

Full Governing Board Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 26th March 2024
at 6:00pm at the Sherwood Hill Campus and via Google Meet



Fran Boto (FB)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Penelope Bradbury (PB)	Parent Governor	Present	
Steve Cooper (SC)	Co-opted Governor (<i>to be appointed today</i>)	Present	
Gemma Davies (GD)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Robin Dear (RD)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Vajeha Haq (VH)	Parent Governor	Present	
David Murden (DM)	Ex-Officio Governor / Headteacher	Present	
Harriet Nicholson (HN)	Staff Governor		Absent
Lindsay Sedola (LS)	Co-opted Governor (<i>to be appointed today</i>)	Present	
Shauna Rubins (SR)	Associate to the Board (Non-voting)	Present	
Katerina Kelesedi (KK)	Observer / potential governor candidate	Present	
Beth Brookes (BB)	Head of School	Present	
Anna Robinson (AR)	Wellbeing; Trans-disciplinary Specialist		Absent
Barry Walder (BW)	Financial Consultant		Absent
Rosemary Viggiani (RV)	Clerk	Present	

	Item	Action
1.	<p>Welcome; Apologies for absence and quorum (5)</p> <p>GD opened the meeting at 6:05pm and welcomed all to the Sherwood Hill Campus. Apologies were received and accepted from HN and AR for personal reasons. BW also sent apologies that were accepted. The meeting was declared quorate (6/7)</p> <p>Governors noted the resignation of Twanieka Alcindor, Sue Smith and Chris Williams and gave thanks for their support for the Board; they sent best wishes to all for their future.</p> <p>Appointment of Lindsay Sedola and Steve Cooper as Co-opted Governors</p> <p>GD introduced Lindsay Sedola (LS) and Steve Cooper (SC); both are proposed as co-opted members of the Board and will bring significant strengths to the Board, particularly with regards to finance and premises.</p> <p>LS and SC left the room.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors appointed Lindsay Sedola (LS) and Steve Cooper (SC) as co-opted governors subject to acceptable references and DBS checks.</p> <p>LS and SC rejoined the meeting and were informed of their appointment and welcomed to the Board.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board appointed Steve Cooper as Chair of the Premises, Health & Safety Committee.</p> <p><u>To note further recruitment progress</u></p> <p>GD reported that she is still following up potential new governors.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.</p>	



	Item	Action
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th December 2023</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th December, 2023 as a true and complete record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters arising (see action list below)</p> <p>The actions outstanding are noted in the table below.</p> <p>ACTION 112: The school asked for approval in principle for three residential trips:</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the following trips in principle, subject to completion of the necessary risk assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bronze Duke of Edinburgh: 11th / 12th May at High Ashurst - Primary Residential 13th / 14th June at Woodlarks - Post 16 week at Woodlarks. 	
3.	<p>FINANCE</p> <p>Update from the Finance Committee (Meeting of 27th February 2024)</p> <p><i>The Minutes from the Finance Committee were circulated prior to the meeting.</i></p> <p>GD had chaired this meeting and provided an update noting that one significant point for discussion was with regards to the fees for Out-of-Borough children. It had been decided that the school should bill £38k / £32k according to the campus and inform the Boroughs that a further increase will be notified in due course. In the meantime it was noted that the school has received an advance from Sutton to cover the costs.</p> <p><i>Governors asked if these Boroughs had now been invoiced?</i></p> <p>DM confirmed that they had been invoiced for all but two students. This has taken significant resources and it has become apparent that the Local Authorities' records often don't match those of the school – and this also applies to Sutton. The cause of the confusion is often where a family moves between Boroughs. Discussions are ongoing and there is still a considerable amount of work to be done to ensure that all parties are in agreement and the school is appropriately funded.</p> <p>DM set out the ongoing discussions with Sutton with regards to funding moving forwards. A tiered system is being developed according to the complexity of the child. Initially based on the High Needs Block Model a set of formulas have been developed that generate a fair funding sum appropriate to the needs of the child which means that decisions regarding placement of students will not be influenced by the funding provided by the Borough. These discussions are still ongoing but are close to agreement. Subject to this being agreed Sutton have confirmed that they will clear both the in year and cumulative deficit.</p> <p>Discussions have also been held with Sutton as to whether the school should add an admin fee to the charge for Out-of-Borough children. However, DM reported that, at the current time, Sutton are in favour of charging the same fee to all Boroughs and any additional costs will be incorporated in the overall funding when agreed.</p> <p><i>Governors asked about this strategy noting that Out-of-Borough children do require additional work in terms of administration / safeguarding. They questioned whether this should therefore be billed to the other Boroughs?</i></p> <p>DM acknowledged that this was a fair point but there are a number of reasons why both Sutton and the school feel that this is the fairest approach, in line with the Nolan Principles and gets eliminates the risk to the school. It would not be appropriate to prioritise children according to their locality.</p>	

Item	Action
<p>DM noted that it is very encouraging to be so close to agreeing a solution. The planned family liaison roles which have been discussed for more than two years can be filled once agreed and DM outlined the positive impact that this will have on all parties - the staff, students and their families.</p> <p>DM reported that the work that Anna has undertaken in terms of the assessments for these children, alongside her rigorous and detailed record keeping has been fundamental in these discussions allowing the school and Authority to reach an agreement.</p> <p><i>Governors gave their thanks to Anna. They also asked about the plans moving forwards and the risks associated with incremental drift in the costs.</i></p> <p>DM confirmed that the school will need to submit a deficit recovery plan – hopefully more of a “staying in the black” plan over a three to five year period with a narrative as to how to sustain a balanced budget. Sutton hopes to provide enough for this year and next year and we will review each child’s needs each term. If a child needs less support we will be transparent about that.</p> <p><i>Governors thanked the Head for his update.</i></p> <p>Risk Register – to note discussions at FAR.</p> <p><i>The Risk Register had been circulated prior to the meeting</i></p> <p>The Head had prepared an updated Risk Register prior to the FAR Meeting.</p> <p>RD and DM will further review this before the next FAR Meeting in the Summer Term.</p> <p>Management Accounts to end of February 2024 (M11)</p> <p><i>The BMR and associated papers had been circulated prior to the meeting</i></p> <p>GD and BW provided an update in the absence of RD.</p> <p>Discussed the potential drift</p> <p>SFVS</p> <p><i>The SFVS had been circulated prior to the meeting</i></p> <p>It was noted that this had been discussed at finance and tweaked before being circulated; the Board need to sign this off for the LA.</p> <p>The submission was discussed and DM requested that it be approved and sent to Sutton with a cover note or statement to recognise the level of transparency and openness with the Local Authority. Oversight is very strong through both the Governors and via the Local Authority. The school have never hidden anything. Carol is the Finance Manager at Sutton and she is working alongside Isobel for handover – so the Authority have access both inside and out; the school would welcome an audit.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the SFVS for submission to the Local Authority.</p> <p>ACTION: RV/DM / BW to liaise to submit the SFVS to the Local Authority on Thursday with a covering letter and the Spreadsheet of Related Party Transactions. It was noted that the RPT’s are likely to include the L.B. of Croydon, the SET and FOSPS.</p> <p>Budget for 2024-25</p> <p>It was noted that this is not yet available and will be approved on 4th June, prior to submission to the LA by the deadline of 20th June.</p>	<p>05</p>


	Item	Action
4.	<p>Update from other Committees</p> <p><i>Minutes from the Committees were circulated prior to the meeting</i></p> <p><u>Staffing and Curriculum (Meeting of 12th March 2024)</u></p> <p>FB provided an update on the discussions held at the S&C Committee.</p> <p>The Committee had considered the HT Report; and noted that the staffing capacity had clearly been very difficult to manage and has not grown as fast as the school due to the financial situation limiting this; however, this is now close to resolution although it was noted that DM is still awaiting the final letter from the People Committee.</p> <p>Recruitment is improving but the recruitment of Lunchtime supervisors is still a challenge.</p> <p>Wellbeing is very dependent upon the staffing capacity .</p> <p>Attendance is very good here but will be further improved when the school is able to recruit the family liaison staff to chase up on family problems. Attendance will be a standing item on the S&C agenda.</p> <p>PP students are doing really well. It would be helpful if all PP children were registered for the additional funding and this will be followed up when the staffing situation allows it.</p> <p><i>Governors noted that it would also be helpful for the school to be more specific as to how the PP funding is being used.</i></p> <p>There had been a very helpful presentation to the committee on assessment and outcomes and it was noted that the Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are very robust. The school has devised bespoke assessment criteria which are unique to the school and essential for our cohort of students. The school may be able to market this to other schools.</p> <p>FB further noted her visits and observations as the Safeguarding Link Governor. She is pleased to see very robust safeguarding with a holistic, searching approach leaving no stone unturned There is a very impressive culture of safeguarding in the school</p> <p><i>Governors thanked FB for her update.</i></p> <p><u>Premises, Health & Safety Committee (Meeting of 6th February 2024)</u></p> <p>FB had chaired this meeting in the absence of CW; whilst not quorate those present had a very informative update from Karen Cunningham with regards to the checks that are undertaken to ensure that the security is as robust as possible.</p> <p>Karen also updated the Committee regarding the plans for Phase 3 and 4 of the developments</p> <p><i>David Charles had undertaken an inspection report and Governors asked if the school had heard back yet?</i></p> <p>DM stated that they had not yet received his report but they understand that there are no urgent matters to address.</p> <p>It was noted that the Committee discussed the fire alarms incident in December where parents had been asked to pick up children; all were safe but the fobs were not coming back on. Following this the school have reviewed the fire risk assessment and action plans.</p>	
5.	<p>Headteacher's Report – SEF and SDP</p> <p><i>The Senior Leader's report was available prior to the meeting</i></p> <p><u>To note the Headteacher's report and matters arising</u></p> <p>There was nothing further to report that had not been discussed at Committee and in the above reports.</p> <p><i>Governors thanked the Head and his senior Leadership Team for the comprehensive report.</i></p> <p>ACTION: DM to update the "School on a page" for Governors.</p>	06

Item	Action
<p><u>To note progress against the SDP</u></p> <p><i>The updated SDP was circulated prior to the meeting.</i></p> <p>It was noted that this has not changed since Staffing and Curriculum Committee.</p> <p><u>Curriculum presentation</u></p> <p>This was covered in the S&C update.</p> <p>DM updated Governors with regards to the Post 16 curriculum.</p> <p>The leadership group met to review and articulate the curriculum in terms of strengths and areas for improvement - and likewise in terms of assessment. The development relating to assessment is around designing the assessment suite to work alongside the semi-formal curriculum. Documents have been developed to articulate this.</p> <p>With regards to Post 16 the challenge is to make sure that the school differentiate the offering between KS4 and the Post 16 offering which may be found at a college such as Orchard Hill. From this review the school found that our Curriculum is fit for purpose and provides the requisite learning experience to allow students to move on in terms of their learning, living and work related skills.</p> <p>There are a small number of pupils in Post-16 at Sherwood Park and having discreet Post 16 classes is a challenge; most classes are blended with KS4 students and the challenge to differentiate is centred around the students' PLPs. This ensures that the Post 16 students are achieving their performance indicators even though the curriculum is being offered alongside KS4. The school are confident that this is working well. The key question is whether their entitlement is being delivered well for each child and the school are developing an audit to gently hold teachers to account.</p> <p>Standing Item: Safeguarding, Health, Safety and GDPR</p> <p><u>GDPR:</u></p> <p>BB reported that there had been a potential GDPR breach for the Hill where a therapeutic listening device was misplaced on trip. This was held on record but no further action was required as there appeared to be no risk of individual children being identifiable.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding:</u></p> <p>DM updated governors with regards to the change of protocol for pick up and drop off at the Park. A letter was sent to parents at end of term asking them to wait in the sheltered area until 9:10 or 9:15 for safeguarding reasons. All visitors will be asked to wait under the canopy until after that time. The school will be open to feedback on these arrangements.</p> <p><i>Governors asked if there were any seating in that area?</i></p> <p>DM confirmed that there is no seating outside. This is not ideal long term and the school are exploring the provision of vestibule areas – but this is difficult for wheel chair users but the safeguarding of students is paramount.</p> <p>There is also increased vigilance around visitors with staff being more vigilant regarding name badges and challenging people where they are not visible.</p> <p>The challenges at the Hill were also noted where there is no covered area outside and it is not always possible for staff to wear badges for health and safety reasons.</p> <p><i>Governors asked whether it might be possible for visitors to be held in the area outside of the office at the Park – possibly with fold-down seating?</i></p> <p>It was agreed that this might be something to further explore.</p> <p>DM said that other developments being explored were the opportunities for a bench outside with the covered area being extended into the car park.</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p>DM outlined some other options as regards the buses and parent drop-off that are being considered; there are plans to pilot these options during the summer term. The priority is to ensure the safety of families and students.</p> <p><i>A parent governor shared an experience at the Hill where they were asked to wait when new members of staff had not recognised them. They were asked to wait until a member of staff could be contacted who could verify their identity before the school would allow them to pick up their son.</i></p> <p>It was noted that, whilst this was an inconvenience, it was sound safeguarding practice.</p>	
6.	<p>Policies and Reports for approval</p> <p><i>Policies and related documents had been circulated prior to the meeting.</i></p> <p><u>To approve Term Dates and INSET dates for 2024/25</u></p> <p>DM confirmed that the planned dates meet the legal requirements for Special Schools.</p> <p>Whilst the number of sessions are very clear for mainstream schools, it is less clear for Special Schools. DM confirmed that he had reviewed the legislation and spoken to Kieran at the Local Authority who agreed with his assessment and that he had done everything reasonable to ensure that the school meets the legislative requirements.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors approved the term dates and inset dates for 2024/25</p> <p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>The GDPR Policies were approved at the last meeting. It was noted that the school does not collect or use biometric data for children and a note has been put on the website to that effect.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors deferred the approval of the CCTV Policy and data privacy statements to the summer term</p> <p>DECISION: Governors deferred approval of the Careers Education and Guidance Policy to the next meeting and approved an extension of its review date to the end of the Summer Term</p> <p>BB noted that the Careers Policy had in fact been provided prior to the meeting but had been missed by the Clerk.</p> <p>ACTION: RV to circulate the Careers Education and Guidance Policy for all to read and reply back with any comments or to confirm that it is OK. Governors to formally approve this policy at the next FGB or at Strategy Meeting in May.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the Health and Safety Policy</p> <p>TO NOTE: The Board noted that the school does not have to provide a Gender Pay Gap report as it employs fewer than 250 people.</p> <p><i>Governors expressed concern at the number of policies not yet reviewed according to the schedule.</i></p> <p>DM noted that this was due to the staffing situation. It would also be helpful to review which policies need to come to the Board for approval and which can be delegated to the Headteacher.</p> <p>ACTION: RV, DM and Ciara to review the schedule of policies for approval at the Strategy Day or Summer Term FGB.</p>	<p>07</p> <p>08</p>

	Item	Action
	<p>DECISION: The Board deferred approval of the following policies to the Summer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lettings Policy - Equality Information and Objectives (PSED Report) - Educational Visits Policy & Emergency Outings Guidelines - Induction and Probation Policy - Staff Grievance Policy - Capability Procedure 	
7.	<p>Governor Visits and Training</p> <p><u>Governor Visits:</u></p> <p>Reports of Governor Visits had been shared prior to the meeting and key points were discussed and noted.</p> <p>FB summarised her Safeguarding Governor report.</p> <p><u>Governor Training:</u></p> <p>VH reported that she had attended two recent courses online on Learning Link - the governance of SEND and also Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – both on 21st March 2024.</p> <p>VH noted that the training on SEND focused mainly on the requirements for Mainstream Schools. However, it was useful in that it highlighted some of the questions that would be helpful for Sherwood Park. This included consideration of the evidence that the school has as regards to how successful the school is at meeting the needs of pupils. Where outcomes are missed, governors should ask why and probe as to any barriers to improvement. Ultimately the question is with regards to what action the Board should take to address these things.</p> <p>It is important to ask the right questions – scrutiny questions – why? Challenging questions to hold the school to account.</p> <p>As regards the equality / diversity training this was worthwhile. It took the form of a game / questionnaire using the Harvard research re unconscious bias.</p> <p>The value of training was discussed – including how it can open eyes as to how governors and staff in other schools view the role of, and practice in, special schools.</p> <p>It was noted that Sherwood Park is now a restraint free school; whilst certain circumstances may require it – for instance if a child was about to run out in front of a car – the school use no holds on our children in the normal course of events. No child will be forced to remain in a room if they do not want to do so. TA's are experts in their field and facilitate learning in any and every environment – even if the TA's themselves do not necessarily view themselves as experts, they very much are.</p> <p>Governors noted the term “back-pack learners” as describing the learning environment at the school.</p> <p>The recent TES report is disappointing with regards to its response to the need – or otherwise – for restraint. If a child has no ‘voice’ then they are very vulnerable.</p> <p>The range of training available to governors was noted. Whilst the Board are not extending their contract with Merton on the grounds of expense, this should not significantly affect the training available through a range of other sources including the Learning Link, Ofsted, the Home Office, Governors for Schools, Better Governor and other sources.</p> <p>There is still the need for all new governors to undertake an induction and training re Safeguarding. The Clerk can also provide an induction re Governor Hub etc.</p> <p>ACTION: RV to arrange training for new Governors including a tour of the school arranged through DM / Rachael.</p>	09

	Item	Action
	<p><u>Skills Audit</u></p> <p>This will be reviewed at the Strategy day</p> <p><u>Preparation for Ofsted</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the Strategy day would be used to consider the key questions and appropriate responses. E.g. with regards to the curriculum, if asked how you know that children are working to the curriculum you can talk about the personalised learning programmes etc. The watch words are to have confidence, transparency and honesty. To have confidence in our collective expertise and lead the inspector to find the school's strengths.</p>	
8.	<p>Correspondence to the Chair / Chair's Actions</p> <p>There was no correspondence to report.</p>	
9.	<p>Confidential Items</p> <p>There were no confidential items.</p>	
10.	<p>Any other business / Dates of future meetings</p> <p>There was no other business.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the new governors for showing an interest in our school.</p> <p>It was noted that the FGB in the Summer term is being re-arranged to allow for approval of the budget before the deadline of 20th June.</p> <p><u>Forthcoming Meetings:</u></p> <p>Finance: 30th April 2024 PHS: 7th May 2024 Strategy Day: 21st May 2024 FGB: 4th June 2024 (<i>changed from July 9th</i>) S&C: 18th June 2024 Finance: 25th June 2024</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 8:10pm</p>	

Signed: <u></u>	Print Name: <u>G. DAVIES</u>
Chair	Date: <u>06.06.24</u>

Action list

Item	Action point	Who	By when	Update
Actions arising from the meeting of the 5 th October 2022				
62	BB to explore how the monies can be transferred from the School Fund account to the main school account.	BB/DM	Oct 22	BB and DM will liaise; action remains open.
Actions arising from the meeting of the 7 th June 2023				
108	AR to include questions about Governance in the parents' survey in early 2024.	AR	Jan 24	The standard Parent Survey will come out in Summer 1; action remains open.
Actions arising from the meeting of the 19 th July 2023				
112	AR to review the process for approving trips including the appointment of EVC's at each campus and agreeing the process for governor approval of high risk trips.	AR	Aut 23	Both Assistant Heads have attended recent training and will review this policy for approval in the Summer Term; action remains open
118	The school to present an updated Induction and Probation Policy for approval in the Autumn Term 2023. Also to present an updated Policy Review Schedule.	BB/DSi	Spring Term 2023	Deferred to the Summer Term; Ciara is reviewing the Policy schedule; action remains open
Actions arising from the meeting of the 26 th September 2023				
23/04	CW, RD and GD to draft responses to the potential Ofsted Questions sheet.	CW/RD GD	1/12/23	Action remains open; RV to resend the Ofsted sheet with GD comments included to GD, FB, RD and SC to add model answers relevant to their Committee Chair Responsibilities. The Board had training last year and the aim of completing this template is to identify where the Board needs more training / knowledge.
Actions arising from the meeting of the 26 th March 2024				
05	RV/DM / BW to liaise to submit the SFVS to the Local Authority on Thursday with a covering letter and the Spreadsheet of Related Party Transactions. It was noted that the RPT's are likely to include the L.B. of Croydon, the SET and FOSPS.	RV/DM / BW	28/03/23	Note post meeting: RV emailed the SFVS and draft covering note to BW, copying DM on 27/03.

Item	Action point	Who	By when	Update
06	DM to update the "School on a page" for Governors.	DM	May 24	
07	RV to circulate the Careers Education and Guidance Policy for all to read and reply back with any comments or to confirm that it is OK. Governors to formally approve this policy at the next FGB or at Strategy Meeting in May.	RV / All	May 24	
08	RV, DM and Ciara to review the schedule of policies for approval at the Strategy Day or Summer Term FGB.	RV, DM, Ciara	May 24	
09	RV to arrange training for new Governors including a tour of the school arranged through DM / Rachael.	RV	April 24	

