

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

The Russell School
 Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on
 Monday 4 July 2022

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

LA - 1	PARENTS - 1	CO-OPTED - 5	STAFF 2
	Mr Adam Curtis (AC)	Mr Neil Cutting (NC)	Mrs. Samantha Leir (SL) Head Teacher
	Ms Claire Smith (CS)	Mr Tom LLOYD (TL)	Miss Rebecca James (BJ)
		Mr. Brian Miller (BM)	
		Mr. Rob Woolner (RW)	

bold = absent

Apologies: Rob Woolner

Clerk: Amanda Bungey

1	Welcome and Apologies for absence: The Chair welcomed Governors to the final meeting of the FGB for 2021- 22.	Actions:
2	Declarations of interest: No declarations of interest were declared.	
3	Previous minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate record and the Chair signed them.	
4	Matters arising: The Strathmore old school building has been an issue. There have been incidents of youths being rude to the children and swearing at them during PE lessons. Then on Wednesday there was a fire. The fire brigdage cut a hole through the fence to get to the hydrant. SL emailed Penny Frost, Charis Penfold and Sam Price and copied in the Fire Brigade. The Council went through everything again and agreed to re-hear the building with aluminium hoarding and also replace the fence panel. It has now been moved up the demolition list. Surveyors came in today. Since then more debris has been thrown over the fence which the caretaker had to clear up so Sam will continue to send emails and photos as the site needs to be cleared of debris that can be thrown over. SL to send out a message to update parents that the school is working with the Council to get the problem resolved and that the caretaker is checking the perimeter every day.	SL

	<p>SL to ask for assurance in writing that the demolition will happen next term and ask how it will be done, as there is likely to be asbestos in the building. AC will try to track down Neil Caswell, senior Borough Commander in Fire Brigade and NC to contact Rob Davies, Group Commander.</p> <p>See update on other matters arising from the FGB meeting on 23 May 2022 at the end of the minutes.</p>	<p>SL</p> <p>AC and NC</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Headteacher's Report:</p> <p>The Quality of Education: SL has produced a detailed, eleven page Headteacher's report. She ran through the key points: Despite the disruption of Covid, it's been a full year of monitoring teaching and learning and learning walks have taken place. All outcomes feed into the School Improvement Plan. Nothing concerning has come up and there has been lots of good practice to take forward. There are just some tweaks to do to complete the SIP. Timetables will be fully reviewed tomorrow and all staffing. The feeling is that Focused Teaching Time is better for the children. There has been good progress with children involved in these groups, particularly in Years 2, 3, 4, and 5. Years 6 and year 1 needed them less. The most impact has been with these groups of children who had the most gaps due to Covid. Focused Teaching Time has also had supported the self esteem of some children. The SENCOs did interviews with the SEN and EHCP pupils and they said that they do not see themselves as different, as they are not the only ones getting support in groups. Governor comment: My own child is benefiting and started to enjoy reading books, and has now become top of the progress charts, thanks to the school's intervention. Governor question: Are we aware of any other schools doing this so that we can benchmark? SL has not heard of any other other schools doing this. Governor question: What are the things to watch out for if we'd like to maintain this? SL: Regularity remains important and for all children have access to adult support. It is important for children who need extra and above so that they are getting what they need for their EHCPs. It's not an easy thing to do and it's easy to slip out of. It's a challenge but the rewards are there. Children not getting targeted interventions have to be doing purposeful and engaging activities, while the Teachers and TAs are occupied. For example this could be mental maths, reading comprehension, etc. The school needs to run the Focused Teaching Time for another year to assess the full impact. Governor comment: The Governing Body would like to convey support for the Focus Teaching Time to continue. SL: Next year, Learning Walks for Governors could look at Focused Teaching Time. BJ to let TL and NC know dates where this will be possible.</p>	<p>BJ</p>

<p>SL: The CCC committee did not get going this year. The Spring meeting of the CCC committee would be a good time for Governors to share these observations. Statutory assessments have taken place this term and the results of assessments have been moderated.</p> <p>CPD has been very thorough this term. Some of the staff have led some training. Full details about staffing is included in the report. The Governors will need to monitor this from September.</p> <p>Pupil progress has been very pleasing. Staff have worked hard to cover gaps and also to cover the curriculum.</p> <p>Governor question: Tell us more about the assessment of foundation subjects.</p> <p>SL: It was felt that this was superficial and not useful. The aim is to find a way to make it more useful. The Big Ideas concepts will be used to refine assessment practices next year, for all foundation subjects. Each class Teacher will be given a clear set of objectives which will state, "by the end of the year all children will be able to..." These objectives will be achievable, measurable and clear for Teachers. SL to do this during the summer.</p> <p>Governor question: Tell us more about the CPD area under Leadership "Using a coaching approach."</p> <p>BJ: The coaching project was started with Emma Smith before Covid. The last session was on Parents. There will also be sessions on Senior Leaders and working with Governors. BJ attended sessions on accountability and feeding solution-focused information through to stakeholders.</p> <p>SL: A full review of School Improvement Plan is taking place. When this is done the governors will receive a copy.</p> <p>Governor question: It looks as if some promising appointments have been made?</p> <p>SL: Alex, a male sports coach has been appointed. Emma A tried to promote giving girls equal access to sporting opportunities, so hopefully this will continue. Carry H is an interesting appointment and she will come in next week to meet the children. She's very hands-on. She will probably go to Year 4. She did a really good lesson at interview.</p> <p>Julia M has been appointed to SLT. There were two other candidates, Tony E and Nix M and all have different experience. SL was very proud of how well they did. They did an activity together and presented it individually. Julia performed extremely well. Jane Y is going to retire at some stage but she's staying to support BJ and will increase her hours. There will be other opportunities in SLT when Jane does retire.</p> <p>Governor question: There has been an expectation around the opportunities we offer through maths hub, how will the school proceed?</p> <p>SL: We will drop out of leading maths hub but will drop into being part of a work group. Whoever the maths lead is, will participate.</p> <p>Behaviour and Attitudes:</p> <p>SL: Attendance is not as healthy as usual because of all the Covid absences, but it should be 96% by the end of the academic year. It was 94% when SL became Head. It is the same offenders every time who take holidays in the middle of term, or at the end or beginning of term. There will be a few strongly-worded comments in the End of Year Reports. SL is also considering bringing in fining</p>	<p>SL</p> <p>SL</p>
---	---------------------

<p>before she goes. The Fining protocol was written by the Local Authority before Covid. It not been used by the Russell, although several schools are using it.</p> <p>Governor comment: We would not want to get into direct conflict with parents.</p> <p>SL: Attendance is a constant priority for the school and it needs to aim for 97% attendance.</p> <p>Safeguarding:</p> <p>There are a few more complex cases at the moment. One child had a Need Plan and a Family Support Worker and that case has just closed. One child is moving towards a Child Protection Plan.</p> <p>Governor comment: Difficult break-ups can cause problems for children outside school.</p> <p>SL: Governors should prioritise the 1st of September for Prevent training with staff. This is a reminder to Governors.</p> <p>Personal Development:</p> <p>SL: Things have been getting back to normal and people have been out and about. There had been maypole dancing, singing and music events, trips, stay-and-play visits from parents, family picnics and Sports Day. This was lovely with Strathmore children being involved and the Russell children really liked having Strathmore children in their teams.</p> <p>A beautiful bench has been put in the school grounds for one of the Strathmore children who sadly passed away. It is custom-made. Work has also taken place in the Wildlife Area to create a wildlife meadow to commemorate this child.</p> <p>Governor question: How has the maypole dancing been going?</p> <p>SL: The maple dancers performed at Ham Fair, the School Fete on Friday, and they will be dancing at Petersham Fete next Saturday afternoon.</p> <p>Governor question: What is the feedback from Year 6 on the Isle of Wight trip?</p> <p>SL: The children had a fantastic time. The new centre was excellent and it is a massive site. The food was good and the accommodation. The staff were fantastic. The children did foraging, fire building, prepared and cooked lunch, learnt first aid, and did tree identification. They made water filters from gravel and sand. They went dinghy sailing for the first time and double kayaking. There were visits to Osborne House and Robin Hill. This year Year 6 behaved really well and slept really well.</p> <p>The Thames Young Mariner's package for Year 4 has been extended to the next morning and involves single kayaking and long boarding. Year 3 will be going to Walton Firs. Year 5 to Sayers Croft to do climbing and bouldering.</p> <p>Governor comment: Doing adventurous activities in a safe environment is very important.</p> <p>Leadership and Management:</p> <p>SL: The report includes BM's diary note about his SIP review visit with Jane Y. It also includes NC's notes on the Director's Briefing.</p> <p>There is also a note about Ofsted and it is highly likely the school will receive an inspection in the next year. Therefore it is important for Governors to get booked onto the LA Ofsted training on the Inspection Framework in the Autumn term.</p>	<p>AC, BM, CS, NC, RW, TL</p> <p>AC, BM, CS, NC, RW, TL</p>
--	---

	<p>SL: If there are any actions on the SIP report, these will need to be picked up in the Autumn Governor's meeting.</p> <p>Governor question: With regards to working with parents training, is there any more we can do to get parents involved?</p> <p>SL: It's just not happened because of Covid. Now the school is free to invite parents in and will need to re-build the connection.</p> <p>Governor question: Are there any champions amongst parents who are confident?</p> <p>Governor comment: parents talk to each other. Anonymous parent's tips might be useful to share.</p> <p>SL: There is also Being a Better Parent training we can tap into.</p> <p>Governor comment: We could include in the Newsletter anything Teachers could pick up (at Parents Evenings) to be shared as anonymised tips.</p> <p>Contextual school information:</p> <p>SL: EAL is increasing. Also numbers on roll is increasing. Currently there are two spaces in Reception. One in Year 1, Year 3 have six, (a year where there was a dip in birth rate) and no waiting list. Nursery is looking similar to last year. The position looks better than the Autumn term when there were twenty seven spaces. Now there are only thirteen.</p> <p>Governor question: How are the Ukrainian families settling in?</p> <p>SL: One child has settled in very well, a little girl. Another little boy has no English and has never been to school. He is not really ready for Year 1, so we may persuade his parents to keep the child in Reception for an extra year. There are more Ukrainian families coming into the borough. The main influx, however, has been families from Hong Kong. Their English is generally better.</p> <p>SEN is increasing. There is a difficult group in the Nursery going up to Reception. One child will be kept in Nursery for one more year.</p> <p>There are several flags for EHCPs. There are two more EHCPs making seven now and another two going through. There is no more money to provide the support. We can do preparation but there is no funding. Kingston and Richmond schools are struggling to meet the needs of these children.</p>	BJ
6	<p>HT Recruitment Update:</p> <p>SL: SL has been working with the SIP Emma Smith, to find a local Headteacher to support BJ. Emma came forward with potential candidates. One stood out who SL has worked with and who she feels is similar to her. Her name is Rachel Nye from Tolworth Infants and Juniors. She has lots of SEN experience and is from a bigger school so she can help with strategic issues. Contact has been made and she's prepared to provide support on one day a week. She is also very flexible and would adjust hours and adapt to whatever BJ needs. Sam and Rachel have met and BJ will meet with Rachel tomorrow. Pay scales will need to be confirmed so that the pay scales for everyone can be worked out. SL has made a plan which BJ and SL will go through tomorrow.</p> <p>NC will need to make contact with the Chair of the Governing body at Tolworth Infants and Juniors to formalise the arrangement.</p> <p>Governor question: BJ, how are you feeling about the prospect?</p> <p>BJ: She has been too busy with recruitment in recent weeks to think about it.</p>	NC

<p>7</p>	<p>Resources Update: BM sent an email to the Governors explaining minor adjustments to the budget and it went in on time. BM told the Governors that the Secretary of State had made two statements recently, the first promised a 9% salary increase for Teachers. The second corrected it to 5%, though this has not yet been confirmed. In any school, the salary bill is 80% to 83% of the budget. The Russell has built in a pay rise of 3%. Therefore if it is higher, this means the budget is fragile and will be difficult. The government have not yet announced the level of support for energy supplies yet. Governor question: Is there an action for the Resources Committee to monitor consumption and bills for energy? Governors agreed that this should be minuted.</p>	<p>BM</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Structure and Governance: BM and NC have discussed academisation. BM put forward some good points regarding the Headteacher's recruitment. BM talked to contacts in the council. The message coming down is that the school should think about maybe, being a one form entry school, to look at the Soft Federation option. It might be good to contact a school to talk through a successful Soft Federation, at Business Manager level. The schools Hampton Hill and Carlisle have done it very well. SL to ask Rebecca O'S to have a conversation about Soft Federation and gather data for the Governing Body. SL said there are not many federated schools, though one example is Hampton Infants and Hampton Juniors. She added that the Russell could potentially federate with Meadlands and The Vineyard. BM: This is coming down the line from the DfE in the White Paper but it may be better not to be forced into something but to be ahead of it. The process takes two to three years. The Governors had already investigated opportunities with Every Child Every Day Academy Trust. SL: Safeguarding has been taken over by Sophie McGeoch who has attachment and trauma expertise. It might be useful to talk to her about academies. There's a lot more information that will come through from the Heads Forum via BJ in the future. Governor comment: There are no real economies of scale to be had by joining with other schools but better to jump before we are pushed. Governor comment: We need to consider the options after we get the data.</p> <p>DM has resigned and CB has retired so the Governing Body needs to recruit more Governors. NC to contact the local Vicar's husband who is an ex- Teacher. NC also to contact Angela Langford for other potential Governors. There will be a need for another Staff Governor and this would have to be offered to all staff. They could also be another Parent Governor. The Constitution allows for ten.</p>	<p>SL SL NC NC</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Health, Safety and Wellbeing The old Strathmore school building has been covered in Matters Arising.</p>	

	<p>There are a few health and safety niggles on-going with the Local Authority which will be going through the Resources Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water testing. • Gates. • The lift. Parts are not available and it beeps all the time. <p>Rebecca O'S is following these things up. Apart from TMVs, the school is statutory compliant.</p>	
10	<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>	
11	<p>Any other Business:</p> <p>No any other business.</p>	
12	<p>Close and tributes to Sam Leir:</p> <p>NC invited Governors to say a few words as this is the final Governor's meeting that Sam will be attending and is therefore a momentous occasion.</p> <p>BM: Sam and Brian started when Sam was a NQT in 1994 and the life in school then bears little resemblance to the life in school today. She is rated in his top ranking of two, having known four Headteachers in this time.</p> <p>AC: Sam deals so well with parents. His own sons always seem to have had the right teacher who is just right for them. Sam understands her customers and her team. For Adam and his wife, their children are their world, nothing compares, and the support his children have received from Sam has been exemplary.</p> <p>TL: The first time Tom walked into the school with his wife, he was worried that they might not agree but fortunately they both loved it. He praised Sam for the fact that she knows every child's name and is always open to answering questions. His twins had the best possible, happiest primary school years; both for their education and socialisation.</p> <p>CS: When we first came here we walked around the school on a tour. One of the parents kept asking about Tiffin School entrance and Sam's response was that this was an all-rounded school. Claire's own boys have had some challenges and difficulties but they have been very happy here. Sam's legacy will flourish and go forward. She will be hugely missed. They are big clogs to fill.</p>	

NC: Neil wanted to give testimony to Sam's leadership. Sam has built a sense of distributed leadership; she has not idealised being a leader. Sam has pushed herself incredibly hard to be a fantastic leader. And she is so ready to share it. He said he will reflect on this time as "the Sam Leir years." Sam has made an impact on so many young lives. She picked up that there was something about The Russell that was special. Sam has lived through a difficult time and managed to help The Russell as a school, with all its history, to find itself again. The new building added to the difficulties and she managed the new build process with poise and strength. She will be deeply missed.

SL: Sam said that the Governors had been a fantastic group to work with, with the right balance of hands on, hands off; involved and interested, wanting to the school to be the best. In order to do that it has to be allowed. Sam and the Governing body have grown together. The Governors know the school well which will stand it in good stead. The school is really lucky to have this group of Governors. Sam will really miss the children, staff and Governors. She said it had been an absolute joy.

NC: The last thing to say thank you to Sam for is finishing strong. All of the Governors and BJ are very glad Sam has not taken her foot off the gas.

The Russell School

Update on Matters Arising from the Governing Body meeting held on

Monday 4 July 2022

	Matter Arising	Date raised	Responsibility	Due	Update
1	The dangers posed by the derelict Strathmore building have not been resolved.	04/07/22	SL AC and NC	04/07/22	SL to send out a message to update parents that the school is working with the Council to get the problem resolved and that the caretaker is checking the perimeter every day. SL to ask for assurance in writing that the demolition will happen next term and ask how it will be done, as there is likely to be asbestos in the building. AC and NC to track down senior Commanders at the Fire Brigade to put pressure on resolving the situation.

2	Safeguarding training.	04/07/22	BM	Autumn term	BM to do the one hour on-line training. CS has booked on.
3	Safeguarding audit.	04/07/22	SL and NC	Next FGB meeting	This is ongoing and SL will produce an action plan. NC to follow up next year. The Safeguarding Audit must be included in the papers for the first FGB meeting in the Autumn term.
4	Governors to meet with link teachers. BJ to let NC and TL have dates when they could observe some Focused Teaching Time sessions in practice for the CCC Committee.	04/07/22	NC and BJ	New academic year	Meetings for the 3 SIP areas to be postponed to new academic year. NC to monitor.
5	Governors discussed how to honour CB as a retired long standing Governor.	04/07/22	SL and BJ	This term	SL has bought a cup to be given as a prize in her honour and CB will be invited in for tea with SL and BJ.
6	Governors to attend Prevent Training on 1 st September and Ofsted training in Autumn term.	04/07/22	All Governors	Autumn term	
7	SL to complete clear set of objectives for each subject area which are achievable and measurable. SL to do this during the summer.	04/07/22	SL	Autumn term	
8	SL to complete the review of the School Improvement Plan and send to Governors.	04/07/22	SL	Autumn term	

9	Include in the Newsletter anything Teachers could pick up (at Parents Evenings) to be shared as anonymised parenting tips.	04/07/22	BJ	Autumn term	
10	NC to write to Chair of Governors of Tolworth Infants and Juniors to formalise the support plan for BJ next term.	04/07/22	NC	This term	
11	Energy consumption and bills to be monitored through the Resources Committee.	04/07/22	BM	Autumn term	
12	SL to ask R O'S to talk to Hampton Hill and Carlisle about how the Soft Federation works at their schools and report back.	04/07/22	SL	Autumn term	
13	Recruitment of new Governors. NC to contact Angela Langford and the husband of the local vicar.	04/07/22	NC	This term	

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____

Next Full Governors Meeting date: Monday 21st November time 7.00pm