

**The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames**

**The Russell School  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on  
Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024**

**Constitution, Membership and Attendance**

<b>LA - 1</b>	<b>PARENTS - 2</b>	<b>CO-OPTED - 3</b>	<b>STAFF 2</b>
Mr. Rob Woolner (RW)	Ms Claire Smith (CS)	Mr Neil Cutting (NC)	Miss Rebecca James Deputy Headteacher (BJ)
	Mr Coulter Patton (CP)	Mr Tom LLOYD (TL)	Mrs Nicola McCann Teacher and SENco (NM)
		Ms Louise Allen (LA)	Ms Laura Brooks Headteacher (LB)

**bold = absent**

**Apologies: None**

**Clerk:** Amanda Bungey

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies for absence:</b>  The Chair welcomed Governors to the second meeting of the FGB for 2023- 24.	<b>Actions</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of interest:</b>  There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Previous minutes (acceptance or alterations):</b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023 were reviewed after the meeting by email. The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record and the Chair agreed his signature.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Matters Arising:</b>  See update on other matters arising from the FGB meeting on 21 February 2024 at the end of the minutes.	

	<p><b>Item 1:</b> All Governors have now signed Declaration of Interest forms. <b>Item closed.</b></p> <p><b>Item 2:</b> Meeting report between Heather C, CS and TL completed. <b>Item closed.</b></p> <p><b>Item 3:</b> Report of walk about LA and TL recorded. <b>Item closed.</b></p> <p><b>Item 4:</b> LB reported that there has been a big push with AfC around wrap-around childcare provision in the Borough. They are consulting with schools and this is on-going. <b>Item closed.</b></p> <p><b>Item 5:</b> CS checked Sayers Croft risk assessment. <b>Item closed.</b></p> <p><b>Item 6:</b> AB sent Link Governor job descriptions. <b>Item closed.</b></p> <p>LA suggested Training and Development should be an agenda item in future. <b>Governors asked to reflect on Link Governor job descriptions and training requirements before next meeting.</b> LA volunteered to take on the role of Training and Development Lead Governor in order to identify gaps and to plan training needed in advance. This was supported by NC.</p> <p><b>Item 7:</b> AB confirmed that in order for Committee meetings to be quorate, 50% of Governors need to be in attendance. LA suggested that it would be useful to have back up Governors for the Curriculum Committee and offered to stand in if necessary. All Governors have the table of meeting dates.</p> <p><b>Item 8:</b> A discussion took place about the best way to recruit new Governors as there are two vacancies. LB felt that it would be useful to have more Governors with knowledge of education. LA and LB have looked at LB's previous school advertisement for Governors in order to adapt it. NC and LA to get together to look at the last skills assessment and will consult other Governors if needed. They will discuss this further with LB to come up with a plan for the best way to recruit new Governors. CS said she could offer some names of parents who are teachers and some with children in secondary who it may be appropriate to approach.</p>	<p><b>All Govs (NC for agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NC, LA, LB</b></p>
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6	<p><b>Safeguarding and Wellbeing:</b></p> <p>LB: Safeguarding is still on the agenda for the SLT meetings and reviewed every week on an on-going document. (Ofsted said that this was good practice).</p> <p>One child is undergoing assessment (section 17).</p> <p><b>Further information is in the “Confidential Section Two” of these minutes.</b></p> <p>Governor question: Has the school got a policy in place about the use of mobile phones and smart watches in school?</p> <p>LB: This has not been an issue in the school so far (though it was in her last school) but it is safeguarding-related so should be in the policy.</p> <p>Governor comment: It may be worth asking Grey Court about their position/ policy regarding phones and smart watches.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p>	LB
6	<p><b>Headteacher’s Report (incl. curriculum)</b></p> <p>LB: The numbers on roll are picking up and the school is in a better position than at the beginning of the year. Numbers are healthier, but this is still a vulnerability.</p> <p>There's a decent number of new nursery children and there is now another family interested in starting in the summer term.</p> <p>There are benefits of having a strategy of being open to mid-year joiners. At the moment there are 23 children for Reception in September 2024. There may be more.</p> <p>There are more spaces in Key Stage One. Key Stage Two is pretty full. Year 4 will be down to 28.</p> <p>BJ: But there has just been an inquiry from a family with child for Year 1 and one for Year 4.</p> <p>LB: The Headteacher’s Report has a breakdown of recent Ofsted Report. There are lots of positives. LB felt it was a very fair experience, measured and balanced. LB put an advertisement in the Petersham and Ham Gazette to celebrate the “Good” result and also used the opportunity to advertise that the school does have spaces.</p>	

	<p><b>Quality of Education:</b> LB: This was judged as good by Ofsted.</p> <p>There was one inset day in January which started with an external trainer, Liz Armour, who worked with teams to tighten up how we plan and deliver English.</p> <p>Also staff considered the wider curriculum. What works well, what could be better, and subject leaders worked together. On the basis of “less is more” the aim is to be tight and clear about the knowledge and skills the children should learn.</p> <p>From September, every year group will deliver three history and three geography topics per year. Science is delivered weekly. DT and art will be threaded through, if they fit the topics.</p> <p><b>Governor question: Why specifically history and geography?</b></p> <p>LB: They are the most substantive subjects behind the core subjects, with a lot of content. They are the meaty subjects to feed everything into. This is normal primary school practice.</p> <p>There will be more CPD this half term. Next INSET day will be after Easter and will focus on the wider curriculum, which worked well when Ofsted came. Emma S was pleased with her observations of maths lessons. History monitoring has been completed by NM. Early Years was observed by an EY consultant last term.</p> <p>Since Christmas the focus has been on behaviour for learning and English.</p> <p>The ECT has to be observed every half term.</p> <p>BJ and LB to do English observations this term.</p> <p>The CPD schedule is attached to the Headteacher's report and LB has noted a number of CPD areas covered last term.</p> <p>A highlight is that the EY lead has signed up for NPQ in EY.</p> <p>The data is included at the end of the Headteacher's report and is the school's internal data, whole school and SEN data and disadvantaged children data.</p> <p>Data is a tricky one and LB stated that staff need to work on moderating and agreeing judgments. There is some disconnect</p>	
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	<p>between the teachers' recorded judgements and what LB is seeing in the classrooms. The data picture could be better as now it is not a true picture of how the children are performing.</p> <p>Governor comment: Governors all agree, and especially those who were involved with the Ofsted process, that it was an excellent result. As LB said, a positive experience and fair process. There were a number of highlights. One of the things was that the Lead Inspector's assessment was almost identical to the school's own self-assessment, which therefore gives confidence in the school's own judgement.</p> <p>Governor question: The school has received validation from the Inspector, but it sounds like you want to put more quantitative measures in place?</p> <p>LB: I want to ensure that all teachers are assessing with the same eyes, to the same benchmark, so everyone agrees. The school has some teachers who are new and there will be discrepancies about assessing.</p> <p>Governor comment: At SLT level, you have a good grasp of that and it will be a way of everyone having that clarity.</p> <p>Gov comment: The school will no longer have Key Stage One SATs available going forward. These gave some hard unassailable statistics.</p> <p>LB: They have not gone away. The children will still do them, it is just that the school won't be held to account in the same way, though it still has to report the results to the Local Authority. Schools have to opt out, not opt in.</p> <p>Governor comment: We want to be setting our targets against Richmond rather than national targets. In terms of data, further development work will be needed for the Governors to get their heads around this.</p> <p>LB: will be happy to do a session for Governors. This to be made an item at the next Full Governing Body meeting.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <p><b>Behaviour and attitudes:</b></p> <p>The Lead Inspector said that there was a sense in some classrooms that some children opt out of learning as they are quiet and undistruptive, and this needed to be challenged more. SLT have done work around this and CPD will continue to focus on this.</p>	<p><b>LB (NC agenda)</b></p>
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	<p><b>Governor comment:</b> One of the historical challenges for schools is how the middle ground children can coast. It will be interesting to see how you develop this further.</p> <p>LB: We have high expectations for all children, at all times.</p> <p><b>Governor question:</b> Is this opting out common across all year groups?</p> <p>LB: There are higher behaviour needs in certain years and some low level opting out. It is present across the school but not a huge problem.</p> <p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p>LB: No attendance check has been made since January, but Ofsted said the attendance was fine, in line with national average. There are a few families who have difficulty with attendance. There is a good relationship with EWO, who is working with two families.</p> <p>Attendance training as was attended by one of the office staff.</p> <p><b>Personal Development:</b></p> <p>LB: This was judged as “outstanding” by Ofsted.</p> <p><b>Governor comment:</b> It is great to get that validation, partly due to the excellent music offer.</p> <p>LB: It has been noted about “school values” in the report that children don’t talk about them at all. There is some work to be done on that.</p> <p><b>Governor comment:</b> It is agreed there are probably too many values and there is some overlap. They probably need condensing down.</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management:</b></p> <p><b>Staffing:</b></p> <p>LB: There is a new TA mainly working in Year 2.</p> <p>There is an additional member of staff in the nursery in the afternoons.</p> <p>Breakfast Club staffing is now stable and the school is compliant.</p> <p><b>Appraisal:</b></p> <p>LB: There will be appraisals for teachers and admin staff this term.</p> <p><b>Curriculum:</b></p> <p>LB: There is a list of things going on in the curriculum.</p>	
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	<p>The real push is to put medium term plans in place for history and geography.</p> <p>Work is continuing on spelling and how this is mapped has been changed.</p> <p>Year 3 and Year 4 have swimming lessons this term, none need catch-up sessions.</p> <p>The school continues to be supported by Grey Court staff for PE.</p> <p>The outside area of the EYFS is undergoing on-going improvements.</p> <p><b>Staff Well-being:</b></p> <p>LB: Ofsted questionnaire gave a very positive picture.</p> <p>The aim is to try to ensure the subject leaders still get release time.</p> <p>The Special Leave Policy has been shared with staff, if they need time for a family commitment. The school had no firm policy before and needed consistency.</p> <p><b>Communication with Families:</b></p> <p>LB: PTA quiz is being held next Friday and LB hopes Parent Governors can come.</p> <p><b>Policies:</b></p> <p>LB: The complaints policy is currently being updated, and will be shared when it is done. <b>Action</b></p> <p><b>Finance and Resources:</b></p> <p>LB: There was a finance meeting a few weeks ago. More will be known when the budget comes out.</p> <p>Governor comment: The Ofsted process shows you have good understanding of strengths and what needs to be worked on.</p> <p>Governor question, how was the feeling after that process? What's staff morale like now?</p> <p>LB: There is always a bit of an anti-climax and the school went straight into the very busy Christmas period. There was a staff celebration and a Christmas party.</p> <p>Governor comment: It would be good thing to do a staff survey and regularly monitor it throughout the year so there is a regular pulse-point of sentiment.</p> <p>LA offered to share ideas about how this could be done. <b>Action</b></p> <p>Governor comment: If polling staff, they could be asked about which school values they consider important.</p>	<p><b>LB</b></p> <p><b>LA</b></p>
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	Gov comment: Well done to LB and BJ. Also to LA, CS and TL for stepping in as Governors during inspection.	
7	<p><b>Resources Update:</b></p> <p>LA: several policies were reviewed - either new /tailored or revisions to existing policies. Rebecca O'Sullivan has worked very hard on these and they were gone through rigorously. Most don't require FGB approval. They are largely in good shape with some tweaking being done. This took up the bulk of the Resources Committee time.</p> <p>RO'S has done an excellent job in forecasting. There is a new energy supplier contract which will have cost implications.</p> <p>There are further conversations to be had regarding the financial situation. A big piece is the budget funding has been received and which needs to be gone through. There will be more to report in due course.</p> <p>Another area discussed was parental donations. If possible, the best channel to progress this would be to use the PTA, as it has a charitable structure and this would have gift aid benefits. LA supported that principle. It could be put in place in advance of September.</p> <p>Governor comment: please convey our personal thanks and appreciation to RO'S. We're very lucky to have her and we appreciate all her efforts.</p> <p>LA: Are all Governors happy that the Committee have effectively signed off on policy updates on the Governor's behalf?  <b>Governors agreed.</b></p> <p>LA: Do all Governors support using the PTA structure for parental donations?  <b>Governors agreed.</b></p>	
8	<p><b>Confidential Section:</b></p> <p><b>Headteacher's Report on Complaints and Exclusions (Reports on Parental Complaints, Pupil Exclusions, or any other Confidential Matter)</b></p> <p>None reported.</p>	



	<p><b>Headteacher's report on Racist Incidents (Governing Body to agree any action deemed necessary)</b></p> <p>See "Confidential Section Two".</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>LA: LA, LB and AB met with representatives from Governor Hub to discuss subscribing to this. The basic option is £150 per year. Alternatively receiving "Governor Hub Knowledge" (additional information) would cost £400. It was felt that this would be a good system to put in place. It is already set up, so would involve migration of papers from MyDrive. It would remove some of needs for emails. Governors would receive alerts. There are safeguards from a security point of view. It is easily accessible. LB has used it before, and thinks it is very usable.</p> <p>Governor question: Is there a lock-in period for subscription and can we afford it?</p> <p>LA has spoken to Rebecca and there is not a problem.</p> <p><b>Governors approved.</b></p> <p>LA happy to work out initial structure.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p>	<b>LA</b>

**The Russell School**

**Update on Matters Arising from the Governing Body meeting held on**

**Wednesday 21.02.24**

	<b>Matter Arising</b>	<b>Date raised</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>1</b>	All Governors to reflect on Link Governor roles and training requirements	21/02/24	All Governors	27/03/24	
<b>2</b>	NC and LA to look at skills assessment and discuss with LB in order to come up with a plan for the recruiting new Governors	21/02/24	NC and LA	27/03/24	
<b>3</b>	LB to consult with Grey Court re their policy about use of mobile phones and smart watches in school	21/02/24	LB	27/03/24	
<b>4</b>	LB to hold session for Governors about data at next meeting	21/02/24	LB	27/03/24	
<b>5</b>	LB to share Complaints Policy with Governors when complete	21/02/24	LB	27/03/24	
<b>6</b>	LA to share ideas of how a regular staff survey could be done	21/02/24	LA	27/03/24	
<b>7</b>	LA to work out an initial structure of Governor Hub for Governors	21/02/24	LA	27/03/24	

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Full Governors Meeting date:      Wednesday 27.03.24 at 6.00pm**

