

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames



Sheen Mount School

Minutes and Action List of the Full Governing Board Meeting Held on 28th June 2023 at 6.30pm at Sheen Mount School

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

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|---|--|
| Local Authority Governors - 1 | Maria Widdowson (MW) (<u>Vice-Chair</u>) |
| Parent Governors – 2 | Susan Boughton (SB) Telmo Valido (TV) |
| Staff Governors – 1 | Robert Kennedy (RK) – Class Teacher and Upper KS2 Phase Leader |
| Co-opted Governors – 10 | Gemma Cass (GC) Andrew Gardiner (AG)* Anna Hare (AH) Justine Hebert (JH) (<u>Chair</u>) Kathryn Higgins (KH) (Curriculum and Learning Chair) David Morley (DM) (Resources Committee Chair) Edward Nicholson (EN)* Julia Sandell (JS) (Pastoral Committee Chair) Jennifer Wright (JW) <i>Vacancy</i> |
| Headteacher - 1 | Tom Holmes (TH) |
| Associate (non-voting) members – 4 | Louise Dear (LD) – School Business Manager Dan Jameson (DJ)* Laura Jeffery (LJ) – Assistant Headteacher, Inclusion Leader and DSL Maria O’Brien (MOB) – Deputy Headteacher and DDSL |
| Clerk to the board | Sarah Bellingham (Clerk) |
| Observers | Caroline Bones (Prospective co-opted governor and observer) Giota Kovani (Prospective co-opted governor and observer) Tej Patel (Prospective co-opted governor and observer) Jodi Hunt (Prospective associate member and observer) |

* Absence(s) in Bold

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames



Sheen Mount School

Action List of the Full Governing Body Meeting of 28.06.2023

| No: | Minute item | SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS | Date by when | Person responsible | For Next FGB Agenda |
|-----|-------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 2.1 | Sign and publish approved previous minutes of previous Board meeting | July '23 | JH/Clerk | |
| 2 | 2.3 | Pick up gender options action point from May FGB meeting | Autumn term '23 | TH/JS | |
| 3 | 3.12 | Send induction information to new governors | July '23 | Clerk | |
| 4 | 4.14 | Bring autumn term holiday camp survey data to November FGB | November '23 FGB | TH | Yes |
| 5 | 5.12 | Add item to C&L autumn term agenda to monitor continuity of staff across classes and consistency of curriculum delivery | Autumn term '23 | GC | |
| 6 | 5.13 | Invite new governors to input into 23-24 survey process | Autumn term '23 | TH/JS | Yes |
| 7 | 5.14 | Carry out leavers' exit interviews | July '23 | KH/JW | |
| 8 | 6.2 | Committee's to review relevant Summer Term SIP Report action points at first meeting in autumn term cycle | Autumn '23 | GC/JS/DM | |
| 9 | 6.4 | Explore suitability of the BC International School Awards system for Sheen Mount | Autumn '23 | MOB/MW/GC | Yes |
| 10 | 7.5 | Add vision setting process to the agenda for the early autumn term Chairs' meeting | Chairs' Meeting Autumn Term '23 | SB | |
| 11 | 8.2 | Adjust the annual review date for the Safeguarding and CP Policy to November | July '23 | Clerk | |
| 12 | 9.1 | Move the following agenda item to the October '23 FGB meeting: 'New governor link visit handbook and scheduling of visits' | October '23 FGB | SB | Yes |
| 13 | 9.3 | Make final updates to SG&CP policy and send to clerk for publishing | July '23 | LJ | |
| 14 | 9.6 | Circulate link governor allocation list to request expressions of interest for 23-24 | July '23 | SB | Yes |
| 15 | 11.1 | Write to parents to inform them of change in Chairship | July '23 | JH | |

Minutes

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 JH welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from EN and DJ. The governors had no interests to declare connected with the agenda items or for the Register of Interests.
- 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present (50% of the total number of voting governors, excluding vacancies). Documents referred to in the meeting had been circulated to all via Governor Hub prior to the meeting, except where noted in the minutes.

2. Minutes and Action List from 3rd May 2023 FGB Meeting

Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes from the meeting of 3rd May 2023 were approved. JH would be asked to sign these. The Clerk would publish them on the school website. **ACTION – JH & Clerk**



Actions from 3rd May 2023 (and matters relating to them)

2.2 The actions from the previous meeting were either completed, in progress.

2.3 Pastoral would pick up the gender options point after discussion with TH. **ACTION – JS & TH**

3. Summer Term FGB Items

Confirm governors stepping down with effect from end of this academic year

3.1 These were: JH, KH, AG, and EN.

3.2 Plans were discussed for a replacement for EN on Resources Committee.

Appoint new Chair of Governors for 2023-2024 with effect from 28 June 2023

3.3 SB left the room at 18.48.

3.4 The governors unanimously voted in favour of SB's appointment as the new Chair of Governors for 2023-2024. This had been discussed already at a previous Board meeting, where an indicative vote had taken place.

3.5 SB returned at 18.50.

Appoint new co-opted governors with effect from the end of the academic year: Tej Patel, Caroline Bones, and Giota Kovani

3.6 The prospective new governors introduced themselves.

3.7 They left the room at 18.51 and the governors discussed their views on each candidate.

3.8 The Board voted unanimously in favour of each individual's appointment to the Board based on the evidence of their skills and experience, which had been presented to them prior to the meeting.

3.9 The new governors returned at 18.55

Appoint new associate member to the Board with immediate effect: Jodi Hunt

3.10 Jodi was Chair of the PSA and was a parent of a pupil at the school. Her background and experience were discussed.

3.11 The Board voted unanimously in favour of Jodi's appointment as an associate member of the Board.

3.12 The Clerk would make contact with the new joiners to provide induction information. **ACTION – CLERK**

Thank you to JH and KH

3.13 The Board offered its sincere thanks JH and KH for the incredible energy and support provided by them both over many years.

4. Financial Management

Update on the closing out of 2022-2023 – Presented by DM



4.1 DM spoke to the key parts of his presentation which included an explanation of the capital budget, the surplus position, the operating budget, and the impact of items such as: high unfunded pay rises required for educational support staff, a double count on a local authority income stream, an overspend on agency staffing due to the need to replace teachers, and a mismatch between the school's receipt of funds for school trips and the cost to the school for those. TH emphasized that the overspend on staff was for the support staff needed to work with children for whom an EHCP had been applied for, but funding had not yet been received.

4.2 **Q:** Was EHCP funding back dated?

A: No

4.3 DM explained that the positive news concerned the fact that the school had received more income than expected from school clubs, and from the Swimway contract, and had spent less than anticipated on teacher salaries.

4.4 Governors were asked if they had any more questions but none were raised.

Final budget for 2023/2024 for Board Approval – Presentation by DM

4.5 DM explained that the 2023-2024 budget needed Board approval, followed by the Chair's sign-off after the meeting.

4.6 DM spoke to his presentation and explained a range of assumptions which had been used to prepare the budget. These included:

- A full spend of carry forward, accounting for predicted unfunded teacher pay rises of 6.5% and support staff pay rises of 8.4%,
- No deficit position,
- Staff resignations and replacement of staff at more junior levels,
- Teaching assistant resignations, with no replacements planned for the academic year,
- A downturn in SEN and higher needs funding from the government, and
- Income streams from school clubs, and the Swimway contact, which was soon due to include Sunday rental time

4.7 Potential financial challenges which the school could face included:

- Teacher pay rises over 6.5%,
- Higher than average new pupils joining after the Census figure had been taken in October 2023,
- Lower than expected monies generated from fundraising,
- Maintenance or emergency repair works on the school site,
- A higher than predicted requirement for agency staff,
- Inflationary increases to the costs charged by service or energy providers at contract renewal dates, and
- A potential downturn in the lettings market.

4.8 A balanced budget would need to be set for the following academic year. In 2023-2024 there should be no spending unless it was absolutely necessary.

4.9 Governors were asked if they had any questions.

4.10 **Q:** How much of the school's budget was staffing costs?

A: These made up between 80-85% of the budget. The pay rises would have a significant impact. TH clarified that income was provided on a per pupil basis, but the government was not providing extra funds for teacher pay rises.

4.11 **Q:** What was the picture looking like in terms of pupil numbers this September, accounting for leavers?

A: Leaver numbers had been reasonably high, due to moves into the independent sector and moves out of the area. TH and the staff were being as proactive as possible on all fronts to generate interest in the school and to be welcoming to families looking at the school.



4.12Q: What were the numbers of pupils attending after school wrap around care currently?

A: This was around 30 pupils on a Monday to Thursday and about 22 on a Friday. The numbers attending the holiday camps held at the school were less good. TH said he may need to work on pupils 'perceptions' of the summer camp and ensure an improved provision.

4.13 Q: The quality of the holiday camp provision had been challenged previously. What agreement did the school currently have from the camp provider about service levels and quality of provision?

A: TH confirmed that the provider had committed in writing to a certain level of provision. He felt the company had listened to what TH had said and had observed their own staff at work during camp days. One key member of the company's staff had now moved on.

4.14 The governors agreed that the quality of this provision needed close and careful monitoring, in order for the school to be acting properly in recommending it to families and pupils. TH would carry out a survey in the autumn term of pupils and families having attending this summer, and would bring the results back to the November Board meeting. **ACTION - TH**

4.15JH asked the Board if it was happy to approve the 2023-2024 final budget or if there were further questions.

4.16 JH asked governors to bear in mind that previously the Board's position had always been that the school's surplus should be within a 'tram line' of £100k, to ensure a buffer in the event of unforeseen costs. The current budget was going back on what the Board had agreed on. However the position had been closely reviewed by the Resources Committee with the school, and it was one which the school had no real choice about given the increase in staff salaries and the government's lack of funding for that. This was not the position the school budget should be in the following financial year. It was something to monitor over the next 12 months. TH added that the school needed to make £187k of savings this academic year at least. DM also added that because the budget year ran from April to March, decisions might need to be taken in or earlier than March 2024.

4.17 Governors had no further questions and unanimously voted in favour of the 2023-2024 budget presented to them.

4.18 The Board expressed its thanks to the Resources Committee, and to TH and LD for their time and hard work on this.

5. Headteacher Report

5.1 TH referred to his report which had been circulated in advance.

5.2 Governors had been given the opportunity to read the report in full and were now asked if they had any questions.

5.3 TH asked governors to note that Reception year mobility had been a challenge. So far, 84 places had been filled and the school was being proactive about recruiting more families. The numbers were more about mobility in the sense of relocation, than about moves to the independent sector.

5.4 Q: How were the numbers looking further up in the school?

A: TH referred to his in-year leavers' table. There were 8 pupils leaving from Year 2, and 5 leaving from one Year 5 class due to relocations. There was a potential challenge around leavers in Year 4. There was information available in the leavers' forms but more information might be forthcoming from the exit interviews held with the governors. JH recommended a review of leavers in the autumn term to observe if there were any patterns or trends.

5.5 Q: How much impact did TH think the Ofsted judgement had had on recruitment?

A: TH said that this was hard to say. Some of the local primaries still retained an outstanding grade without having been inspected under the new framework. East Sheen primary had recently received an outstanding judgement, and had received a lot of support from Sheen Mount. Their inspection had been in a different year. Overall the picture meant that the vision and strategy work was vital.



5.6 Governors agreed that there were so many strengths to the school and that it delivered an amazing experience to the children who attended. It was important for the Board and staff to be confident in how it talked about that.

5.7 **Q:** What were the pupil numbers like at East Sheen Primary?

A: They had not been full in Reception the previous year and had gone down to two classes in one year recently. TH flagged that a birth rate challenge looked likely in the following couple of years.

5.8 **Q:** Did Richmond council provide information on birth rates and demographics?

A: Yes it did. The school also spoke to school families here from overseas about recommending the school to other families planning to move to the area from their home country. JH added that the combination of Covid and Brexit had thrown everything out slightly. The previous influx of international families had tailed off and some families were moving out of London to home countries. It was generally regarded that pupil numbers would be going down in the next few years.

5.9 **Q:** Was there a link with the cost of living crisis?

A: Partly yes, but it was also expensive to keep pupils in private school.

5.10 TH explained that because the school was in something of a satellite position in Sheen, it wasn't somewhere they many people walked past. The school needed to approach nurseries and the local community, for example via fairs, popular coffee shops, and estate agents, to make sure people knew the school was here. TH was pulling this all together at the moment.

5.11 **Q:** Were more teachers leaving than might be usual at a year end?

A: Yes. One was retiring, four were moving abroad, and one lived too far to continue commuting. These were all understandable situations so the number seemed unfortunate. The school would be energized by new staff joining and by the maternity returners. The school would monitor consistency for classes. All staffing was secure for September 2023.

5.12 The C&L Committee would include an item in its first autumn term agenda to look at and monitor the continuity of staff and consistency of delivery for classes. **ACTION - GC**

5.13 **Q:** Please could governors have a survey update?

A: TH had held a successful meeting with JS. However it was not realistic to send surveys out at this point in the summer term. The new governors would be invited to help with the process in the autumn term, with a view to sending out the surveys in the second half of the spring term. **ACTION – TH/JS**

5.14 KH and JW offered to help TH with the leavers' exit interviews. **ACTION – KH/JW**

5.15 TH told the Board separately that staff who had recently helped at the Year 3 sleep over and Year 4 upwards residential trips, had gone above and beyond in their care of the children, many of whom had had a high level of need. The Board expressed its thanks to those staff for their outstanding care of these children.

6. SIP Report

6.1 The school's improvement partner, Tom Gibson, had provided impressive input and engagement to date. New governors were told that he came into the school on a termly basis to do a report on an area of focus such as strategy or other items suggested by him or the school. He gave an independent view and was a useful sounding board for staff.

6.2 This term's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting following his recent visit. It was agreed that each committee review the action points in the report relevant to that committee's remit, in the first meeting of the autumn term. **ACTION – JS/GC/DM**

6.3 **Q:** The SIP had referenced a piece of work by a member of staff, who was now leaving at the end of term. What would happen about that?



A: MOB would lead on that item and move it forward.

- 6.4 MW said that she had come across a British Council International School Award system, which she felt would be a good achievement for Sheen Mount given its international community. MOB, MW and GC would look into this and report back to the Board in the autumn term. **ACTION – MOB/MW/GC**

7. Vision Setting

- 7.1 JH referred back to the previous meeting's discussion about vision setting and to the series of questions listed at the end of the vision presentation she had prepared and circulated in advance of this meeting. She asked governors each question in turn.

Did governors think that the proposed vision setting process was the right one?

- 7.2 JH summarized the key aspects of the process which were to frame what the Board and SLT were doing, energise people and stimulate input, explain what 'great' looked like, get input from prime stakeholders (parents, staff and pupils), and reach agreement on the process for agreeing the vision at the end of those steps.

- 7.3 The governors were in agreement with this.

What skills did the Board have and who should lead on this?

When should the process start and finish?

- 7.4 SB thought it would be important to sign off on the agreed vision at the November 2023 FGB meeting. The September inset days could be useful for staff input. Governors were also welcome to join staff on Monday 4th September for the initial discussion about this.

- 7.5 It was agreed that this would also be discussed at the Chairs' meeting early in the autumn term, so that Committee input could be harnessed in the autumn term cycle of meetings and the October FGB, before the end of November FGB meeting.

ACTION - SB

8. FGB Standing Items

Safeguarding

- 8.1 Thanks were expressed to JW for her minutes of her latest safeguarding link visit to the school.

- 8.2 Governors discussed when would be the appropriate time in the year to review the safeguarding policy and it was agreed that this should be in the autumn term, following updates annually to KCSiE, and with the updated policy brought to each November FGB meeting for approval. **ACTION - CLERK**

- 8.3 Each Committee Chair was encouraged to look at the policy review schedule prior to the Chairs' meeting in early autumn term, to allow planning for timely review processes, linked with the Committee and FGB meeting cycle.

Equality

- 8.4 There were no items to review.

SEND

- 8.5 There were no items to review.

9. Link Governor Visits and Policy Approvals



New governor link visit handbook and scheduling of visits

9.1 This item would be moved to the October FGB meeting agenda. **ACTION – SB**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

9.2 This had been circulated prior to the meeting, and LJ summarised the changes.

9.3 The governors unanimously approved the updated policy. LJ would update the photos in the policy to reflect the current governor membership and roles, and would update the 'linked policies' list at the back of the policy to add in the Complaints Policy. **ACTION - LJ**

Online Safety Policy

9.4 This had been put in place based on latest KCSiE guidance. It had been reviewed and approved by Pastoral and had been put together in part using information from the school's IT providers.

9.5 The governors unanimously approved the policy.

9.6 SB would circulate the latest link governor sheet to governors, and asked that everyone confirm their preference or interest in one or more roles available. **ACTION - SB**

10. Receipt of Committee Minutes and Updates

10.1 These were noted as received.

11. Communication to PSA, Staff, and Parents

11.1 JH would write to parents about the change of chairship, by way of separate note to the weekly newsletter. **ACTION - JH**

12. AOB

12.1 JH asked governors to reflect on what had gone well or what could work better in the following academic year. In summary the feedback was that:

- The Committees structure worked well, however the timings of meetings may need revisiting.
- The link governor visits schedule could be refreshed to better fit with the committee meeting cycle.
- A governor day at the school would be useful, in part as an extra session on vision setting. The previous one had not taken place due to teacher strike action.

12.2 The Board expressed its thanks to MW for her energy and time in helping recruit the new governors.

12.3 The Board also expressed its thanks to LJ and her colleagues for their work on the revamped behaviour policy at the school, which most recently had resulted in the school being given a Bronze Attachment Aware award. The school was hopeful of a silver award the following year. LJ would be sending round a presentation on this in autumn term, as staff, parents and pupils were all involved in the behaviour process and school's expectations.

Meeting ended at 20.31