

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

The Russell School  
 Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on  
 Monday 23 May 2022

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

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

**bold = absent**

**Apologies: None received**

**Clerk:** Amanda Bungey

1.	<b>Welcome:</b> The Chair welcomed Governors to the remote meeting of the FGB for 2021- 22.	<b>Actions:</b>
2	<b>Apologies for absence:</b> None received.	
3	<b>Declarations of interest:</b> No declarations of interest were declared.	
4	<b>Previous minutes:</b> There is a minor correction required on Matters Arising, to change the date from November to March. Other than that, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate record and the Chair signed them.	<b>AB</b>
5	<b>Matters arising:</b> See update on the matters arising from the FGB meeting on 28 March 2022 at the end of the minutes.	
6	<b>Headteacher's Report:</b> SL: It is difficult to do an accurate comparison of attendance because of COVID and code changes. A meeting was arranged with the Education Welfare Officer and an attendance level of nearly 96% was excellent in her eyes. However, Governors do need to continue to scrutinise attendance as we move through the Autumn Term.	

<p>EAL has continued to increase with 81 children who have English as a second language, which is 37% of the pupils.</p> <p>The school's first Ukrainian family has been admitted and a second Ukrainian family is starting tomorrow.</p> <p>There have been no exclusions.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the number of children entitled to free school meals.</p> <p>The numbers on roll have increased. Another child is starting in Reception.</p> <p>There are still spaces in Year 3 and Reception, Year 3 because of the low birth rate that year.</p> <p>The school is losing another two children, one to Germany and one to another part of the UK. There is no waiting list.</p> <p>We are still not at capacity in Reception, but the numbers in Nursery are looking positive at 20.</p> <p>There have been no racist incidents.</p> <p>Safeguarding – there have been three CAMHS referrals and one referral to an Education Welfare Officer.</p> <p>There is a central recording system that all members of staff have access to and this alerts BJ, SL and HC to all safeguarding incidents. The system is called CPOMS. It is also used to record behaviour and conversations with parents and all the information is in one place.</p> <p>SEN has increased. There are five EHCPs going through currently, two in the next couple of weeks and two by the end of term. The SENCOs are very busy at the moment.</p> <p><b>Governor question: how is the Ukrainian family settling in?</b></p> <p>SL: The mother's English is quite good and they have settled in well and made friends. Another little boy starts tomorrow with no English at all.</p> <p><b>Governor comment: Governors wish to express our support and empathy for the families and their situation.</b></p> <p>SL: A reading charity called Bookmark have offered a welcome box. SL has ordered five of these and they include books, a tablet and craft materials.</p> <p><b>Governor Comment: peer groups work well.</b></p> <p>SL: The little boy speaks Russian and there are some Russian speakers in school.</p> <p><b>Governor comment: Attendance numbers are steady. Hopefully they are levelling out.</b></p> <p><b>Governor question: Has there been communication to parents about attendance?</b></p> <p>SL: There is a letter ready to go and any parents flagging will get a letter and this will be followed up. Most children's attendance is good. COVID cases have skewed the figures. Nursery children are picking up colds and bugs as they have not seen other children during COVID times.</p> <p>SL: There is a Resources Committee meeting this week. There is a bit of funding available for Ukrainian family support. The prediction made for next year is that we are full. BM to do a diary note after the meeting and will circulate to Governors. Any dip in numbers will affect next year's budget. The outlook on Nursery is at least 20. There is still quite a high level of SEN in Nursery and Reception.</p>	<p>SL</p>
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	<p><b>Governor question: Regarding CAMHS, in terms of referrals, what is the waiting list like?</b>  SL: That depends on the level. Usually it is tier three which is 12 to 14 months waiting list. The school has access to tier two, which is mental health.</p> <p><b>Governor question: Why has the reporting table changed from the Spring report?</b>  SL: It has been separated out to make it clearer.</p>	
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>School Leadership discussion:</b></p> <p><b>a. HD Recruitment Update:</b>  There have been two rounds of advertising for the position of Headteacher. In the first round, two applicants were taken through to a full day of interviews. However, with an increased level of scrutiny, unfortunately after the final interview it was felt that the Governors could not recommend either candidate. In the second round, there were quite a few calls and site visits took place, which resulted in two applications. NC, AC, CS and Emma Smith met to shortlist. However, they could not take any of the applicants through.</p> <p><b>b. Options Assessment:</b>  <b>Governor comment: A plan needs to be made for the short to medium term. Governors need to consider the implication of the options. One is to link with another local school. AFC emailed NC to put him in touch with a Governor of Meadlands, Nigel Seymour. NC said thanks, but this is early days and the Governor's will decide on the best interests of the school.</b>  <b>Governor comment: I know Meadlands is very different from the Russell and has a different ethos.</b></p> <p>SL: There are a number of options for September.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BJ to become Acting Headteacher with support from another Headteacher as mentor. (SL has done this mentoring for other schools).</li> <li>2. BJ as Acting Headteacher but look at additional leadership capacity from another Headteacher (SL did at Kew Riverside).</li> <li>3. To explore the potential for a "Soft Federation". Two schools or more working together with a different leadership structure. A Head of School and an Executive Head between two or three schools.</li> </ol> <p><b>c. Action Planning</b>  <b>Governor question: Focusing on the short term, we could continue with the recruitment process once SL has left. It could be possible to advertise again for a Headteacher in Autumn or early Spring. When would be the best time to run that process?</b>  SL: Early Spring is the best time to advertise. This gives time to do a few rounds if necessary.</p>	

	<p><b>Governor question: What does BJ think as she's the most important cog in all this? What does she want to be doing? What is BJ most comfortable with in her career and own work life balance?</b></p> <p>A discussion took place around between the Governors who generally agreed that the “soft federation” options was not their first choice and they would need to consider what is best for the school, and not act on pressure from the Local Authority. That option would have to be carefully planned in order to get the right school partners with the same culture and ethos.</p> <p>They were also in agreement that one of the first two options would be their preferred choices in the short to medium term.</p> <p>It was also agreed that all Governors think very highly of BJ and would support her if she was to agree to an acting role as outlined in options 1 and 2. A plan to support her would need to be put in place.</p> <p>The Local Authority has a number of Headteachers to call on for guidance and support. It would be about supporting BJ and not making changes to the school. It would also impact on BJ's role as Deputy Headteacher and it would be necessary to recruit a replacement for the hours BJ would normally be in the classroom. It will be necessary to work out a new Senior Leadership structure. Governors need to discuss with BJ before any decisions are made. Time is of the essence now as there are only seven weeks left.</p> <p>It was agreed that a meeting should take place tomorrow at 11.00 am between BJ and the Governors (CS, NC, AC) and SL to discuss how she feels about proceeding with option 1 or 2.</p>	<p><b>BJ, SL, NC, AC, CS</b></p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Health, Safety and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>CS will take on the role of Educational Visits and Risk Assessment Governor and will look at residential risk assessments.</p> <p>SL: The trip to the Isle of Wight was successful.</p> <p>SL: The parents are getting a bit anxious about September and it may be necessary to send out a holding letter to keep parents, children and staff informed of the plans regarding the Headteacher recruitment and short to medium term plans.</p>	<p><b>SL</b></p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>AOB:</b></p> <p>No any other business.</p>	

The Russell School

Update on Matters Arising from the Governing Body meeting held on

Monday 23 May 2022

	<b>Matter Arising</b>	<b>Date raised</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>1</b>	The dangers posed by the derelict Strathmore building have not been resolved.	28/03/22	SL and BM	04/07/22	Now that the elections are over, SL to have word with local councillors and Richmond MP and BM will also speak to councillors.
<b>2</b>	Safeguarding training. AC has now completed. SL recommended the level 1, one hour training on line.	28/03/22	BM	04/07/22	BM to look into carrying out the on line training. CS may not need to do this training due to current role.
<b>3</b>	Safeguarding audit.	28/03/22	SL and NC	04/07/22	The LA have sent out audit questions (168). SL to do audit and that will produce an action plan. NC to follow up next year.
<b>4</b>	Governors to meet with link teachers.  BM to report meeting.  CS to decide which area.	28/03/22	NC?	New academic year	BM has done a diary note for the minutes to report his visit.  CS to be involved with safeguarding, risk assessments and excursions.  Meetings for the 3 SIP areas to be postponed to new academic year. NC to monitor?
<b>5</b>	Governors discussed how to honour CB as a retired long standing Governor.	23/05/22	NC?	?	NC has been to visit with flowers and a card on behalf of Governors. Plan to set up a CB cup to be a special award for a child who had succeeded in some area.

					Perhaps linked to environmental efforts.
6	Meeting with BJ to take place to discuss short to medium term plans about the Headteacher recruitment.	23/05/22	BJ, SL, NC, AC, CS	04/07/22	
7	SL to send letters to parents about attendance	23/05/22	SL	04/07/22	
8	SL to send holding letter to parents and staff about HT recruitment.	23/05/22	SL	04/07/22	

Signed by the Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Full Governors Meeting date: Monday 04.07.22 at time 7.00pm**