

GOVERNING BODY FOR GARDEN SUBURB INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON
THURSDAY 8 MAY 2014**

MEMBERS

LA GOVERNORS

*Mary Ogle
*Evelyn Thomas
Alison Zilberkweit
*Jane Harris

STAFF GOVERNORS

*Sarah Sands (Infant Headteacher)
*Eileen Bhavsar (Junior Headteacher)
*Alexia Dobinson (Infant Support)
*Emma Woolston (Infant Teacher)
*Laura Anderson (Junior Teacher)

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

*Kathryn Malik (Junior Support)

PARENT GOVERNORS

*Lisha Taylor (Junior)
*Omar Shah (Junior)
*Adrian Hodgson (Junior)
*Bob Bratland (Infant)
*Sean Lockie (Infant)
*Michael Kkafas (Infant)
*Gerard Wiseman (Infant)

COMMUNITY GOVERNOR

Ruth Beedle
*Francoise Wagneur (Vice Chair)
*Katalin Barcza-McQueen
*Julia Sanitt (Infant, Chair)

NON-VOTING OBSERVERS

*Lisa Berger (Junior DHT)
*Liz Cormack (Infant DHT)

*denotes member present

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr George Peradigou (Clerk)

Part I

14/40 **WELCOME TO ALL GOVERNORS**

The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting. A Special Welcome was extended to Jane Harris, the new Local Authority (LA) Governor, who introduced herself.

14/41 **ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted and accepted on behalf of Ruth Beedle and Alison Zilberkweit.

14/42 **DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

It was noted that there were no pecuniary interests by Governors within the current agenda.

14/43 **PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2014, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting, were confirmed, initialled and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment:

14/26 Budget Ratification

For both Junior School and Infant School sections, the second bullet point was amended from ‘...the final figure would be known in May 2012’ to... ‘...the final figure would be known in May 2014...’.

14/44 **MATTERS ARISING**

14/23 Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)

It was noted that, in approximately one month, the CPZ would be extended around the School, which would cause further problems for staff members trying to park their vehicles. The Chair said that she had spoken to LA representatives and was advised that the LA was looking into providing parking vouchers for staff. Governors expressed disappointment about the delay in this given that the CPZ had already come into force. Concerns were also expressed as to whether the vouchers would only apply to teaching staff. The Chair undertook to pursue this with the LA.

Action: Chair

14/45 **HEADTEACHERS’ REPORTS/UPDATES**

Infant School

The Infant School Headteacher’s report, a copy of which had been circulated before the meeting, was noted by Governors. Arising from the discussion:

Staffing

The Headteacher updated Governors regarding the various staffing changes and cover arrangements.

A discussion ensued on whether holding exit interviews would be worthwhile to the School. The Headteacher said that this would not be worthwhile for the School given that she was usually aware of the reasons why staff members were leaving. She added that the yearly staffing questionnaire included questions which allowed staff to express their concerns.

Governors noted that recent studies had shown that teachers countrywide only stay in the profession for an average of five years. This meant that turnover was not a local issue in the School or the borough, but countrywide. Nevertheless, the Headteacher said that turnover was not a particular concern at the School. She said that, although the School was geographically classed

as outer-London so pay rates were lower than some neighbouring boroughs, it had an excellent reputation and people genuinely wanted to work there.

Walking Bus

A Governor enquired as to the feasibility of reviving the Walking Bus idea after attempts to get this underway previously had failed due to a lack of volunteers. The Headteacher said that this could be attempted once again.

School Clubs

In response to a Governor's query, the Headteacher said that there was no hard-data which evidenced how beneficial the School's clubs were. However, she explained that she was well aware of their effectiveness. She said the clubs gave pupils the opportunity to learn from specialist coaches.

A Governor asked about the types of problems encountered by staff running the School clubs. It was noted that pupils were sometimes reluctant to participate when their parents allocated them to clubs that they did not want to be in, for example, because their friends were not in the same club.

Attendance Monitoring

The Chair enquired as to whether the Headteacher monitored attendance by groups of pupils and whether pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or those receiving Free School Meals (FSM) had higher absenteeism than other pupils. The Headteacher undertook to investigate this and circulate the data to Governors as well as include this in the School's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) by September 2014.

Action: Infant School Headteacher

Governors commended the School's current attendance, which stood at 94.49%. The Headteacher said that numerous interventions had been put in place and had had a positive effect on frequent absentees.

In response to a Governor's query, the Headteacher confirmed that parents were taking their children out of school for weddings, holidays, and other such reasons.

Information Gathering for School Funds

The Chair enquired as to how the Headteacher intended to gather information required for school funds, once all Infant School pupils received free school meals. The Headteacher said that the School would highlight the importance of the School having the required information and inform parents of the other benefits they could receive by providing this information.

In response to a Governor's query, the Headteachers confirmed that there was a risk of a loss of funding in the Junior School if eligible children were not identified.

School Meals

In response to a Governor's query, the Headteacher said that the Food Standards Agency had rated the School's catering company as high in quality. In response to a further question, she confirmed that meal-time supervisors guided children's choices to help ensure they were receiving the right macro-nutrients. It was noted that pupils who were not eating the proper macro-nutrients were monitored and that concerns were eventually raised with their parents.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for her informative report and verbal updates.

Junior School

The Junior School Headteacher's report, a copy of which had been circulated before the meeting, was noted by Governors. Arising from the discussion:

Staffing

The Headteacher updated Governors regarding the various staffing changes and cover arrangements. In response to a Governor's query, the Headteacher said that when staff returned from maternity leave mid year, they were eased back into work by providing cover for teaching and various other responsibilities. She said that some opted for phased returns.

School Meals

Governors noted that the School's catering company had met with the School Council and had taken on pupils' views and recommendations.

Hard-to-Reach Communities

The Headteacher said that work was on-going to establish good communication links with the School's hard-to-reach communities. The EAL Co-ordinators from both Schools had hosted a coffee morning for Iranian parents, which was very successful with 9 parents having attended.

Attendance Monitoring

The Chair enquired as to whether the Headteacher monitored attendance by groups of pupils and whether pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or those receiving Free School Meals (FSM) had higher absenteeism than other pupils. The Headteacher confirmed that this was monitored and tabled a report showing this, a copy of which was filed in the minute book. The report revealed persistent absences from 85% and below, as follows:

- Pupil Premium: 0 (0%)
- Current FSM: 1 pupil (7.69%)

- SEN: 3 (23.08%)
- Pupil Premium and SEN: 2 (15.38%)
- None of the above: 7 (53.85%)

Governors noted that past records had revealed a correlation between SEN pupils and absenteeism.

While there were persistent absences of 3.5%, the School's current attendance stood at 95.44%, which was above the national average. Governors were reassured that there were interventions in place to help bring down persistent absenteeism.

Spanish Lessons

Following her recent school visit, a Governor commended the provision of Spanish lessons for all pupils throughout the School. She also commended the establishment of the Spanish Film Club and enquired as to its frequency. The Headteacher, in reply, explained that it was one of the School's most popular clubs with the average attendance being 15-20 pupils and that it met every Tuesday at 3.30pm.

In response to a further query, the Headteacher explained that, at Year 6, Spanish was assessed using some GCSE standards. She explained that, depending on the cohort, between a quarter to half of the pupils generally achieved grade C. This was the highest possible grade in this particular assessment.

Governors commended the School for this achievement and said that this was yet another example of the breadth of School's curriculum.

Mathematics Co-ordinator

In response to a Governor's query, the Headteacher explained that the School's Maths Co-ordinator had recently visited Brookland Nursery as part of a training assignment for a Maths Specialist Teacher course.

Science Syllabus

A Governor enquired as to whether the School had a co-ordinated and progressive Science syllabus from Year 3 to Year 6. The Headteacher confirmed this to be the case and explained that Science for SATs no longer existed. It was noted that the School had been chosen for the National Science Sampling Test, where some pupils would be randomly selected for a moderation exercise with an external examiner.

Art and Design

One Governor enquired whether time continued to be allocated to art, given the increasingly full syllabus. The Headteacher said that art appreciation was built into pupils' learning and that Art was part of Art & Design

World Book Day

The Vice Chair commended the success of the recent World Book Day and enquired as to whether she could review some of the books which were produced by pupils. The Headteacher explained that the books only remained on display for half-term. However, she undertook to send samples to the Vice-Chair.

Action: Junior School Headteacher

Football Pitch

The Vice Chair enquired as to the progress of the ongoing feasibility study for a potential football pitch. The Headteacher explained that the cost of the pitch would be similar whether it was produced with astro-turf or grass, which required drainage. She undertook to circulate plans to Governors once they had been drafted.

Action: Headteacher

Adrian Hodgson undertook to investigate the possibility of a sports grant. The Headteacher made him aware that many grants were unavailable to the School given that it planned to install the pitch on top of a green-space.

Action: Adrian Hodgson

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for her informative report and verbal updates.

14/46 **GOVERNOR OPEN DAY**

The Governor Open Day had taken place on Thursday 1 May 2014. Governors discussed the day's findings. Arising from the discussion:

Eight Governors had attended the Open Day. The Chair thanked those who managed to attend. Governors commended the broad range of lessons and activities, which were made available for Governors to observe.

Governor's noted the following feedback from Staff:

- The Open Day provided a valuable experience for members of staff who had the opportunity to meet Governors and explain day-to-day practices.
- Governors were very friendly and interacted positively with pupils.
- Providing Governors with timetables before the Open Day proved to be very useful in avoiding the need for using additional resources on organisation.
- It was suggested and **AGREED** that, for future Governor Open Days, lesson visits would be a maximum of 30 minutes long.

The Chair undertook to include feedback from the Governor Open Day in her next Chair's Letter. Gerard Wiseman was asked to draft a paragraph on this to be included in the newsletter for parents.

Action: Chair and Gerard Wiseman

Having observed a swimming lesson during the Open Day, a Governor expressed concerns that pupils spent most of their time outside of the swimming pool. The Junior School Headteacher said that this was because it was one of the class' first swimming lessons. She reassured him that the pupils had now reached a level where they were in the swimming pool for the whole lesson.

14/47 **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

Finance

The committee had not met since the last Governing Body meeting. A meeting would be arranged.

Curriculum

The committee meeting was held on 8 March 2014. Copies of the minutes had not yet been circulated.

Premises

The committee had not met since the last Governing Body meeting. A meeting would be arranged.

14/48 **GOVERNOR SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT**

Governors reported back positively on the Governor Support and Development courses they had attended.

The Chair commended the Governor Support and Development Programme and urged Governors to attend courses which were inclusive of the package to which the School subscribed.

It was noted that the new Governor training booklets had been circulated. Governors who did not receive a booklet in the post were asked to seek one from the Clerk.

14/49 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dining Hall Roof Drainage

A Governor raised concerns, following a recent premises walkabout, that the Dining Hall Roof's draining system required updating. The Headteacher's undertook to investigate this further.

Action: Headteachers

Uploading Committee Minutes

It was AGREED that the Chairs of each committee would be responsible for uploading their committee's minutes onto the School's website. The Junior School Headteacher undertook to provide them with log-in details.

Action: Junior School Headteacher

14/50 **DATES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The following committee meeting dates were confirmed:

Staffing: 4 June 2014, 8.15am
Finance: 10 June 2014, 8.00am
Premises: 3 June 2014, 8.00am
SEN: 13 June 2014, 8.15am
Curriculum: 25 June 2014, 8.00am

14/51 **DATES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

The next meetings of the Governing Body were confirmed as:

Autumn (1): Monday 13 October 2014 at 6pm
Autumn (2): Wednesday 26 November 2014 at 6pm

14/52 **MOTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

It was **RESOLVED** that, because of its nature, the business to be transacted, be treated as confidential and not for publication.