

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

**The Russell School
Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on
Monday 27 March 2024**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

LA - 1	PARENTS - 2	CO-OPTED - 3	STAFF 2
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

1	Welcome and Apologies for absence: The Chair welcomed Governors to the third meeting of the FGB for 2023- 24.	Actions
2	Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Previous minutes (acceptance or alterations): The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record and the Chair agreed his signature.	
5	Matters Arising: See update on other matters arising from the FGB meeting on 27 March 2024 at the end of the minutes.	

	<p>Item 1: All Governors to reflect on Link Governor roles and training requirements: Keep item on.</p> <p>Item 2: 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: The skills assessment was analysed and the results sent to LA. A Governor recruitment pack was sent out to parents but no applicants have been received so far. (It has been re-sent today). Recruitment priorities are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial experience • links with local businesses and leadership experience • education <p>NC has some skills assessments documents which should be put on Governor Hub for future reference.</p> <p>Item 3: LB to consult with Grey Court re use of mobile phones and smartwatches: LB will tie this in with a Communications Policy. It is not mandatory but recommended to the school that it would be a useful tool. (NC and LB had similar input from Angela from Governor Support). Draft to be provided to next Resources Committee meeting for review. NC attended the Chairs' Forum and received useful data from AfC about the general increase in complaints across schools in the borough which will help to inform the communications policy.</p> <p>Item 4: LB to hold session for Governors about Data: Hold this until the next meeting.</p> <p>Item 5: LB to review school values & investigate option to consolidate: To be remain open for further consideration once the review is completed.</p> <p>Item 6: LB to share Complaints Policy with Governors when complete: The Complaints Policy has been done and LA gave helpful notes. LB to circulate after this meeting to Governors.</p> <p>Item 7: LA to share ideas of how a regular staff survey could be done: LA will share suggestions for survey by email to LB tomorrow.</p>	<p>LB, LA</p> <p>LB</p> <p>LB</p> <p>LB</p> <p>LA</p>
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	<p>Item 8: LA to work out an initial structure of Governor Hub for Governors:</p> <p>LA will circulate an initial draft for the Governor Hub structure. It involves migration of documents over to it. It is important to get the file path structure right and to allow for the archiving of documents. For the next FGB meeting in May, LA will trail it by setting up the documents in Governor Hub.</p>	LA
5	<p>Headteacher Verbal Update for period from 21 February FGB Safeguarding and Wellbeing & Key Staffing announcements:</p> <p>LB: The numbers are still 207. There will be two new starters in Nursery bringing it to 209. It is quite full in KS2 but there are spaces in KS1.</p> <p>Curriculum development:</p> <p>LB: The big project is tighter mapping of history and geography projects. At the next Inset day teachers will be given some time to plan the first projects, now that three topics are mapped out against the National Curriculum. Knowledge and skills will be mapped so teachers can plan.</p> <p>Governor comment: Good luck with the Inset day after Easter. It is a great way to hit the ground running. Thanks to LB.</p> <p>Behaviour and Safety:</p> <p>“Give me five” has been introduced. This is five clear expectations of behaviours that children should display in the classroom and at assembly. There is a simple and clear visual. This has been introduced with staff and children. It will launch properly in the Summer term, giving time to tweak before the next school year if needed.</p> <p>Governor comment: The “Give me five” expectations is very positive and should address an item the Ofsted Inspector picked up on, which was some of the children opting out in class.</p> <p>LB confirmed it will be very clear- a quick, short, sharp reminder. There will be time to make tweaks if trialled in the summer.</p> <p>Safeguarding update:</p> <p>There are two children on the “child in need” plan. One family is going through a section 47 assessment due to the needs of an older sibling. One SPA referral has been made since last meeting, due to disclosures made by children.</p>	

	<p>Staffing update:</p> <p>Further information is in the “Confidential Section Two” of these minutes.</p>	
6	<p>Resources Committee Draft 2024/25 Budget Proposal</p> <p>LA: The Resources Committee meeting took place yesterday, covering where we are this year and the draft budget for next year. The forecast to the end of the year is still anticipating a deficit position overall albeit reduced. Financial outlook remains a key concern going forward.</p> <p>The main variances, up or down, are to do with the Mayor's free school meals support, salaries for support and teaching staff and EHCP funding delays.</p> <p>Reflections going forward are that receiving more information on meal costings means it can be more precisely budgeted for in future. Another area - being more explicit about re-charges to Strathmore so it is reflected in the budget. There's always uncertainty, but in a very difficult financial environment, work has been done so that the deficit has moved down.</p> <p>The largest income for the draft budget is from the Borough. This has increased, but the school numbers are down by nine.</p> <p>Staffing costs is the largest cost and an anticipated salary rise has been budgeted for but this may come in lower. There are increasingly limited opportunities for efficiencies in staff costs following last years restructure. Other non-staffing costs are above inflation; cleaning costs are up by 10%, the energy deal has been renegotiated but is more expensive, pension contributions are funded but there is still a shortfall.</p> <p>A deficit reduction plan will again need to accompany the budget submitted.</p> <p>(The summary sheet was shown to Governors on screen).</p> <p>It will be a difficult and precarious year ahead. The deficit recovery plan from last year will have to be revisited.</p>	

<p>The School's Financial Value Standard (SFVS) was updated from last year. (This was shown to Governor's on screen). It was a "Yes" to most questions apart from a "No" to setting a balanced budget as there will need to be a deficit recovery plan. Also "No" to use of the Borough's Best Value Frameworks as the school uses more appropriate systems. LA to circulate to Governors. Action.</p> <p>Members of Resources Committee and NC will need to complete Governor's Financial Management document. Action.</p> <p>Another thing which required urgent approval by the Resources Committee was £13,000 for the server replacement. This was approved.</p> <p>Dates for future Full Governing Body meetings may need to be shifted to fit some of the Borough's deadlines for budget approvals. LA to liaise with RO. Action.</p> <p>Governor comment: Pleased to see the forecast deficit has reduced which is down to good management</p> <p>Governor question: Do we know when the Mayor's free school meals support ends? LB: It is there for the next academic year.</p> <p>Governor question: Is the school considering collaborating with other schools in order to reduce costs? LB: As a small school we already do. For example, when we did safeguarding training with a neighbouring school.</p> <p>LB: The deficit is going to increase working on the premise of applying 4% inflation and 5% pay rise. Increasing the numbers on roll is key to mitigating the cost impact on the budget.</p> <p>Governor comment: Generating income is important, as are the numbers on roll. One-form entry schools cannot share costs as easily. We are not likely to be the only school in this position. Summer camps would help and hiring out the car park. A priority is also recruiting for the nursery which would make an impact.</p> <p>LB: Admitting children in summer term, (which we haven't always done) is for that reason, trying to increase the nursery numbers.</p> <p>Chair of Governors asked Governors to confirm that they approve the budget. This was confirmed.</p>	<p>LA</p> <p>LA, NC, RW</p> <p>LA</p>
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	<p>The SFVS was approved.</p> <p>The Chair thanked LA for the update and RO for her work.</p>	
7	<p>Any Urgent Business</p> <p>None</p>	

The Russell School

Update on Matters Arising from the Governing Body meeting held on

Wednesday 27.03.24

	Matter Arising	Date raised	Responsibility	Due	Update
1	All Governors to reflect on Link Governor roles and training requirements	21/02/24	All Governors	22/05/24	Keep on
2	LB show Governors the Communications Policy when it is complete (to include use of mobile phones and smart watches)	21/02/24	LB	22/05/24	
3	LB to hold session for Governors about data at next meeting	21/02/24	LB	22/05/24	Keep on
4	LB to review school values & investigate option to consolidate	21/02/24	LB	22/05/24	Keep on
5	LA to set up next FGB documents in Governor Hub	27/03/24	LA	22/05/24	
6	LA to circulate SFVS to Governors.	27/03/24	LA	22/05/24	
7	Members of Resources Committee will need to complete Governor's Financial Management document	27/03/24	LA, RW, NC	22/05/24	
8	Dates for future FGB meetings may need to be shifted to fit some of the Borough's deadlines for budget approvals. LA to liaise with RO.	27/03/24	LA	22/05/24	

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____

Next Full Governors Meeting date: Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 6.00pm