

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

**The Russell School
Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on
Monday 21 November 2022**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

| LA - 1 | PARENTS - 1 | CO-OPTED - 5 | STAFF 2 |
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| Mr. Rob Woolner (RW) | Mr Adam Curtis (AC) | Mr Neil Cutting (NC) | Miss Rebecca James (BJ) Acting Headteacher |
| | Ms Claire Smith (CS) | Mr Tom LLOYD (TL) | |
| | | Mr. Brian Miller (BM) | |
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bold = absent

Apologies: none

Clerk: Amanda Bungey

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| 1 | <p>Welcome and Apologies for absence:</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Governors to the first meeting of the FGB for 2022-23. AC was welcomed and thanked for helping by joining the meetings remotely, until Governor numbers are able to be increased.</p> | Actions: |
| 2 | <p>Declarations of interest:</p> <p>No declarations of interest were declared.</p> | |
| 3 | <p>Previous minutes:</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July were accepted as a true and accurate record and the Chair signed them. An amendment has been made to show that RW is the LA Governor.</p> | |
| 4 | <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>See update on other matters arising from the FGB meeting on 21 November 2022 at the end of the minutes.</p> <p>The following items were closed: Item 1. Derelict Strathmore building. This can be closed as the site has been made more secure. BJ still having talks about fences. There is some talk about fencing the car park off as well soon. There is no news on the development of the SEN School. No recent incidents. Probably the cold</p> | |

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| | <p>season is keeping the youth away. There are some cameras which deter youth from entering. Closed.</p> <p>Item 2. Safeguarding training BM and CS have done this. Closed.</p> <p>Item 5. Carole B is going through the archives with Jane Y. Closed.</p> <p>Item 6. Prevent training. TL and BM attended. Feedback was to look for alternative provision as not pitched for primary school. This was fed back to AfC. Closed.</p> <p>Item 7. SL has completed clear set of objectives for each subject area during summer. Closed.</p> <p>Item 8. SL completed review of the School Improvement Plan. It is in the Headteacher's report. Closed.</p> <p>Item 10. NC has written to the Chair of Governors of Tolworth Infants and Junior school to formalise the support plan. Closed.</p> | |
| <p>5</p> | <p>Headteacher's Report:</p> <p>BJ has produced a detailed, 14 page Headteacher's report. NC congratulated BJ for an excellent and informative report. BJ ran through the key points:</p> <p>The Quality of Education:</p> <p>BJ: Observations of teaching and focus teaching sessions are on-going. Rachel N is coming in on Wednesday to do some with BJ. Book Looks by subject leaders are taking place. Talking points within CPD about the classroom environment are listed. Work scrutinies have been completed by SLT and in the Spring these will feed into the next report to the Governors. SLT have looked at data in the Autumn and Summer term to help plan for next steps in learning. The Headteacher's report shows data from a report compiled by the Borough. Early Years were at the lower end, and lots of work is going into this. It is hard to get the level of writing expected, as the level required is high.</p> <p>Governor comment: It often depends on the cohort. If there are a lot of children with summer birthdays, it is not possible to achieve.</p> <p>Governor question: Is that normal compared to previous years?</p> <p>BJ: It is normal. The school is putting a lot of effort into it and phonics screening hopefully won't be affected.</p> <p>Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 data is good.</p> <p>Governor question: How did the Russell schools results compare with other schools in the Borough?</p> <p>BJ: The Russell is second in the whole of Richmond and Kingston for reading and writing. Our data is posted on the school's website. This achievement has been celebrated with staff as they have done so well.</p> <p>Governor question: Can we "value-add" what the school has bought to this cohort?</p> <p>BJ: It is hard to judge because we lose children during the year. There are half of the children still with the school who started with in the Early Years and the school does track children that have been with the school from the beginning.</p> <p>Governor comment: Anecdotally there is clear evidence that their education experience and what they gain is as we hoped.</p> | |

Governor comment: Value-add is always the best measure with this particular post-COVID cohort who have had disrupted education. What speaks volumes is that the Russell score is coming up second in the Borough and this is important testament to the school's achievement and the great nurturing and caring environment provided by the school.

Governor question: The boys levels are lower. Is this normal?

BJ: Quite normal, girls mature earlier. Boys are developmentally less ready. This levels out later on.

Governor comment: I suggest we send out good news to parents in the newsletter with an honest yet humble assessment of the very positive educational environment. Let's celebrate what has been achieved. It is never easy as a one-form entry school to demonstrate data like this.

BJ: A lot of work is being done with Year 1's and COVID tuition funding received is being used for this. Susannah R-D has been doing the tuition. The Reception baseline is looking quite promising at the moment. This has formed part of the Acting Headteacher's appraisal targets. The school has been nominated by Richmond Music Trust to be a "Music Mark" school because of what Liz T does for the school, to support access to music for all children. Some children sang at the Bentall's Centre today. Liz T has managed to secure PUC funding for inclusive music opportunities. The Music Tech teacher is doing rock bands and music technology with Key Stage Two children.

Governor comment: The governors would like to convey deep appreciation and thanks for all the hard work that Liz does. Could we provide Liz Thomas with some meaningful recognition?

BJ and NC to discuss. **Action.**

There is a list of CPD and staff have been doing quite a lot, carrying on with the Pedagogy focus. It is important for subject leaders to feel confident now that the school is in the Ofsted window. School is making good use of AfC training support at the moment.

Staff: Lauren O is leaving in January to have twins so there is a need to consider her replacement, cover-wise and financially. **Action.**

BJ

Debbie G has been off since 3rd October as she broke her foot. BJ has restructured lunches but there are high demands on SLT time who have to cover lunch duties. One of the parents is helping to cover voluntarily and has asked if there are any job opportunities.

Governor comment: This may be an opportunity to offer apprenticeship training. **Action.**

BJ

Carrie H started as Year 4 teacher. She is leading on French and outdoor learning. She has vast knowledge of forest schooling. She has settled in well and BJ will observe her next week.

Alex C has started three days a week in a sports role. He needs support from Susannah R-D, as he has not worked with younger ones before. He is very engaged and willing to learn.

There are some strategic actions for the school:

- Observations of teaching, learning and learning environments.
- Tailoring CPD rota for spring term analysis of data.
- Always monitoring workload.
- Induction ongoing for all those new to their roles.

Actions for governors include:

- To set dates for spring term to look at for focus teaching sessions.

Governor comment: NC and TL leading on that part of the SIP and dates for them to visit in spring term needs to be set. It should be timed to be part of the SIP review.

- Ensuring outcomes of Teaching and Learning observations.

Behaviour and Attitudes:

BJ: the school is continuing “Marvellous Mondays”, (Year 1 to Year 6). Bingo balls are used on Mondays in assembly and whoever's number is picked comes to see BJ to show their work and talk about their attitude to learning.

Attendance has improved. However, lots of children are ill in Reception at the moment. BJ has spoken to the EWO with regard to certain families.

There are still have some families taking children out to go to see family members who they haven't seen for years due to COVID. The school has chosen not to introduce fines as no primary schools in the Local Authority are using fines.

Governor comment: Attendance looks very positive. Thanks to BJ.

No exclusions.

No racist incidents.

No children on full Child Protection Plan.

Just one child on a Child In Need plan.

Two requests for information

Two SPA referrals completed.

Governor question: How the Ukrainian families doing?

BJ: One family has gone back to Ukraine. The child had been kept back in Reception as he was struggling and the family had not settled well. The other Ukranian children have both settled very well.

Safeguarding:

There have been a few changes to the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document. These have been added to the Safeguarding policy.

There are no major changes for primary schools.

Actions needed are for Governors to monitor racist behaviour and safeguarding for the school.

Personal Development and community links:

The AGM for the PTA has taken place and they have appointed a joint Chair, Vice Chair, joint Treasurers and a small team. They are really proactive. Kath R and Christina S are joint Chair. Nadine C is doing lots of things - she has organised a Christmas fair and a massive raffle with amazing prizes and had a Christmas tree donated to the school. There has also been Christmas card-making which makes money for the school. The PTA are doing a good job at fund-raising.

There is a list of trips that have taken place.

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| | <p>The Year 6 trip to Lavender Hill Court did not happen at the last minute due to health and safety reasons, because the fire alarms were not working.</p> <p>Sayers Croft took place last week and all came back tired, happy and muddy. Jane Y, Toni E, Dani P went and BJ visited.</p> <p>Engaging parents is ongoing. There were home visits for Nursery and Reception children. There was a welcome event in September and this was well-attended. Children showed their parents around their classrooms. More parents were engaged in the Autumn term during parent's evening, one-to-one and virtual. There were a few technical problems with the virtual meetings. There are more parents helpers in classrooms now. There are plans to hold some low key coffee mornings for ex-Hong Kong parents who are new to the school as they have a different system of education.</p> <p>Leadership and Management:</p> <p>SLT have done an overhaul, so the collective targets are related to the SIP.</p> <p>Support Staff appraisals will be completed during the Spring term.</p> <p>It was agreed that all staff eligible will progress to relevant next point of pay scale.</p> <p>Training for governors: Ofsted training would be advisable.</p> <p>Rachel N, the Head of Tolworth Infants and Juniors has been coming in and helping BJ. She was doing one day a week and has cut it down to half a day. She has been really supportive and a good fit for the school and for BJ.</p> <p>Governor comment: NC to give Rachel a call and thank her for her contribution. He will ask her for her insights. Action.</p> <p>BJ met with Emma S and talked about BJ's role and the SIP. She is in this week to talk to subject leaders for music and history.</p> <p>Peters C (Lead Advisor for Internet safety) held a meeting which had a good turnout for Year 5 and 6 parents.</p> <p>Governor question: Any thoughts about how to build on the success of that event?</p> <p>BJ: IT safety features in lessons. Peter was pleased with how much they already knew. He will be happy to run another more general one with parents (using AfC credits). He's very knowledgeable. BJ has given out QR codes to parents on parentmail.</p> <p>Governor comment: Knowledge of what children can see on WhatsApp and social media is good preparation for secondary school. Training could be online so that the turnout is better. Action.</p> <p>Helena M (Advisor for the Borough) has done Questioning Training and will be doing work in inset day in January to focus on subjects.</p> <p>A maths teacher from St. James's school has supported Julia M. (She has taken over Maths Lead from Adam C). He was very happy with what we are doing. Julia is well on the way with next steps and is attending the maths hub.</p> <p>The school is in the three to five year window for Ofsted inspection and needs to think about training for Governors.</p> | <p>NC</p> <p>BJ (next year)</p> |
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| | <p>School Improvement Plan: The SIP is detailed further on in the Headteacher's Report. All action plans are underway and are being reviewed continually. SLT are constantly adding to this working document.</p> <p>Contextual school information: BJ: Of the 29 languages in the school, Cantonese is now the second most common language. Similar numbers are having FSMs. One adopted child. Numbers on roll are slightly higher than last year. There have been some in-year joiners. 21 children are receiving SEN support. There are 5 EHCPs</p> <p>Governor comment: From having done the new Inspection Framework training, there is a lot of important information included. It is important to know the language of the new Inspection Framework. How children learn is a strong focus for inspectors. There is a lot of good in the framework and we need to tap into the concepts Ofsted is promoting. Three concepts - progress, cultural capital and learning are important for inspectors.</p> <p>Governor question: What do we mean by TLA's time being used effectively? BJ: This means that the guidance from teachers is the right guidance. Heather C has been checking on that.</p> <p>Government question: what is the new system for assessing the foundation subjects and science to make data more accessible? BJ: Foundation subjects assessment hasn't worked. BJ has tried to make it easier to use by subject leaders and teachers. It is a new shared colour-coded document. Big Ideas are still used. Key things you want the children to know by the end of their year groups. Assessing that knowledge and skills they have, has been developed. Teachers have received it really well. BJ will monitor it in the next couple of terms.</p> <p>Governors thanked BJ for some really good information in the Headteacher's report, which is very positive.</p> | |
| 6 | <p>Resources Update:</p> <p>The school is still waiting to hear from AfC about the funding. There will be backdated pay rises to factor in. The situation is stable until next financial year. It will be necessary for the Resources Committee to look at all lines of enquiry for resource planning as soon as they have received the information from AfC.</p> | |
| 7 | <p>Communications Update (news media interest):</p> <p>A discussion took place about what should the school's approach be to press enquiries, following a well-meaning letter from a parent to the local MP and the subsequent press interest. Governors agreed that all press</p> | |

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| | <p>enquiries should be directed to the Council's Press Office. All local state schools would agree that they are underfunded but the school would not want to become a mouth-piece for other schools.</p> <p>Governor question: Does the school have a communication procedure?</p> <p>BJ to check. Action.</p> | BJ |
| 8 | <p>Headteachers Recruitment:</p> <p>An updated recruitment pack has been provided by BJ to NC and advertising will proceed to allow plenty of time for applicants to meet the deadline. Candidates will be shortlisted and the recruitment will take place on January 30th.</p> <p>On this occasion, NC and CS will be involved again and TL offered to replace AC.</p> <p>A discussion took place about how a new approach may be required so that the benefits and flexibility of what the school is offering in the role is at the forefront, rather than just what we are expecting from the candidate. The fact that it is a one-form entry school which is community-based and not part of an Academy chain gives the role autonomy, and the opportunity to build direct relationships and participation with the community, which would appeal to some candidates. BJ will consult with Emma S for her suggestions and Governors were encouraged to give their input in the form of specific feedback about the recruitment form in preparation for the recruitment.</p> | BJ All Govs |
| 9 | <p>HT performance management:</p> <p>The Headteachers Performance Management review was successfully run. It was a very positive session with BJ and included Emma S, NC and CS. They identified three key areas in the year ahead. One was to review the Nursery provision and how to do that differently to meet the needs of parents. The nursery intake helps the school with recruitment and with the financial position. It also provides a solid foundation in Early Years so that there is less need for interventions at a later date.</p> <p>Governor comment: Colleagues with young families said that the private sector is becoming increasingly unreliable as they are short-staffed. We could offer stability.</p> <p>BJ has contacted Anita at the Borough who deals with numbers. She has not heard back yet as to what numbers are looking like for Reception.</p> | |
| 10 | <p>Ofsted and the New Education Inspection Framework:</p> <p>NC encouraged Governors to read the papers provided from the training he attended for Ofsted inspections and the new Education Inspection Framework. He encouraged Governors to do the AfC training, if at all possible.</p> | |

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| | It was decided that a team of three Governors should be available in case of inspection, NC, TL and CS (as Parent Governor). BM and RW to be reserve Governors. | |
| 11 | <p>Health Safety and Wellbeing:</p> <p>BJ and RO are sorting out the fire evacuation procedure currently.</p> <p>The fencing at the boundary to the derelict building is an ongoing issue.</p> | BJ/RO |
| 12 | <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:</p> <p>BJ said she feels well- supported in her role as Acting Headteacher.</p> <p>NC said that he took a huge amount of comfort and pride at BJ's appraisal for all the hard work she is doing in the background and how well she has dealt with the situation. A lot of the good work Sam had been doing is being continued. She should be commended.</p> | |

The Russell School

Update on Matters Arising from the Governing Body meeting held on

Monday 21 November July 2022

| | Matter Arising | Date raised | Responsibility | Due | Update |
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| 1 | Safeguarding audit. | 04/07/22 | BJ and NC | Next FGB meeting | This is ongoing and to be included in the papers for the next FGB. |
| 2 | 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 | Current academic year | Meetings for the 3 SIP areas to be arranged. |
| 3 | How to involve parents more. | 04/07/22 | BJ | Ongoing | School to try different approaches with open evenings and open events such as coffee mornings in future. |
| 4 | Energy consumption and bills to be monitored through the Resources Committee. | 04/07/22 | RO/BM | Autumn term and ongoing | |
| 5 | RO'S to talk to Hampton Hill and Carlisle about how the Soft Federation works at their schools and report back. | 04/07/22 | RO | Spring term | RO has done some research on Soft Federation and there are lots of different examples. BJ has notes. RO to report back to Resources committee. |
| 6 | Recruitment of new Governors | 21/11/22 | NC and BJ | | NC still to contact Angela Langford. Need to revisit skills audit taken place previously, and do a skills |

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| | | | | | audit with CS to update list of skills, NC to circulate and governors to update if have any changes. There needs to be an election for Parent Governor. |
| 6 | How to provide Liz Thomas with some meaningful recognition for all she does for the school to promote music. | 21/11/22 | BJ and NC | | |
| 7 | Lauren O is leaving in January to have twins so there is a need to consider her replacement, cover-wise and financially. | 21/11/22 | BJ | | |
| 8 | One of the parents is helping to cover lunches voluntarily and has asked if there are any job opportunities. This may be an opportunity to offer apprenticeship training. | 21/11/22 | BJ | | |
| 8 | NC to give Rachel N a call and thank her for her contribution. He will ask her for her insights. | 21/11/22 | NC | | |
| 9 | BJ to approach Peter C about running a general IT safety session with parents, possibly online. | 21/11/22 | BJ | | |
| 10 | Does the school have a communication procedure? | 21/11/22 | BJ | | |

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____

Next Full Governors Meeting date: Monday 23 January 2023 at 7.00pm