

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
Meadlands Primary School

**Minutes of the Full Governing Board (FGB) Meeting**  
held in school  
on Thursday 19th May 2022 at 6 to 8:30 pm

**Constitution, Membership and Attendance**

<b>PARENTS (2)</b>	<b>LA (1)</b>	<b>STAFF (2)</b>	<b>COOPTED (8)</b>
Alida Hawthorne (AHa)	<b>Penny Frost (PF)</b>	Sophie McGeoch (SMcG)	Nigel Seymour (NS) - Chair
Christina Powell (CP)		Sarah Taunton Johnson (STJ)	Annabelle Hughes (AH) – Vice Chair
			Ulrich Tiedau (UT)
			Chloe Walkom (CW)
			Lisa Fairmaner (LF)
			John Cannon (JC)
			Kasia Oberc (KO)
			Vacancy

**bold** = absent

Apologies: Penny Frost

Absent without apologies: None

Also present: Jess Bunker (JB), Marie Newman (School Improvement Partner (SIP)) (part), Daija Angeli (clerk)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies and Declarations of Material Interest</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>1.1</b>	The meeting started at 6:05 pm. Chair welcomed all in attendance. Apologies were received from Penny Frost.	
<b>1.2</b>	Governors were reminded of their duty to declare any direct or indirect pecuniary interest which may relate to any matter under discussion on the agenda and none were declared.	

<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b></p> <p><b>2.2</b></p> <p><b>2.3</b></p> <p><b>2.4</b></p> <p><b>2.5</b></p> <p><b>2.6</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes and Actions Log</b></p> <p><b>The minutes of the meeting on 17 March 2022 were approved as an accurate record of the discussion.</b></p> <p>SMcG provided an update on refugees from Ukraine arriving in the area (5.13). Two children had been admitted as pupils to St. Richard's CE Primary. Meadlands has some spaces in reception so pupils may join over the coming months. There is a protocol of admissions that the school needs to follow, so the school could not make a decision on going over capacity.</p> <p>The Chair reviewed the FGB Actions Log.</p> <p>Items on the Log remaining open/ongoing were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour Policy to be shared via GovernorHub.</li> <li>• Succession Planning document to be produced by Chair. Interested governors to respond to doodle poll.</li> <li>• Phishing training for staff.</li> <li>• Consider Link Governor role for data protection.</li> <li>• Check protocol in reporting CPOMS.</li> </ul> <p>The SLT explained that staff will be trained on unconscious bias on the inset day in September. <b>Upon governor's request</b>, SMcG explained that reviewing existing records for unconscious bias was a big piece of work, and still to be undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of SEND/CPOMS records to May FGB.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governor question:</b> Do governors need unconscious bias training?  <b>Governors recommended</b> AfC's unconscious bias training.</p> <p><b>Governor question:</b> What is CPOMS?  Chair explained that CPOMS was the school's system to record any safeguarding activity. Governors would like a demo of the system to understand the reporting of safeguarding concerns better.</p> <p>Closed items included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPG policy has been ratified.</li> <li>• The link between the PPG audit report and the PPG policy has been clarified in the PPG policy.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STJ Governors interested in chairing the GB</b></p>
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<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b></p> <p><b>3.2</b></p> <p><b>3.3</b></p> <p><b>3.4</b></p> <p><b>3.5</b></p>	<p><b>Key headlines from the Education White Paper</b></p> <p>SMcG gave a presentation of the main headlines of the Education White Paper, published in March 2022. The presentation will be made available to governors on GovernorHub following the meeting.</p> <p>“Opportunity for all. Strong schools with great teachers for your child” sets out the vision for the sector for 2030. Its two main aims were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 90% of pupils will achieve expected standards in reading, writing and maths.</li> <li>2. Increase attendance and achievement of home educated children.</li> </ol> <p>SMcG explained that these targets were partly aimed to close the attainment gap, partly a reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic where attendance has taken a dip; e.g. nationwide, only 50% of children looked after (LAC) were attending school at present. Target 1 was ambitious but achievable at Meadlands.</p> <p>Pillar 1: An excellent teacher for every child SMcG commented that resilience in newly qualified teachers had been different recently and that Early Careers Teachers (ECT) found it harder to step into their new roles. It will be interesting to see how this is addressed in the initial teacher training (ITT) reforms.</p> <p><b>Governor question:</b> Does different mean more or less resilient? SMcG answered that in her experience resilience was worse than it had been 6 to 7 years ago. She further explained that the probation period had been extended to two years, training was more centralised with less local and peer-to-peer support, so the investment by the school was now higher. A small school could only support one or two ECT at a time, as the mentoring expected had a high impact on the workload of more experienced teachers. SMcG recommended making the development of the Early Years a focus of the School Development Plan (SDP) going forward to develop expertise.</p> <p>Pillar 2: High standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance SMcG explained that an “arms-length” curriculum meant that more online resources - demos and teaching resources similar to those provided by Oak</p>	

	<p>Academy during the pandemic - would be available to teachers to lighten their workload. A richer, longer school week had already been implemented at Meadlands. She suggested a greater focus on speech and language development for the SDP.</p>	
3.6	<p>Pillar 3: Targeted support for every child that needs it. SMcG commented that it was still unclear how the parent pledge, as well as many other aspects of the white paper, would look in practice. There were very high expectations placed on the SENCo. SMcG suggested that a support hub for safeguarding could be created in Ham to help parents with safeguarding concerns.</p>	
3.7	<p>Pillar 4 – A stronger and fairer school system. This brought the trust and multi academy trust back to the table. SMcG recommended starting conversations with other schools.</p>	
3.8	<p><b>SEND Green Paper</b> STJ summarised the findings of this green paper which was still under consultation until 1<sup>st</sup> July. SLT concluded her presentation with a recommendation to support SEND in the Early Years. At the school level, it was important to think smartly about the SENCo role and what this will look like in the future. The presentation will be made available to governors on GovernorHub following the meeting.</p>	
3.9	<p>The Chair thanked SMcG and STJ for their helpful presentations. Governors would need to consider how the impact on their strategy; a lot of the work had already been done, but there were also opportunities for development.</p>	
3.10	<p><b>Governor question:</b> Has the Government made budgetary arrangements to support the implementation? Did the supply of central resources mean centralisation of the curriculum that left no scope for local customisation? <b>SMG</b> said this was dictated by the Ofsted handbook. This had moved away from a focus on data recently but</p>	

<p><b>3.11</b></p> <p><b>3.12</b></p> <p><b>3.13</b></p> <p><b>3.14</b></p>	<p>Target 1 implied that data were back on the agenda. She would be horrified if the resource hub removed the ability to respond to local circumstances and believed that it was meant to reduce teachers' workload.</p> <p><b>Governor question:</b> Will the high standards for achievement mean that it will be hard to keep the current rich curriculum?  <b>SMcG explained</b> that in a traditional independent school the focus was on maths, reading and writing in the morning sessions while the afternoon could be reserved for enriching activities like arts and sports.</p> <p><b>Governor question:</b> How realistic is it to achieve the ambitions outlined in Green Paper?  <b>SMcG explained</b> that experts in speech and language support and health would need to be available to achieve this. So there had to be a shift elsewhere. JB added that there was currently a disconnect in health provision. Under 5s were supported by the Ham Clinic, after that responsibility lay with the school. Schools had to be proactive to get information on the children.</p> <p><b>Governor question:</b> Have there been discussions on alliances between local primary schools?  Chair explained this would be discussed later in the agenda with details to follow. He concluded that there was a risk that the workforce was not there to achieve the ambitions of the Green Paper.</p> <p>The governing board reviewed the following policies:  Early Career Teacher  Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs  Complaints  Equality  <b>All policies were approved.</b></p>	<p><b>Approved</b>  <b>Approved</b>  <b>Approved</b>  <b>Approved</b></p>
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p> <p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>Quality of Education</b></p> <p>The Governor Link visit reports had been circulated to governors via GovernorHub prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Chair advised governors to direct questions regarding the staff wellbeing and SATs reports to PF via GovernorHub.</p> <p>AHa and CW reported back from their Early Years (EYFS) visit in early March.</p>	

	<p>KS had outlined challenges around provision in the EY. She was excited about the new building; given the age range of the children, their needs varied widely. The nursery had many new starters, and the focus needed to be on social learning as this was delayed due to Covid-19 isolation and lack of interaction.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> LT supported the EY and was currently thinly spread, though she commented that a good supply teaching was in place. She expressed excitement about the SLT training she participates in.</p> <p><b>4.5</b> The EY reported had undergone system changes, and reporting requirements were now much more time intensive for the teachers without providing feedback. The link governors expressed confidence in LT's abilities to manage the challenges facing the EY.</p> <p><b>4.6</b> KO noted on her recent Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) visit that the USP of the school was that it enabled teaching staff to research education and go deeply into a subject. This was a great asset to keep in mind.</p> <p><b>4.7</b> Chair reminded all governors to schedule link visits for the summer term and post reports on GovernorHub.</p> <p><i>STJ and KO left the room briefly during the discussion.</i></p>	<b>All</b>
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b></p> <p><b>5.2</b></p> <p><b>5.3</b></p>	<p><b>Budget and Resources</b></p> <p>Chair reported that given the recent development in staff changes, the FGB was not in a position to approve the final draft budget 2022-23. AH added that draft notes from the FSG meeting on 16 May 2022 could be found on GovernorHub.</p> <p>NS explained that a few things had changed from the previous draft and the school was in a much better outturn position than expected. The FSG identified several risks for the coming financial year. Governors had agreed to budget for increasing energy costs and had conducted scenario planning around staffing.</p> <p><b>Governors decided</b> to approve the final draft budget during their meeting on 16 June or earlier via email.</p>	

5.4	Chair added that the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) had already been discussed and approved.	
6.	<p><b>Behaviour and Attitudes</b></p> <p>6.1 Attendance: STJ reported that attendance without nursery was 93.76%, and 93.19%, compared to 95.60% three years ago) with nursery. A 2 to 3% drop in attendance is observed nationwide. 12 pupils were persistent absentees, none of the LAC and as most of them were over 85% it was hoped that attendance would be at 90% by the end of term.</p> <p>6.2 Racism and exclusions: STJ reported there had been one incident of racism; two children shouted a racist statement in class. The children were excluded from class the following morning, parents and AfC were informed.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Personal Development</b></p> <p>7.1 School Improvement Partner (SIP) Marie Newman joined the meeting via Zoom.</p> <p>7.2 SMcG outlined the staff structure and staff changes. The school had 11 qualified teachers, including the HT. One teacher was currently on maternity leave; she was planning to return in December and had given her preference for a year group. Four teachers resigned this term, SMcG, JB, MB and JP. This was a substantial shift in staff.</p> <p>7.3 <b>Governors question:</b> Has the deadline for resignations passed? SMcG: No, this was 31 May but no other staff changes were anticipated.</p> <p>7.4 SMcG was pleased that STJ had agreed to be Interim HT from September onwards. They had discussed the support needed; STJ would like to be supported by an experienced HT 1 or 2 days/ week as well as retaining the independent adviser, Chris Byrne. In addition, she would like to arrange half termly, rather than termly, SIP visits. SMcG and STJ concluded that this support was needed to maintain the quality of teaching and learning with the turnover of staff, current staff stepping into interim management roles and facilitating ECT training.</p>	

7.5	Staff recruitment encompassed a new Interim Deputy HT, new SENCo, a new SLT, a new Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL as well as three new class teachers. Interviews for class teachers would take place on Monday with six candidates (two experienced teachers and four ECT, one in their second year).	
7.6	SMcG explained that the interim arrangements still needed to be discussed with Kate Cockle, Human Resources Consultant at the Royal Borough of Kingston. There was interest and strength for the Deputy HT position within the existing team. If a Deputy HT was recruited from outside, the school may end up “top heavy”; suggested was a rolling termly contract until a new HT was in place.	
7.7	The SENCo was identified as the biggest area of risk, partly because JB was leaving, and partly due to the renewed focus on the role. SMcG said it was too late to interview for a new person to start in September. Options were to invite internal expressions of interest, collaborate with other schools, and/or ask AfC for greater support, i.e. SEND Lead Education Adviser Sarah Herbert to provide 2 to 3 sessions per half term.	
7.8	SMcG stated that the new SLT could be recruited from existing staff which had been developed, though these may be interim arrangements. In addition, it had been considered to move away from subject leads to EY, KS1 and KS2 leads; this discussion could be postponed until a new HT was in place.	
7.9	Regarding the DSL and Deputy DSL, capacity could be built with non-teaching staff (Jolene Gee) and will be kept in mind during the interviews on Monday.	
7.10	<b>Governor question:</b> Is the experience with lower resilience a common one? SMcG answered that from conversations with colleagues and AfC this is common, and there had been a shift towards lower resilience in the past 6 to 7 years.	
7.11	<b>Governor question:</b> Is JP leaving with immediate effect? SMcG – The contract will run through the end of the school year, but JP would not return to work.	
7.12		

	<p><b>Governor question:</b> Will the current supply teacher continue? SMcG - This is an operational question and falls within the bigger staffing question.</p>	
7.13	<p><b>Governor comment:</b> We developed our own talent so hopefully they will be able to step into the many interim positions.</p>	
7.14	<p><b>Governor comment:</b> The more experienced applicants for the current vacancies may be interested in stepping into senior leadership positions.</p>	
7.15	<p>Marie Newman suggested for the SLT to check the compatibility of providers for the ECT with one year of experience.</p>	
7.16	<p><b>Governor question:</b> What specialist support is provided by Chris Byrne? <b>Chair</b> answered that Chris Byrne reviewed the curriculum and curriculum uplift. It was to be discussed whether he would continue to support the school, or whether sufficient support could be provided elsewhere.</p>	
7.17	<p><b>Governor question:</b> Why does the SLT need to talk to Kate Cockle? Was this to discuss the proposed structure or contractual questions? <b>SMcG</b> explained that ideally, she would have presented answers to the questions tonight, but Kate Cockle had not been available to clarify the contractual questions the HT needed to ask.</p>	
7.18	<p><b>Governor comment:</b> We need to ensure the process is fair, and staff can submit expressions of interest. We also need to think about other ways of staffing.</p>	
7.19	<p><b>Governor question:</b> Would the SLT welcome support from governors for the ECT induction? <b>SMcG</b> clarified that this needed to be done by a qualified teacher. The <b>governor explained</b> that she was, and had done induction in her previous role. <b>Chair</b> thanked her and said it was useful to have this expertise on the Board.</p>	
7.20	<p><b>Governor question:</b> The costs for ECT versus an experienced teacher needed to be considered. <b>Chair</b> said that resources were available, as the budget 2022-23 had been drafted with the current team. The school was in a very fortunate position.</p>	

7.21	<p><b>Governor question:</b> How were the scenarios developed, and which other scenarios were discounted?</p> <p>SMcG said that STJ and herself brainstormed workable solutions, working with what was available to the school.</p>	
7.22	<p><b>Governor question:</b> The SLT was not trying to replace like for like?</p> <p><b>JB</b> – It was worthwhile to consider a scenario with a SENCo that was not a class teacher and DHT at the same time. <b>STJ</b> added that one DHT was usual for small primary schools.</p> <p><b>Chair</b> – There is a risk when staff took on part class teaching, part other responsibilities. How do we monitor this risk?</p>	
7.23	<p><b>Governor question:</b> Is there more flexibility in recruitment when the new DHT is also a class teacher?</p> <p><b>STJ</b> – The most important thing are strong class teachers in all classes. When considering internal recruitment, we would not want to remove one of the strongest class teachers from teaching, but rather lead on Teaching and Learning while teaching part time.</p>	
7.24	<p><b>Governor question:</b> Should the school try other things to support learning?</p> <p>SMcG explained that the school had decided against outsourcing booster sessions. These were now run by support staff members who worked additional hours. This has proved beneficial, as they were well aware of the day-to-day teaching and had a good rapport with the class teachers.</p>	
7.25	<p><b>Governor comment:</b> Supporting safeguarding and SEN depends on external services. These services, social workers and speech and language therapists were also under pressure.</p>	
7.26	<p>Marie Newman commented that the initial thoughts shared by the SLT were very helpful. AfC often recommended adding leadership support for interim HT. She recommended add additional support around SEN as this was a key area of risk. This could be provided by an experienced SENCo from another local school. Additional SIP visits were not a problem.</p>	
7.27	<p><i>SMcG, STJ and JB left the room for the confidential discussion; see separate confidential minutes.</i></p>	

<b>8.</b>	Safeguarding The updated Single Central List was not discussed but was signed following the meeting	
<b>9.</b>	Reflection on the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Diversity and inclusion</li><li>- Format and content</li></ul>	
<b>10.</b>	Date of next meetings: Thursday 16 June 2022 at 7:30 am (1 hr zoom) Thursday 14 July 2022 at 6 pm	

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.