

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

**The Russell School
Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on
Monday 27 March 2023**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

LA - 1	PARENTS - 1	CO-OPTED - 5	STAFF 2
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)	Mrs Nicola McCann Teacher and SENco (NM)
	Mr Coulter Patton (CP)	Mr. Brian Miller (BM)	

bold = absent

Apologies: None

Clerk: Amanda Bungey

1	Welcome and Apologies for absence:	Actions
	The Chair welcomed Governors to the third meeting of the FGB for 2022- 23.	
2	Declarations of interest:	
	No declarations of interest were declared.	
3	Previous minutes:	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record and the Chair signed them.	
4	Matters arising:	
	See update on other matters arising from the FGB meeting on 27 March 2023 at the end of the minutes. The following items were closed: Item 1. Link Governors. NC's email of 24.01.23 suggested Link Governors for the SIP. .Item closed.	

	<p>Item 4. Update on support from Rachel N. Feedback has been received from Rachel who was complimentary about the school, staff, children's behaviour and how the school has been progressing in times of change. Rachel was very supportive around discussions about the budget. The discussion included maintaining contact between the two schools. Item closed.</p> <p>Item 6. Restructuring. The meeting with HR has taken place. Item closed.</p> <p>Item 7. Summer camps. BJ has been reaching out to organisations, but has not found anyone yet. Item closed.</p> <p>Item 8. Policies. Amendments have been made to the complaints procedure. Item closed.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Health Safety and Wellbeing</p> <p>BJ has alerted all staff to wellbeing services available through Workplace Options (employee assistance programme).</p> <p>The car park to the old Strathmore site has been closed off. This together with the installation of cameras has prevented activity on the site.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Headteacher's Report:</p> <p>Quality of Education: BJ: There were learning walks in October and November and last week. These will continue after Easter. The focus has been on learning environments, learning in small groups and the impact of teaching and learning systems. Subject leaders have also carried out learning walks, pupil and staff voice and look books. A new system of foundation learning subject assessment has been put into practice and has helped imbed knowledge and skills in each subject in one place. Teachers assess learning against Big Ideas. The subject leader has it all in one place and can see where the gaps in knowledge are. This seems to be working well and is more cohesive than it was before.</p>	

Autumn learning walks looked at staff practice and mentoring has been developed for specific staff to develop practice, which is having an impact on teaching, learning and the environment.

Julia Mead has had meetings with Joseph Vandervolt (Adviser for Mathematics) and he is coming in this week to do CPD with her.

Outcomes of the Spring learning walks will inform CPD and planning for Spring and Autumn, focusing on vocabulary and writing.

There is only one year's data to analyse due to Covid.

There has been much work done with Becky Lee to develop the main curriculum areas so that more children reach the GLD (Good Level Development). Becky Lee has had support from the SIP Emma Smith and Natasha Wood (Early Years advisor from AfC), who suggested making changes in the environment. She has also been to visit other Early Years settings to discuss strategies, which she has found very useful. Results for this year will be submitted in June and the school is predicting a higher GLD of 65 or more (national average).

Governor question: What changes have been made to the environment in Reception?

Certain things have been moved around so that there is more value from eg the maths area.

Governor question: Have visits to other schools been helpful and are there any specific schools which have been identified as particularly helpful?

A good relationship has been established with Holy Trinity and a Becky Lee may also be visiting Tolworth Infants and Juniors.

Pupil progress meetings have been held to plan interventions during Focus Teaching time. The school uses a volunteer scheme called "Bookmark" which delivers 30 minutes of one-to-one reading time on line, using chrome books and headphones. It is inexpensive and very effective.

Governor question: How many children are using this scheme?

Thirteen children have been selected for this based on their reading assessments.

Little Wandle is now imbedded and this is having an impact on the children's confidence in reading skills in Early Years and KS1.

Becky Lee has been keeping up to date with catch up programmes and will do training for the whole staff in the summer.

Aderyn Knight and Becky Lee have been working together to ensure that the spelling program throughout the school links with Little Wandle so that there is clear progression through **the school**. There is a new handwriting scheme called "Letter Join" which also links in.

The school now has a fully stocked range of "Big Cat" books and the school will move away from using the supplementary online library.

Governor comment: Governors agreed it is better to have less screen time and better to have physical books.

External moderation of writing has been planned with other local schools and potentially with Tolworth Infant and Junior school. It would be useful to have more of a relationship with a one-form entry school and to build up networks which existed pre-Covid.

The pupil voice survey is still to be analysed and will be in the next Governor's report.

There have been three strike days this term and a fair number of Teachers took strike action . Parents responded well and as much notice as possible was given, as Teachers gave advance notice, (even though they did not have to). In the first strike, five classes were out and in the second strike, four classes were out.

Governor comment: Some schools shut completely.

There is an NEU meeting about the latest ideas from the government which include a £1,000 one-off payment and 4.5% increase later. Unions are consulting on next steps.

CPD is listed in the report.

The school was given £300 to spend on bi-lingual books and dictionaries for new children from Hong Kong.

Professional development continues to focus on pedagogy and for developing out foundation subjects in teaching, assessment and leadership. The CPD plan focused on subjects and have been led by subject leaders. The aim is to upskill teachers to teach subjects. April's inset day will focus on "Retrieval Practice".

Governor comment: The elements that fall within that strategy include the ability of children to put into practice what they have learnt, as sufficient time and depth have been given to all concepts. NC has given notes on the Ofsted training he attended which included a graph around how everyone learns. Need to keep re-activating in order to imbed knowledge.

The school still has credits with AfC so will continue to prepare for Ofsted as the school enters the Ofsted window in May. There have been a few local inspections – Archdeacon School and Hampton Juniors is due to be inspected tomorrow.

Staffing:

BJ: The Year 3 Teacher, Aderyn Knight, is pregnant and will be leaving at the end of the academic year. Three interviews for her post will take place tomorrow.

Two members of staff are covering Lauren Ott's post while she is on maternity leave.

One of the SMSAs, Nadia Mulvaney is leaving and her post will be covered internally by SLT and TLAs.

The strategic development and action for the Governing body are on the report.

Behaviour and attitudes:

BJ: Attendance is currently 95.2%. There are 4 persistent absence families with multiple children. Certain year groups have had outbreaks of illnesses such as chickenpox. Attendance is monitored and tracked for all children who fall below 95% and the Education Welfare Officer is involved with families where attendance is below 90%.

There have been two racist incidents reported to the Borough and these were handled internally with parents.

Safeguarding:

There have been two SPA referrals with one more made today. Also two requests for information from outside agencies.

The safeguarding policy has been read by staff and Governors.

Heather Clarke has done a refresher Level 3 safeguarding course.

	<p>In the summer term there will be assemblies to reinforce body boundaries and consent.</p> <p>Governor comment: These need to be age-appropriate.</p> <p>BJ: They will be split between KS1 and KS2.</p> <p>Personal Development:</p> <p>BJ: There have been lots of trips and visitors to classes this term. There have been events to encourage parents' engagement such as coffee mornings and PTA events. A DBS event was held but it is always hard to get large numbers of parents attend such events. The £38 cost of a DBS cannot be funded by the school. The school does get volunteers but unless they have a DBS they cannot be on their own with the children, so the school needs to keep encouraging people to apply.</p> <p>Governor question: Would this be a good use for PTA funds?</p> <p>BJ: This is a possibility and may be worth checking. They last two years so better to target younger years. Action</p> <p>BJ: An art evening was recently held and there is a curriculum display evening on 28th after school.</p> <p>Governor question: It would be good to get some feedback about this event?</p> <p>Action</p> <p>Governor question: So many good things happen such as trips. Should we be thinking how these contribute to the pupils' learning and development?</p> <p>BJ: Class trips are always linked to the topics and projects they are working on and the overall curriculum, but explaining this link could be done in future reports. Action.</p> <p>Leadership and Management:</p> <p>BJ: Appraisal targets have been reviewed to make sure they are working for everyone and will be finally reviewed in July. The targets are more in line with the current School Development Plan. Appraisal for admin staff were interrupted by the consultation.</p> <p>Governor question: What do you mean by saying that appraisal plans are facilitated as best you can?</p> <p>BJ: This refers to how the school can facilitate the targets for next year in terms of timing.</p> <p>Some of the Governors have met with Senior Leaders and the rest of the meetings need to take place in the Summer term.</p> <p>Governors need to book onto safeguarding training.</p>	<p>BJ and CS</p> <p>BJ</p> <p>BJ</p>
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CS and RW are booked on for 31.03.23 and BM is booked in for April.

The Resources Committee have held a number of meetings but the Curriculum Committee have yet to hold a meeting.

Emma Smith has been doing some deep dives with Subject Leaders and others are planned later this term such as Early Years.

Julia Mead has been part of the Maths Hub working party and has been developing her maths leadership skills.

SDP action plans are regularly reviewed by SLT. This is a two year plan which is due to end this year but some things will continue into the next two year plan.

Contextual School Information:

- 80 children EAL
- 30 languages, most common Cantonese and German
- 29 FSM Ever 6 numbers
- No looked after children
- 1 adopted child

Numbers on roll have gone up. Now full in Year 4 and all juniors and 10 spaces in infants. For next September Reception at the moment have 23 with Russell as first choice for September 2023. Numbers in current Reception class are up with only 3 spaces.

- There are 26 children receiving SEN
- 5 EHCPs (2 will drop off in September)
- 4 going through statutory assessment process for EHCP which is a long drawn-out process.

School Development Plan:

BJ: This is attached to the report.

Link Governors and staff will meet to run through the list:

TL and NC to cover pages 12- 19

RW and BM to cover pages 20-23

Governor comment: Thanks to BJ for the detail in the report and the quality of information. Highlights are the numbers on roll and the work that Julia and Becky Lee are doing in maths and Early Years, taking advantage of AfC credits. Numbers need to be kept up as the next census in October will affect funding.

	<p>Governor comment: As long as Grey Court remains as “Outstanding” this will keep children in the area. The majority of Russell children go to Grey Court School.</p> <p>BJ: There is good feedback from parents about Grey Court and the transition process between Year 6 Russell and Year 7 Grey Court has been effective.</p>	
7	<p>Resources Update:</p> <p>This item was moved to the end of the meeting as it was confidential and therefore not minuted.</p>	
8	<p>Spring SIP Report:</p> <p>Governor question: Page 4 - are many parents not attending Parents Evenings?</p> <p>BJ: The majority of parents do attend and if not this is followed up and re-booked.</p> <p>Governor question: Page 7 - do you feel Subject Leaders are developing their confidence?</p> <p>BJ: Emma has been doing deep dives for this purpose and Julia has taken on the role of Maths Lead and is helping other staff to feel more confident with delivery.</p> <p>Governor question: Are there opportunities for visiting other schools and are the pre-Covid links being re-established?</p> <p>BJ: Visiting other schools could be done as part of moderation. Through AfC there are some subject-lead networks on line. Sencos meet up as a locality. It is harder in small schools as they do not have enough staff.</p> <p>Governor comment: It may be better to invite other schools. We can share our unique approach to behaviour and engagement and our unique environment with our relationship to Strathmore school. When we led the maths hub we had visitors from many other schools.</p> <p>Governor comment: It would be a good idea to invite Grey Court Subject Leaders to talk to Subject Leaders in the Russell School.</p> <p>Action</p> <p>Governor question: Page 8 - are SLT confident that there is a consistent approach to all areas of the curriculum. How can Governors help with the elevation of this?</p> <p>BJ: The School Development Plan answers this and a lot of work has gone into moulding this plan to achieve what is needed. Meetings are planned during the next half term to review this. Not all are at the same level but there is a consistent approach.</p> <p>Governor question: What would prevent it from being a consistent approach?</p>	BJ

	<p>BJ: Phonics and reading is a new approach which is filtering up through the rest of the school, who have not had this approach before.</p> <p>Governor comment: Inconsistency would be if all the focus was on literacy and numeracy. If consistent, it will be working out how to use history to develop literacy etc so that all areas are inter-twined and no areas are neglected.</p> <p>BJ: In Marvellous Mondays, the children do link projects to different areas. Also the Little Wandle approach does flow through and build.</p> <p>Governor comment: This consistent approach will increase as the new phonics and reading approach works through the years.</p> <p>Governor question: Key priority 2 - how can Governors support the school to secure the Leadership structure?</p> <p>Governor comment: the Governors played a big part in supporting the HR recruitment including developing the job description and collaborating with SLT on the recruitment process. Also, CPD is always a priority for discussion.</p> <p>Governor question: Key priority 3 -how will leaders measure the impact of the new documentation to support maths teaching?</p> <p>BJ: Julia Mead has been doing a lot and the impact of what she has put in place is looking positive.</p> <p>Governor comment: There is a need to have a meeting of the Curriculum Committee as soon as possible.</p> <p>Action</p>	<p>NC CS and CP</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Governor CPD and Training Opportunities:</p> <p>BJ: Governor’s priority is to attend Safeguarding training.</p> <p>NC attended the network meeting on 7th March and commented that most schools were having problems with the state of their finances. Some Governors have already taken steps but there is nowhere else for them to go. About 80% of schools were having to tackle deficit budgets.</p>	
<p>10</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>There were two racist incidents. These were dealt with, with parents, and using the Relationship Policy. No further action needed.</p>	
11	<p>Any other Business:</p> <p>No any other business</p>	

The Russell School

Update on Matters Arising from the Governing Body meeting held on

Monday 27 March 2023

	Matter Arising	Date raised	Responsibility	Due	Update
1	Information about Federated schools	23/01/23	NC and BJ	22/05/23	NC and BJ to discuss with Rachel N at Tolworth as a Federated school.
2	Governor vacancies	23/01/23	NC	22/05//23	NC to circulate skills assessment to all Governors and new Governors to fill out so that it is up to date. NC to approach AfC following this.
3	DBS checks and PTA funds.	27/03/23	BJ and CS	22/05/23	To check with PTA if some funds could be used for DBS checks for volunteers.
4	Curriculum display evening.	27/03/23	BJ	22/05/23	Governors requested that BJ gives feedback about this event.
5	School trips	27/03/23	BJ	22/05/23	Governors requested that trips listed in the Headteacher's report are linked to the topics and projects in the curriculum.
6	Grey Court Subject Leaders	27/03/23	BJ	22/05/23	Governors suggested that Grey Court subject Leaders are invited to talk to Russell Subject Leaders.
7	Curriculum Committee	27/03/23	NC, CS and CP	22/05/23	A meeting of the Curriculum Committee to take place as soon as possible.

8	Health Safety and Wellbeing	21/11/22	NC	22/05/23	Change title as regular item on the agenda to "Safeguarding and Wellbeing".
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Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____

Next Full Governors Meeting date: Monday 22 May 2023 at 7.00pm