

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

**The Russell School
Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on
Monday 03 July 2023**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

LA - 1	PARENTS - 2	CO-OPTED - 3	STAFF 2
Mr. Rob Woolner (RW)	Ms Claire Smith (CS)	Mr Neil Cutting (NC)	Miss Rebecca James Acting Headteacher (BJ)
	Mr Coulter Patton (CP)	Mr Tom LLOYD (TL)	Mrs Nicola McCann Teacher and SENco (NM)
		Mr. Brian Miller (BM)	Ms Laura Brooks Appointed Head for September 2023 (LB)
		Ms Louise Allen (LA)	

bold = absent

Apologies: CS

Clerk: Amanda Bungey

1	Welcome and Apologies for absence: The Chair welcomed Governors to the fifth meeting of the FGB for 2022- 23.	Actions
2	Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.	
3	New Governor Appointment (Louise Allen) and Welcome to new Headteacher Louise Allen was nominated and voted it by RW and BM. Louise introduced herself. She has a strong and relevant business background, running her own business with involvement in National and Education Policy. She is Chair of the PTA in her own children's school, Hampton Infants. She loves reporting and governance and is delighted to support the Russell School and the Governing body.	

	<p>Louise was warmly welcomed to the Governing body who look forward to her contribution.</p> <p>NC gave another big welcome to Laura Brooks, the newly appointed Headteacher who was able to join the FGB for the last meeting of the year. Governors were looking forward the opportunity to hear from Laura and the engagement she has had so far with the school.</p>	
4	<p>Previous minutes:</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record and the Chair agreed his signature.</p>	
5	<p>Matters arising:</p> <p>See update on other matters arising from the FGB meeting on 03 July 2023 at the end of the minutes.</p> <p>The following items were closed:</p> <p>Item 1: Governor vacancies. The skills assessment has now been issued to all. NC to aggregate the data and present once received back from most. He asked remaining Governors to send it back to him ready for the first meeting in the new academic year. The skills assessment will identify areas for personal development and skills needed when recruiting new Governors. Item closed</p> <p>Item 2: Audit of website. Governors were reminded to provide blurb for website (CP, NM, LB) Item closed.</p> <p>Item 6: Changing title of Health Safety and Wellbeing. This is to be changed to "Safeguarding and Wellbeing" on the next agenda. Item closed.</p>	<p>NC</p> <p>CP, NM. LB</p> <p>NC</p>
6	<p>Health Safety and Wellbeing:</p> <p>The tree fort is out of action, as a part of it is broken and is being repaired. It will have to be signed off for health and safety.</p> <p>An update on the abandoned site of the old Strathmore school is that planning permission for Ham school should be progressing soon. BJB to catch up with the council (and liaise with Strathmore Heads, Sarah</p>	<p>BJB</p>

H and Ivan P) regarding how the Council intends to do the construction, as issues such as dust suppression, asbestos and trees would need to be considered.

7 Headteacher's Report:

Quality of Education:

Ongoing observations of teaching and learning have been taking place by SLT. Lots of areas of the SDP have been completed. A few elements will carry over and will feed into to new targets with BJ and LB. Learning walks are taking place. The writing process is being refined and this will be a focus for next academic year, with new teachers coming in. Leads have been doing their own learning walks so that they can be confident when talking to Ofsted.

Emma S did a learning walk to observe children with other languages and had to have the children with EAL pointed out to her. All are doing well with activities and are enthusiastic with their learning.

Governor comment: The cultural background of parents may be different and we should be aware of that.

BJ: The school prides itself on celebrating different cultural backgrounds.

Governor question, are we doing anything to promote home languages of parents?

BJ: Base languages are still encouraged when talking to parents at parents evenings.

Governor comment: Emma S suggested commissioning the School Improvement Advisor (Diverse Ethnic Achievement and PPG) to support with this.

BJ: The credits for this have been spent this year so it will be next year.

A lot of families came to the International Day and contributed to the scrapbook by completing a page about their heritage.

Governor question: How well is the school integrating cultural capital for all children who attend the school?

BJ: The school does offer a wide range of trips, visitors etc.

Governor comment: Ofsted is suggesting there is a class differential which is why they want everyone to access a rich, diverse curriculum.

BJ: SATs tests for Year 6 were completed in May. They did well. The reading paper was very tough as were the spelling tests.

Year 6 tests were moderated for writing, which has not been done for a long time. This was done by Local Authority moderators, who did a very vigorous and meticulous scrutiny of five children. Our assessments were judged as accurate in all five cases. If they hadn't agreed, they would have started picking more children to look at. Well done to Kirsty O'B, Year 6 teacher.

Year 2 also had Sats and achieved really well. These were mix of data and teacher assessments. There were some Year 2 re-takes.

Year 1 did really well with phonics screening. Only three didn't pass, which shows the phonics programme is working well.

Year 4 had multiplication tests. BJ said the test is hard as it gives only 6 seconds for each of the 25 questions. It will be reported to parents with the end of year reports. (Some re-sat but the style of test does not suit all children).

There will be an assessment week for all of the years, including Year 4, to assess children's progress in early June and pupils' progress will be based on that.

The school took part in a locality moderation at the end of last half term. This was positive and gave a lot of networking opportunities. There were lots of agreements with moderation.

In preparation for Year 6 moderation, a Meadlands teacher came over to help prepare.

There was internal moderation of Reception GLDs (Good Level of Development) and Years 1 to 5.

Pupil progress meetings have been held, which conclude tomorrow, looking at class data, gaps and how to prepare interventions for children next term.

Table of Continuing Professional Development:

The hybrid offer works quite well, as virtual training is more convenient. Internal professional development focused on parts of the SDP. CDP was given by Leaders, owning their subjects. This helps to get them to be ready for Ofsted. Subject areas were scrutinised, in pairs, as having another person enables the opportunity to bounce ideas off each other.

Governor comment: One of the phrases which stuck in my mind is the concept of spotlighting a child in their journey. This is more

achievable in a smaller school. Being able to track individual children rather than looking at groups is powerful. Is that something done exclusively in early years?

BJ: It is quite new, but has potential to go further. It is done quite a lot with SEN children.

OPEL progress in Early Years is looking at a specific age where the development is shown.

Lots of work has been done on cultural capital.

The school is continuing to build on Rosenshine's Principles which will be continued next term.

Teachers are visiting the Big Ideas documents to make sure they are working.

The Teacher Voice is being looked at which will lead into action planning.

Spark Ed projects are being looked at to see if it will be useful for CPD next year.

Staffing:

A confidential discussion took place about recent staff changes and this is in **Confidential Section Two**.

Attendance:

This has been kept at the same level as last year = 95.9%. There are a few offending families with several children. The EWO has been really good this year and is in constant communication with two of the families. There may be attendance contracts drawn up for them next year. The EWO goes in hard but fair. 95.9% is good compared with national figures.

Governor question: Why did last year's Year 5 to Year 6 attendance drop off?

BJ: There were quite a few unauthorised absences and a few illnesses.

Governor comment: Last sentence in SIP's report said that leaders committed to continue to be "relentless". I was really encouraged to hear that.

Governor question: Is there going to be the same EWO next year?

BJ: Yes.

No exclusions.

No racist incidents.

Safeguarding decrease on last year – 4 SPA referrals this term, 2 requests for information.

Monitoring CPOMs- no further safeguarding issues.

Level 2 Safeguarding refresher training course is being held on 4th September, in the afternoon at St. Richard's, with all 3 local schools. Governors are invited. BJ will let governor's know details. **Action.** **BJ**

BJ has put in where the trips link to the curriculum as previously requested as an action.

Maple dancing was run this year by one of the Tas, Jess P. The dancers have performed at Ham Fair and Petersham Horticultural Society and have one more performance to do at the School Fair on Friday.

International Week was successful.

Another Learning Look took place for parents and went well.

Governor comment: Timing is sometimes hard for working parents.

BJ: We do hold it towards the end of the day. And we do offer alternatives if they can't come on the day.

Nursery and Reception have had Stay and Play sessions.

Sports Day took place with Strathmore School as well and was well attended. Lots of competitive parents did the obstacle race.

The Summer fair is being held on Friday. It is also a strike day so a couple of classes will be out.

New Reception parents' Stay and Play was very well attended and Laura B came along as well.

NC has distributed notes on his AfC training on Governance. TL attended as well. NC thinks it is essential training for Governors and they can do it on-line. It was delivered by Helena – who did an excellent job and is very engaging.

	<p>AB requested that Governors copy her in when they book training as the Clerk to the Governors is meant to authorise the training.</p> <p>LA, as a new Governor would be happy to attend any training.</p> <p>BJ: Maths Hub will continue and the school is also trying to secure a place for Toni E, (Year 5 teacher), but demand is high.</p> <p>The school is within the window for an Ofsted inspection now, or in the Autumn term. So, it's crucial for Governors, (teams A and B) to meet and prepare. Ofsted can call up to Wednesday lunchtime each week.</p> <p>SDP will be thoroughly reviewed for the Autumn.</p> <p>Children's views have been gathered across the Summer term in different age groups and backgrounds etc.</p> <p>Working with parents will be completely in place for next year with workshops planned for them.</p> <p>Subject Leaders are preparing for Autumn by gathering staff views.</p> <p>Contextual information: 80 EAL which is 36% (Cantonese top language). 30 FSM (every six). No looked after children. One adopted. Numbers on roll- there are 16 spaces in the school spread across Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 3. BJ: Some families have gone abroad and there are a few coming in. There is another tour next week for potential new families, but there are a dip in numbers. Nursery numbers are up and down as well.</p> <p>SEN: Numbers are 29. The school is losing 2 EHCPs from Year 6, and gaining one in Reception.</p>	<p>All Govs</p> <p>NC, TL, CS and Team B</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Review from Ms Laura Brooks</p> <p>LB reported that she had spent a lot of time this half term on recruitment work. She's really pleased with the appointments.</p>	

She thanked BJ for making her feel so welcome and making her feel part of the community. Laura applied for the job because of BJ, she knows she has big shoes to fill.

LB wants The Russell to be the first choice, for first class education, in Richmond. She is confident she can do it as the Russell is a unique school with a lovely feel.

LB now needs the data next week which will feed into the development plan. She wants Early Years to be even better. Ofsted is due so it is not a time for big changes, but a time to finesse so that everyone is clear with the vision, curriculum intent and outcomes.

LB will look at the development of under-fives. She will revisit maths and writing as, with new staff on board, they need to be clear.

As the school has bought into the Spark Ed writing project, LB wants to get teachers on board.

LB knows the financial situation is precarious and to keep numbers up there is a need to get the message out about the Nursery.

It was lovely to see the Horticultural show being hosted at the Russell which helped to put the school on the map.

LB plans to do storytime by the Russell school at some of the soft play areas. She plans to run stay and play sessions for the younger community. She will explore other strategies to promote the school.

Governor question: In terms of Headteachers report, does it feel the right level of detail?

LB: I would want to be challenged and questioned even more. Ofsted are going to challenge.

LB is excited about her new role.

Governor question: As a working parent, liaising with other parents about which camps their children go into the summer, a camp at The Russell would be useful.

BJ: There have been a number of discussions but there won't be one in place for the summer.

Governor question: Have you had conversations between you about BJ letting go and letting Laura take the rein? Has LB thought about what you would really like to achieve in the first term regarding setting

	<p>your stall out and visibility. How could be BJ help with that? Has there been a senior level conversation about BJ continuing to so some things to support LB?</p> <p>LB: BJ has a deep knowledge of the school and LB is reliant on her. Plans have been made together for inset day. Fortunately there is no requirement for quick change and crisis management.</p> <p>Governor comment: BJ has done an amazing job getting us through.</p>	
9	<p>AfC School Place Planning Meeting – Discussion Paper</p> <p>A confidential discussion took place about future plans for schools in the area in light of numbers on roll, future local housing developments in Ham and sharing resources with other local schools. The housing development is likely to bring in higher numbers but not until 2027- 31.</p>	
10	<p>Curriculum Committee Update:</p> <p>CS met today with NC and reported that it was interesting to have an understanding of how the curriculum flows throughout the years. Early Years is where most of the effort needs to go.</p> <p>When walking through school, it was possible to see the way staff manage behaviour. Everyone was happy at play in the nursery. Looking at books shows the projects and what the children know at the beginning and the end. This could be something that could be built on as it shows the impact and where there are gaps. CS to put a report together. Action</p> <p>Walking around brings the Headteacher's Report to life. In one of the books was the question: "What did you feel about this topic?" The child can say what they feel.</p> <p>Governor comment: Most of the meetings of CC should be Governors walking around and triangulating evidence, incremental innovation.</p>	CS
11	<p>Resources Update:</p> <p>A confidential discussion took place about school finances. This is in Confidential Section Two.</p>	

<p>12</p>	<p>NG Skills Assessment</p> <p>NC: First set of questions. NC has put ticks in number 5 for everyone to show Governors want to do it.</p>	
<p>13</p>	<p>Confidential Section:</p> <p>Headteacher's Report on Complaints and Exclusions (Reports on Parental Complaints, Pupil Exclusions, or any other Confidential Matter)</p> <p>None reported.</p> <p>Headteacher's report on Racist Incidents (Governing Body to agree any action deemed necessary)</p> <p>None reported.</p>	
<p>14</p>	<p>Any other Business:</p> <p>NC There will be an informal tea and cake meeting at the beginning of term.</p> <p>The date of the first formal meeting in the Autumn term to be confirmed. (LB would prefer another day rather than Mondays due to a prior commitment).</p> <p>NC to write a piece for the final school newsletter.</p> <p>NC gave a big thank you to BJ for the fantastic job she has done. Her love for the school is palpable. She has carried the school despite all the challenges she faced this year. Governors are looking forward to her new partnership with LB and it is clear that they are already working well together. NC said that he was very proud of BJ and how much she has achieved and grown. CS also commented on the phenomenal job BJ has done.</p> <p>BJ thanked Governors for their help and also for the flowers.</p> <p>A special thanks was also made to Jane Y for staying on an extra year to support BJ.</p>	<p>NC</p>

The Russell School

Update on Matters Arising from the Governing Body meeting held on

Monday 3 July 2023

	Matter Arising	Date raised	Responsibility	Due	Update
1	Ofsted Inspection Governor Team	22/05/23	NC, TL and CS	08/11/23	To meet to put together responses to questions in SIP's presentation and take 3 questions each. Plan to get together before September to come up with key messages. NC to arrange meeting.
2	Advertising Nursery vacancies	22/05/23	LB	08/11/23	See appendix 1 for notes of discussion.
3	CC Committee	22/05/23	TL and CS	08/11/23	To arrange meeting with Heather C.
4	Feedback from new teachers – why they chose The Russell	03/07/23	BJ	08/11/23	To seek feedback and inform Governors.
5	Monitor well being and progress of PPG and EAL children	03/07/23	All Govs	08/11/23	To look at Autumn term data analysis.
6	Governors to be invited to attend safeguarding refresher training at St Richards on 4th September	03/07/23	BJ	08/11/23	BJ to let Governors know the time of the training.
7	Training requests for AfC	03/07/23	All Govs	08/11/23	To inform clerk of training requests and she will book Governors in.
8	Curriculum committee to put together a report following learning walk	03/07/23	CS	08/11/23	CS to report.

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____

Next Full Governors Meeting date: Wednesday 08 November 2023 at 7.00pm

Appendix 1: Update on item 2 of Matters Arising – Advertising Nursery Vacancies

A discussion took place about how to promote and extend the numbers in the nursery as this ultimately affects the numbers on roll, with higher numbers feeding into the school and allowing a smooth transition into the school for children.

Flyers could be sent amongst locals.

The Flower Show was here and that brought a few new faces into the school grounds.

Looked at extending childcare with the existing after school club, but Active Club were not willing to do.

LA: Louisa's school do wrap-around with 7.30 breakfast and pick up as late as 6.00 to 6.30pm. There are arrangements in place with private nurseries locally. The funding gets shifted over.

The issue at The Russell is the 3.15 finish. There is a need for wrap-around childcare. It may be that the school should be finding a way to meet the need, but it needs to be properly resourced.

The school does have wrap-around Breakfast Club and offers afternoon nursery until 3.15pm. The school did approach Sudbrook Nursery but they were not interested as they don't need our children. Active club would need to have extra staff and the ratio is different for younger ones. Staff would also need extra training.

LB: If the school operated an extended nursery, it would have to have a teacher. However, if it operated as a private enterprise, it could be a Governor-run nursery which would not need a teacher. There is a demand, it's just the staffing of it.

NC: A model or exemplar is needed to see how the business plan works.

LB: We could find them locally, there are enough schools we could ask.

We have the advantage of facilities and parking and a bus route outside.

CS: It would be incredibly positive for working parents who need childcare.

Another way of making it more attractive would be if it starts for even younger age group. Some people who want to go back to work, don't know how to move a two year-old from established friendships.

LB: It could grow, so the nursery could even take in babies.

BJ: It would involve looking at the school's infrastructure as it is not set up for this.

BM: Issues are that London has falling birth rates, so the market is decreasing and there is a surfeit of nurseries, and competition is fierce. There is also the issue of training, as nurseries are Ofsted inspected. Unfortunately wages have been kept low and there is the issue of the quality of the level of care - traditionally it has attracted young women who tend to be less involved. Parents realise they are not engaged with children as well. The questions are how will it be managed, how many steps are needed?

NC: The starting point is with exemplars. What are people doing already? They have dealt with some of the risks already and we should definitely explore it.

BM: It may be worth having a word with the German school.

CS will ask in Hounslow.

To be kept it as a standing item on the agenda.