

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Chase Bridge Primary School held at the school on Wednesday 25 March 2015 at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Mr John Justice (Chair) Ms Rebecca Hill
Mr Iyas AlQasem Mr Andrew King (Headteacher)
Ms Una Blair Ms Francesca Prior
Fr David Cloake Ms Pippa Prior
Ms Claire Debney Mrs Janet Scott
Mr Mike Dormer Mrs Eleanor Wright
Councillor Alexander Ehmann

Also attended: Mr Brian Ostro, Associate Member (Deputy Headteacher)
Ms Pippa Felsing (School Business Manager)
Miss Beryl Hawkins (Clerk to the Governors)

1. Apologies Apologies were received from Mr Will Arnold, Ms Caroline McCarthy and Mr Mark Potter.

2. Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.

3. Membership

3.1 Iyas AlQasem, parent governor elected for a term of four years ending on 27 February 2019, was welcomed to the governing body. All governors introduced themselves.

3.2 The resignation of Major Shane Green, co-opted governor, was received.

3.3 The governing body received a current membership list and noted that there were vacancies for three co-opted governors. It was agreed that the vacancies should be filled after further consideration of the restructuring proposals and arrangements for recruitment and induction of governors. **AK, JJ, JS**

4. Restructuring of the Governing Body The governing body received:

- A proposal to restructure the governing body – discontinuing the School Improvement Committee and Community and Resources Committee and sharing out their work between the whole governing body and designated link governors
- Suggested link areas between the Middle Management Team roles and governors
- A draft annual planner based on the proposals
- A draft governor role description.

The governing body discussed the proposal, considering its benefits and drawbacks and questioning John Justice, Janet Scott and Andrew King on its implications for staff and governors.

It was noted that:

- The school was judged to be Good when last inspected by Ofsted and now aspired to be Outstanding. Governance was an area that needed to improve: the success of the faculty link governor role had not been consistent across the faculties.
- The whole governing body would continue to be collectively responsible for holding the executive to account. There would be no change in the liability of individual governors.
- The purpose of the link governor role would be to provide an overview of how strategic and statutory responsibilities were being put into practice.
- Visits to see policy being put into practice did not need to be long.
- Employers were required to give governors up to three days leave without pay to enable them to carry out their role, but governors often found that it was not practicable to take time off for school business.
- The reason for the proposed change was linked to the outcomes of the annual review. The key messages indicated that the school needed to improve the rate of progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. In order to achieve this the staff team had been reorganised, with the emphasis on year group leaders rather than faculties. The change in focus of the governing body was proposed because of the changed focus of the staff team.
- The second reason for the proposed change was the statutory requirement for the governing body to have an overview of statutory policies.

It was agreed that the proposed structure would:

- reduce duplication of work
- provide an all round focused level of scrutiny
- provide an excellent development opportunity for staff in the Middle Management Team
- allow the governing body to concentrate on its strategic functions
- enable the governing body to make more informed decisions
- make the role of individual governors more manageable by allowing them to concentrate on and take responsibility for a smaller work area and at the same time be more knowledgeable and able to contribute to the overall work of the governing body.

The governing body agreed that in order for the proposed structure to be successful:

- All governors would need to take their share of work and ensure that visits took place and reports were produced as timetabled.
- Governors who were not able to commit to visiting the school during the school day as proposed for the main link governor role should inform John or Andrew, who would try to fit them into a designated role that matched their availability – for some designated roles visiting during the school day would be less important.
- Every governor, including staff governors, should have a designated role.

- The governors' day should continue as an integral part of the annual cycle of development planning.
- Induction of governors needed to be robust and completed without delay.
- The structure of the governing body should be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it was fit for purpose.
- Named governor roles should be reviewed at least annually to ensure that governors were well matched to their roles, to assist with succession planning and to help to maintain a consistent level of scrutiny and challenge.

The governing body agreed unanimously to the proposed change in governing body structure with effect from 23 April 2015, subject to approval of necessary documentation and the appointment of governors to designated roles at an additional meeting to be held on 22 April 2015. **AK, JJ, JS, BMH**

The governing body agreed that:

- Governors linked to year groups should stay in the same year group rather than follow a cohort through the school.
- Governors should inform John Justice of their preferences for designated governor roles. **Governors**

Recently appointed governors were thanked for their feedback, which had resulted in a positive induction experience for Iyas.

5. Governor Recruitment and Induction This item was deferred to the next meeting. **JJ, JS, FP, CD, CMcC**

6. Minutes and Matters Arising

6.1 The minutes of the meetings of the governing body held on 3 December 2014 and 4 February 2015, including a confidential minute, were confirmed and signed (copy in the minute book).

6.2 School Improvement Committee The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 November 2014 were confirmed and signed by the chair of the governing body (copy in the minute book).

6.3 Community and Resources Committee The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March 2015 were confirmed and signed by the chair of the governing body (copy in the minute book).

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

7. Schools Financial Value Standard On the recommendation of the Community and Resources Committee, the governing body approved the Schools Financial Value Standard audit document, including the review of the school's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, and it was signed by the Chair (copy in the minute book).

8. Confidentiality The governing body agreed that no items required a confidential minute.

9. Future Meetings Dates of future meetings were agreed:

Wednesday 22 April 2015 at 6.30 p.m. **Additional meeting**

Wednesday 17 June 2015 at 6.30 p.m.

It was noted that, subject to the necessary agreements at the meeting on 22 April, there would be no further meetings of the School Improvement Committee or the Community and Resources Committee. **Governors**

10. Link Inspector's Termly Monitoring Visit Andrew King stated that he had just received the draft report from Deborah Moss on her termly visit to the school on 18 March 2015.

Andrew read out extracts from the report. These were enlarged on by Brian Ostro, who stated that the report was extremely positive and that Deborah was particularly impressed with: the work the school had done to improve writing; the revised procedures for marking; pupils' responses to marking; and the exemplary follow-up and consistency in marking. The governing body agreed that the proof of the revised procedures would be in pupil performance results. Examples of responses to marking were on display in the staffroom for governors to view.

11. Headteacher's Report The report of the headteacher was received (copy in the minute book), including:

- Factual data relevant to the work of the whole governing body and the School Improvement Committee
- Progress with leadership and management priorities, including the new school priorities and school development plan and changes in teachers' practice
- Monitoring of pupil progress, including the use of and impact of Pupil Premium and Sports Premium funding
- Personnel and appointments
- Development of the school grounds
- Policies due for review
- Admission applications
- Secondary school allocations
- Budget setting for 2015/16
- Chase Bridge International Rugby Competition

Arising from the report:

11.1 Admissions The governing body noted the decrease in the number of allocations to Orleans Park Academy and the increase in allocations to Whitton Academy. It was also noted that most of the allocations to Orleans Park were for siblings.

11.2 School Grounds Andrew asked for volunteers to contact him if they were interested in being involved in the project to develop the school grounds.

Governors

11.3 Dramatic Edge The governing body congratulated the boys' dance group on winning the Dramatic Edge Primary Dance Festival competition.

12. Faculty Reports The governing body received faculty reports from governors' visits (copies in the minute book):

Faculty	Faculty Leader	Linked Governors	Meeting Date
Early Years	Laura Jeffery	Janet Scott	25/11/14
Inclusion	Erica Barber	Pippa Prior	28/11/14
Humanities	Tania Noble	Claire Debney	2/3/15

Janet Scott stated that she had just carried out her spring term visit.

JS

13. School Self-evaluation, School Development Plan and Action Plans The governing body received a printed version of the final annual school self-evaluation document and noted the new priorities with explanatory notes in the headteacher's report. In summary the new priorities were:

1. Improve achievement in writing and phonics
2. Develop target setting, assessment and tracking systems that support all children to make excellent progress
3. Create outstanding leadership and management aligned to year groups
4. Continue to seek ways to enhance practice through supporting and collaborating with other schools
5. Develop outstanding community facilities at the school that enrich and enhance children's learning
6. Team specific priorities

It was noted that the final document would be available on the school website and that the new school development plan, including the new priorities would be circulated to governors and included on the website.

The governing body noted that progress on the leadership and management action plan and the governing body action plan had been covered in the item on restructuring the governing body and in the headteacher's report.

AK

14. Draft Annual Budget Plan The governing body received the draft annual budget plan for 2015/16. On the recommendation of the Community and Resources Committee and after questioning the headteacher, the governing body approved the draft budget plan and it was signed by the Chair. It was noted that:

- The second and third year projected draft budgets showed a negative carryover to the following year. However, anticipated additional income would result in a balanced budget for at least the second year; there were elements of the budget where it was likely that further savings could be made; the school's financial position was comparable to that of schools generally across the borough, and Nick Whitfield, Director of Children's Services, had made representations to Lord Nash about the current financial position of schools.
- The new staffing structure would have a positive effect on the budget.
- Anticipated income from the Rugby World Cup had been included in the budget and allocated to capital costs for improvements to the school grounds.

- Income from use of the school grounds for corporate hospitality had been used to set the budget, whereas in previous years it had been possible to use this income for one-off projects.
- It was not known how the outcome of the general election might affect school budgets, including Pupil Premium grant.

The governing body agreed that the school's financial position would need to be carefully monitored; pressure on schools to expand had lessened and if economies of scale were needed in the future these were more likely to come through collaboration with other schools than through further expansion.

15. Friends of Chase Bridge This item was deferred to the next meeting. **CMcC**

16. Academy Status John Justice and Andrew King reported on the Achieving for Children governors' conference – 'Governance in a Turbulent Era' – that took place on 24 March 2015 and at which the main discussion item was academy status and, in particular, multi-academy trusts. The governing body noted that:

- The local authority recognised that Richmond and Kingston schools were not particularly suited to becoming academies but was encouraging schools to think creatively about establishing free schools and multi-academy trusts in partnership with the local authority.
- The school was confident that in the foreseeable future it could continue to be financially viable without resorting to a change of status.
- The financial benefits of a change of status to academy or multi-academy trust were not known.
- Schools were able to collaborate in order to make financial savings without establishing a multi-academy trust.
- The school could generate income by offering training to other schools as a Teaching School.

The governing body agreed that:

- A change of status should only be considered for the school if it was in the best interests of the children in the school.
- No immediate action should be taken, but the school should maintain vigilance so that it was ready to take action if needed.

17. Policy Review

17.1 Policies Due for Review The governing body received a revised list of policies and other documents due for review (copy in the minute book) and approved the following policies:

- Inclusion Policy, including the Accessibility Action Plan; Equality Act requirements; and a reference to the 'SEN Information Report for Parents and Carers', which is published on the school website and replaces the SEN Policy
- Health & Safety Policy, including the Early Years aspects of use of the outdoors and emergency evacuation plan in the event of fire.

- Whistleblowing, currently included as an appendix to the Health & Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Policy
- Governors' Allowances

The Register of Business Interests was circulated for updating by governors during the meeting.

The governing body asked for the Emergency Plan to be presented to a future meeting for approval. The governing body noted the action taken by the school to minimise the risk of an emergency involving children at the school during the Rugby World Cup.

PF, AK

17.2 Governors' Role in Policy Review The governing body considered the role of governors in policy review and agreed that the purpose of the policy link governor role was to bring a lay perspective, ensuring that policies were easy to read and legible. It was agreed that, whilst governors could not be expected to have a detailed knowledge of the laws affecting statutory policies, a basic awareness of current statutory requirements and changes in legislation would give them greater confidence about whether the school's policies and practice were compliant.

18. Ofsted Awareness Andrew King stated that he had met with staff on 17 March 2015 in preparation for a possible Ofsted inspection in the summer term. Governors were advised to read the final school self-evaluation document to increase their awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It was suggested that:

- A focus meeting should be arranged by Andrew King with a group of volunteer governors who could be on call in the event of an inspection. The meeting should cover the inspection process and answer the questions in the Ofsted Awareness Checklist (copy in the minute book).
- A list of volunteer governors and contact details should be drawn up.
- Andrew King should arrange for a mock inspection for the whole governing body.
- The list of key questions and answers in the Ofsted Awareness Checklist should be kept updated by Andrew and a governor.
- The school and governors needed to be pro-active in providing evidence to support the school's self-evaluation and current progress. **AK, JJ, Governors**

19. Training Rebecca Hill stated that she had attended a useful training session on the role of the staff governor.

Claire Debney stated that she had booked to attend Key Stage 2 Test Administration for School Governors and Fischer Family Trust for Primary Governors in the summer term.

John Justice and Claire Debney stated that they had completed a number of online GEL training modules.

The clerk agreed to recirculate the link to the GEL online training.

BMH

20. Governing Body News and Impact Statement

20.1 The governing body agreed items for inclusion in the school newsletter:

- Restructuring of the governing body with reasons
- Financial future for school
- Ofsted preparation
- Self-evaluation priorities
- Welcome to new parent governor

20.2 The governing body highlighted aspects of the meeting that could be expected to make a difference to the teaching and learning experience of children attending the school:

- Improvement in self-understanding
 - Closer alignment of the governing body's work to the senior and middle management teams – focussing on progress of reading, writing and maths throughout the school.
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The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

Chase Bridge Primary School Governing Body Minutes Action Sheet		
Minute reference	Action required	By whom and when
3 Membership	Make arrangements to fill vacancies for co-opted governors	AK, JJ, JS As agreed
4 GB Restructuring	Inform John Justice of preferences for designated roles Prepare for additional meeting of GB	All governors Immediate AK, JJ, JS, BMH For 22/4/15
5 Recruitment and Induction of Governors	Prepare for item on recruitment and induction of governors	For 22/4/15 JJ, JS, FP, CD, CMcC
9 Future Meetings	Note meeting dates for the summer term	All governors Immediate
11.2 School Grounds	Contact AK if interested in being involved in the school grounds project	All governors Immediate
12 Faculty Reports	Report to governing body on spring term faculty visit for Early Years	JS For 22/4/15
13 School Development Plan	Circulate new SDP to governors	AK Immediate
15 FoCB	Report to governing body from FoCB	CMcC On 22/4/15
17.1 Policies Due for Review	Present Emergency Plan to meeting of governing body	PF, AK On 22/4/15
18 Ofsted Awareness	Take appropriate action on Ofsted awareness suggestions	AK, JJ, Governors
19 Training	Re-circulate link to GEL online training	BMH Immediate