final version to upload onto the website. **ACTION – CR & SB**

Policy Review Process and Checks

8.4 MW would be emailing the Chairs of Committees shortly to remind them of the next policies which were coming up for review. **ACTION – MW**. MW and SB were steadily working on various policy items to ensure all school policies were documented, approved and visible as needed.

8.5 Q: How should we update staff about the latest complaints policy?

A: JH asked LJ and MOB to update via normal channels, for example via the next staff briefing. **ACTION – LJ & MOB**

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9 Committee Updates

- 9.1** KH confirmed that she would continue to input into the content of the business continuity plan, as she has experience in this area and would discuss this with TW. **ACTION – KH & TW**

10 Communication to PSA, Staff and Newsletter

- 10.1 Q:** When is the next PSA meeting scheduled for?

A: IH said that he had asked and would update governors once he knew. TW will attend on behalf of governors. **ACTION – IH & TW**

- 10.2 Q:** Was any governor available to attend the next staff meeting?

A: KH volunteered. **ACTION – KH**

- 10.3** JH asked all to confirm the key messages for these meetings and the newsletter. It was agreed the following would be covered: attendance and unauthorised absence; the school survey/review, and the governors' review of children's progress so far this academic year. KH suggested inclusion of the governors' attendance at the curriculum evening and their continued focus on curriculum. **ACTION – JH**

- 10.4** IH read out a letter from a member of staff who was shortly to go on a sabbatical, thanking the school for its support.

11 AOB

- 11.1** The date of the next full governing body meeting was confirmed as 25 March 2020.

- 11.2** Governors were asked to update their e-mail address on Governor Hub profile to their Sheen Mount one. **ACTION - ALL**

Signed by the Chair: _____
Justine Hebert (JH)

Dated: _____