

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames



Sheen Mount School

**Minutes and Action List of the Full Governing Board Meeting
Held At Sheen Mount Primary School on 13th March at 6.30pm**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

Local Authority Governors - 1	Maria Widdowson (MW) (<u>Vice-Chair</u>)
Parent Governors – 2	Susan Boughton (SB) (<u>Chair</u>) Telmo Valido (TV)
Staff Governors – 1	Robert Kennedy (RK) – Class Teacher and Upper KS2 Phase Leader
Co-opted Governors – 10	Gemma Cass (GC) (Curriculum & Learning Chair) Giota Kovani (GK) Anna Hare (AH) – arrived 6.50pm Caroline Bones (CB) David Morley (DM) (Resources Committee Chair) Julia Sandell (JS) (Pastoral Committee Chair) Jennifer Wright (JW) David Carter (DC) Tej Patel (TP) <i>Vacancy</i>
Headteacher - 1	Tom Holmes (TH)
Associate (non-voting) Governors – 5	Laura Jeffery (LJ) Maria O’Brien (MOB) Dan Jameson (DJ) Jodi Hunt (JH) Debbie Canner (DC)
Clerk to the board	Sarah Chipperfield (Clerk)

* Absence(s) in Bold

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames



Sheen Mount School

Action List of the Full Governing Body Meeting of 13.03.2024

Actions in white below are outstanding, those in grey completed or in progress

No:	Minute item	SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS	Date by when	Person responsible	For Next FGB Agenda
1	1.3	Online Safety Appendix 3 to be signed. Clerk to follow this up.	April 2024	GC/Clerk	
2	2.1	SB to sign approved FGB minutes from 29 th Nov and clerk would upload these onto the website.	April 2024	SB/Clerk	
3	2.3	Create a glossary of acronyms to be uploaded on Governor Hub	Summer term	TH	
4	2.4	Baseline toolkit for Oracy to be looked at during CPD in summer term	Summer term	TH	
5	2.7	Create a child friendly version of the Behaviour document.	Summer term	LJ	Y
6	2.8, 8.8	Add separated parents page to Communications Policy and rewrite existing document.	Summer term	LJ/SCHOOL	Y
7	3.6	Clerk to send JR induction documents and to update AfC and Governor Hub	April 2024	Clerk	
8	3.12	Preparations to start for the parent elections	Summer term	SB/Clerk	Y
9	4.20	Meeting to discuss a relaunch of the Trustee Fund	Summer term	SB/GK/TV/JR	
10	5.13	TH to create a template for risk assessment	Autumn term	TH	
11	8.1	Pastoral committee visit to be organised	Summer term	JS	
12	8.5	Move Online Safety policy documents to Pastoral folders and make sure policy review is amended	April 2024	Clerk	
13	8.7, 9.4	Update Governor Hub and website (if applicable) with approved policies. Policy Review Schedule to be updated.	April 2024	Clerk	
14	9.3	The School Financial Value Survey to be signed	April 2024	SB	
15	10.3	Email issue to be raised with IT	April 2024	TH	

Minutes

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 SB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from GC and LJ. The governors had no interests to declare connected with the agenda or for the Register of Interests.
- 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present (50% of the total number of voting governors, excluding vacancies). Documents referred to in the meeting had been circulated to all via Governor Hub prior to the meeting, except where noted in the minutes.
- 1.3 Governors were reminded about the Online Safety Appendix 3, which needs to be signed. **ACTION – GC/Clerk**

2. Minutes and Action List from 29th November 2023 FGB Meeting



Minutes

2.1 The minutes from the meeting of 29th November 2023 were approved. SB would be asked to sign these. The Clerk would post them on to the school website. **ACTION – SB/Clerk**

Actions from November 2023 (and matters relating to them)

2.2 Actions from the previous meeting were either completed or in progress.

2.3 A general glossary of term to be created for Governor Hub. **ACTION – TH**

2.4 A baseline toolkit for Oracy to would be looked at during CPD in the summer term. Research has been carried out into options available and something that the school can adapt, would be most useful. **ACTION – TH**

2.5 The purpose Statement has been completed and SB conveyed her thanks to GK for her contribution.

2.6 A.I. research meeting to take place this term.

2.7 Child friendly version on the Behaviour document needs to be completed. **ACTION LJ**

2.8 Separated parent page needs to be included in the Communications policy, which is currently being reviewed. **ACTION LJ**

3. Spring Term FGB Items

Governing Body membership

Vacancy update

3.1 SB confirmed that a vacancy still exists, and it has not been possible to recruit a new governor with an HR background. SB proposed to elect JR to the board, as her professional experience would support the building and policy development work on the estates plan.

Appoint new Co-Opted Governor for 2023-2024 with effect from 13th March 2024

3.2 JR left the room at 6.40pm.

3.4 The governors unanimously voted in favour of JR's appointment as a new Co-Opted Governor

3.5 JR returned at 6.41pm

3.6 The Clerk would make contact with the JR to provide induction information. **ACTION – CLERK**

Succession Planning

3.7 SB confirmed that JS and GC had given notice to leave at the end of the academic year. SB conveyed her thanks to JS for her time and work as a Governor and Chair of the Pastoral committee.

3.8 SB has met with a potential associate member, with a background in teaching and organising school links with industry. It is anticipated that they will join as an associate in the May FGB and will sit on either the C&L or Pastoral committees.

3.9 SB conveyed her thanks to MW for her continued work on recruitment.



3.10SB reiterated the importance of timely notice if a governor wishes to step down.

3.11 TH reminded the board that governors can remain for more than one term and parent governors can transfer to a co-opted governor role.

3.12 TH noted that TV term will expire at the end of 2024 and preparations should be made for the parent elections.

ACTION SB/Clerk

4. Financial Management

4.1. DM provided an update on the progress of the budget. It had been challenging to get accurate information, due to the absence of a key member of staff, who has now left. DM and staff have been working with service level provider SMS, to work through all data and systems, to get an idea of the current position.

4.2. A loss of £174k is predicted at the end of the financial year, based on February 2024 figures. This was less than the original predicted deficit of £186k. It is hoped that the position will be better than predicted.

4.3. A positive outcome is that there is now a much more robust system in place, as a result of this process.

4.4. At present, the school is not in a position to approve a 3-year budget, which is due to be presented to the LA in April. An additional Resources meeting is scheduled to go through the approval process.

4.5. DM noted that there are huge financial pressures on the school, as a result of staff pay rises which have not been funded by the government. Educational support staff salaries alone have increased by 23%. The school has had to use their surplus to fund the pay rises, but this isn't sustainable going forward.

4.6. TH introduced DC, the new SBM, and conveyed his thanks for her efforts and time working on the budget.

4.7. TH noted that, although mistakes had been made in the accounts coding, this had not had a financial impact on the school. The only consequence had been time spent working through the financial records. The school's financial plan had been adhered to by the school for this academic year.

4.8. DC introduced herself to the board and gave an overview of her background and experience.

4.9. DC noted that she has received good support from Judith Porter and the SMS team and, although it had taken time to work through the accounts, they were now close to a solid figure. She echoed DM in hoping this would be better than predicted. DM assured the board that money had not been spent unnecessarily.

4.10. DC noted that many schools find themselves in similar situations, due to increased wage and pension costs. The way that funding is allocated to schools is based on PPG and student numbers and doesn't always accurately reflect staff numbers.

4.11. Governors discussed how 3% of the 6.5% increase in salaries last year had not been funded by the government. Further pay increases would be unsustainable going forward and may mean that redundancies would have to be considered.

4.12. Q: There has been a 23% pay rise for Education Support Staff over the last 2 years. How much has this increase in salaries cost the school? Would this be in the region of £150-200k?

A: Yes, this figure is closer to £200k.

4.13. The board discussed the financial implications of salary increases, funding required for EHCP support staff and loss of funding, due to lower enrolments.

4.14. Q: The school isn't able to raise a loan, so is there a debt relief option if we hit zero?



A: The school is not able to go into a loss. We would be required to write a Deficit Recovery Plan with the Local Authority. This would involve making drastic cuts and putting steps in place to balance the budget.

4.15. Q: Is it possible to lower the amount of places available to new students?

A: It isn't possible to reduce the numbers for the coming academic year

4.16. Q: Are we able to secure more funding by bringing forward the planned in-house wrap around provision a term earlier?

A: This would require a considerable amount of time from the Senior Management Team and SBM, who are currently focused on the budget, so not a realistic option at present.

4.17. Q: The bench marking data seems very high for support staff. Is there a reason for this?

A: The data has been double counted and is not an accurate reflection. It is also very difficult to make comparisons between schools as the student and staffing requirements will differ greatly.

4.18. Q: Are we able to generate any income from external clubs?

A: We could potentially offer space at the weekend, but would need to consider the cost of key holders. It would be best to maximize clubs on the same day to reduce costs.

4.19. Q: Are we able to use funding from the PSA to alleviate some of the financial pressure on the school?

A: We are not able to use PSA funding for staffing costs as this is a committed funding stream. It would be possible to use funding for school resources and extra activities.

4.20. The board discussed relaunching the Trustee Fund and ways that parents could contribute. Successful examples from other schools were given. Governors will arrange a meeting to discuss, with a view to relaunching the Trustee Fund in the summer term. **ACTION SB/GK/TV/JR**

4.21. The board confirmed that there will be a governor presence at the talk for new parents.

4.22. SB asked the board to agree a balanced budget at the next Extraordinary Resources meeting.

4.23. The governors unanimously voted in favour.

5. Headteachers report

5.1. TH clarified that everyone had read his report. TH talked through the current number of enrolled students. It was unlikely that the Reception cohort would be full for the coming academic year, however, there had been lots of in-year admissions. Any prospective in-year admissions are taken on a tour of the school by TH and he was confident that 95% of these enquiries resulted in a place being accepted.

5.2. Governors were invited to ask questions.

5.3. Q: Are staff visiting local nurseries to promote the school?

A: Yes, this is done every year.

5.4. Q: What accounts for the low numbers in accepted places?

A: Parents are opting for independent schools or they are moving away. Generally, parents do not choose another local school.

5.5. Q: What is the catchment area for the school and is this affecting numbers?

A: We do not currently have a catchment area. Any data listed on external websites is out of our control.



- 5.6. TH confirmed that parent surveys had been sent out and 80 responses had been received so far. Unfortunately, some emails from the school are finding their way into parent's junk mail.
- 5.7. SB congratulated the school on receiving the International School Award – Foundation Level. Staff confirmed that this news would be shared with parents.
- 5.8. TH talked about a very positive open morning, which included a visit from the Assistant Director of Education at AfC. The school was able to showcase areas of strength and Teaching and Learning was in a good place.
- 5.9. RK highlighted the letter received by the school from Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP, congratulating the school on the high levels of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics assessments for Key Stage 2. The letter acknowledges that the progress made by students between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, places the school amongst the top 5% of primary schools with the country.
- 5.10. The Governors congratulated TH and staff for this achievement and staff confirmed that the letter had been passed on to parents and would be published on the website.
- 5.11. Governors discussed how a measurement of added value would be assessed in the future, without causing undue burden to Year 6 teachers.
- 5.12. **Q: How does the school address and manage risks and where is this documented?**
A: There isn't currently a collective document dedicated to risks. They will be factored into other reports, i.e. Estates risks.
- 5.13. The Governors discussed the benefits of creating a risk document and TH to create a template for Autumn 2024. **ACTION TH**

6. Spring Term SIP Report and SDP

- 6.1. School staff confirmed that progress was being made. Progress data for children from Reception to Year 6 was not accurate, due to student's leaving and in-year admissions. Any monitoring needs to be simple and strategic. It was noted that it is important to be aware that the data does not reflect the circumstances behind the figures. It was also highlighted that any monitoring must not cause undue stress to students.
- 6.2. The governors considered whether there was a CDP opportunity for staff, to look at how data was used.
- 6.3. **Q: Could you let us know whether the EYFS advisor visits have been beneficial?**
A: The EYFS job share has been very good and the visits confirmed that the school have been doing things correctly.
- 6.4. Staff confirmed that a Maths advisor was due to visit after Easter and an English advisor was planned for June. An assessment course was also scheduled to look at the school processes.
- 6.5. Governors were invited to ask questions about the SIP report. No questions were raised.

7. Curriculum Committee update/minutes

- 7.1. SB confirmed that governors had read the committee meeting minutes.
- 7.2. DC provided an update for the recent Geography link visit. The curriculum is very clearly mapped and the outcomes for children are achieved in an effective way. DC was able to look through examples of work from Years 2, 4 and 6 and was



impressed with the standard of work. Children received a strong foundation in the subject, the trips were very successful and there was an effective crossover with other subject areas.

7.3. Q: How was the experience for the subject lead?

A: It was an enjoyable experience for staff and useful to focus on key questions for Ofsted coaching. Annuals visit for foundation subjects are proving to be very effective.

7.4. Governors were pleased to hear that visits were going well, post-Covid, and staff confirmed this had been an overall positive experience.

7.5. Governors were also invited to attend Celebration assemblies and Living Values assemblies. Governors will need to email TH in advance, if they wish to attend.

8. Pastoral Committee update/minutes.

8.1. JS provided an update to the Board. The well-being room was in progress and TH confirmed this had been helpful. JS suggested that new quality objectives should be considered. A visit by the pastoral team was due to be scheduled. **ACTION -JS**

8.2. RK outlined the after school activities being offer to PPG students, where targeted support was offered.

8.3. MoB talked about the feelings box initiative, and how this was supporting children. So far this had been used by 16 children. It was felt this was working very well.

8.4. JW mentioned that the Online Safety Policy contained highlighted sections and it was confirmed that this had now been removed.

8.5. The governors discussed how the IT usage and Online Safety policies overlapped. It was suggested that the Online Safety policy should now sit within the Pastoral Committees remit. All governors were in agreement. **ACTION – Clerk**

8.6. SB explained that the Exclusions policy would now be voted on at the FGB. This is because all governors may be required to be involved in an exclusion, and should be in agreement with the content of the policy.

POLICY VOTES

EXCLUSION POLICY

8.7. The Exclusion policy approved unanimously by the Board. **ACTION – Clerk**

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

8.8. The Communications Policy needs to return to the Pastoral Committee to include the Separated Parents guidelines. **ACTION - SCHOOL**

9. Resources Committee update/minutes

9.1. DM provided an update to the board. The School Financial Value Survey had been reviewed and approved by the committee.



9.2. MW noted that the work involved in the survey would usually be carried out by the SBM, but had been supported by the Resources Committee, due to exceptional circumstances.

SCHOOL FINANCIAL VALUE SURVEY APPROVAL

9.3. The School Financial Value Survey was approved unanimously by the Board. SB to sign the survey. **ACTION - SB**

EARLY CAREER TEACHING POLICY VOTE

9.4. The Early Career Teaching policy was approved unanimously by the Board. **ACTION – Clerk**

9.5. SB highlighted that governors needed to exercise due diligence in making sure the ECT policy was being adhered to. The board unanimously agreed. It was confirmed that there are currently 7 ECT members of staff at the school.

10. Communication to PSA, Staff and Parents

10.1. The board discussed communications sent by the school and whether it is possible to monitor whether messages are being seen. TH confirmed that some emails from the school are finding their way into parent's junk mail. It's not something the school is able to monitor and there needs to be an IT solution to the problem.

10.2. The governors discussed whether school reps can help to pass on any messages through WhatsApp groups.

10.3. The issue appears to be particularly affecting parents with younger children, suggesting the problem has started in recent years and especially with the "Notices" emails. TH to follow this up with IT. **ACTION – TH**

10.4. SB asked how any requests to parents was responded to and it was felt that there was approximately 50% engagement. The school used the newsletter as the main source of information. The board discussed whether any links or messages could be flagged elsewhere.

10.5. SB asked about the parent forum and it was confirmed that this was a good sounding board.

10.6. SB reminded governors to book in any visits directly with MOB.

10.7. SB updated the board about the new DfE governor handbook that was released in March.

10.8. MW confirmed that, although the content had not changed, the format was easier to read and a section on statutory policies had been included.

10.9. It was discussed whether Governor days should be more frequent. The Board and staff agreed that changing this to an annual event would be beneficial.

10.10. Governor attendance at inset days and on learning walks was also discussed.

11. CONFIDENTIAL

11.1. See Appendix A

Meeting ended at 20:36