

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body of
Garden Suburb Infant and Junior Schools
Held on Thursday 21 March 2024 at the Junior School**

MEMBERS

LA GOVERNOR (1)

*Evathia Elsiwidy

PARENT GOVERNORS (2)

*Luisa Pettigrew (Junior) (19.10.26)

*Abigail Haye (3.12.27)

HEADTEACHERS (2)

*Sarah Sands (Infant Headteacher)

*Eileen Bhavsar (Junior Headteacher)

STAFF GOVERNORS (1)

*Andrea Bailey (18.10.27)

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

CO-OPTED GOVERNORS

(12: 2Teachers; 2Parents from each School)

*Anthony Shayle (Junior Parent)

*Adrian Hodgson (17.05.26)

*Biljana Elia (Infant Teacher)

(17.05.26)

*Isabel Clarke (Junior Teacher)

*Tara Ward Ammoun

*Alexia Dobinson (Infant Support)

Greg Bookman (30.11.26)

Ian Phillips (29.12.27)

*Claire Calman (5.02.28)

Vacancy x2

NON-VOTING OBSERVERS

*Lisa Berger (Junior DHT)

*Sarah Jowsey (Infant DHT)

Reference	Action	By Whom
24/15 Updates from the Infant School	The IHT agreed to add a note on measles to the School newsletter.	IHT
24/21 Governor training	It was suggested that the Complaints policy be updated to make it more transparent and clearer particularly in terms of the timings. It was agreed that this would be discussed in the HT and chairs committee as well as at the next FGB meeting.	Co chairs

24/10 **Welcome**

All Governors were welcomed to the meeting.

24/11 **Acceptance/non-acceptance of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Ian Phillips and Greg Bookman.

24/12 **Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**

No Governor present declared a pecuniary interest in the business to be discussed. The IHT reminded Governors of her role on the board for BELS.

24/13 **Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024**

Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024, were virtually **CONFIRMED** by the Chair, as a fair representation of the meeting, subject to the following correction:

Claire Calman was not present at the meeting.

24/14 **Matters Arising**

Governors were thanked for completing all their declarations on Governor Hub.

The Chair asked if anyone was still having issues with any logins and if so, to inform either herself of the School Business Manager.

It was clarified that all Governor training should be reported at the FGB meetings rather than contacting Alexia Dobinson.

It was requested that terms of office would be added to the Governor attendee list to allow it to be easier to track.

An agenda item on Governor appointments would also be added moving forward.

24/15 **Updates from the Infant School**

Governor attention was drawn to the IHT report and supporting documents, added to the drive prior to the meeting. She highlighted that regardless of the challenges with the budget the day to day teaching and learning and experiences of the children were very positive.

The School had also had a school effectiveness visit from their SIP Claire Syms which focused on Science teaching. The report had been uploaded on the drive and was very positive. It had looked at planning as well as reviewing the teaching and scheme of work.

The HT also pointed to the staffing structure that had been included which outlined the number of staff changes which had occurred over the Christmas period. The cover for both Pink and Purple classes had all been sorted and had very strong Teachers. They would be with the School until the end of the school year.

In terms of finances the IHT noted that the LA had announced a new fund of money which had been given to some schools to support them where they had taken on children from different countries, for example, Syria, Ukraine and Israel. They had also given funds to schools facing emergency repairs who were in deficit. The School had put in a bid for the leaking roof and had received £16,190 for the repairs that had had to be completed.

The IHT reminded Governors of the challenges with pupil numbers and the reduction to two classes in Reception for the upcoming year. The number of children with EHCPs had also increased, from four in 2020 to 15 this year. The funds provided to schools for these did not cover the resources necessary and the school were responsible for topping this up.

The School also continued to have a high number of children in receipt of Pupil Premium, EAL and SEN. There were currently 57 PP children, 49 of which were also EAL and 14 had SEN. Ten crossed all three categories.

Following a Governor question, the IHT noted that attendance figures had increased slightly. The School continued to pay into the Educational Welfare offer with the EWO coming into make visits which was very helpful. She added that a lot of the absence was due to sickness particularly amongst the younger children and the higher levels of anxiety that seemed to be present with these parents.

The IHT provided an overview of the number of amazing activities that had been taking place over the term. Today, the Y2 students had a Great Fire of London workshop where they all came dressed in costume and Y1 students visited Kew Gardens. The School had also had a number of really nice assemblies to celebrate different religions and cultures.

A Governor questioned what the difference was between the amount of funding received by the School for SEN, EAL and EHCPs compared to how much the School had to contribute. The IHT noted that the School approximately received £104,700 and the cost to the School was £194,000.

A Governor asked if there were comparisons with other schools regarding attendance. The IHT noted that these were available on the DfE website and the School tended to be in line with these. She added that a number of the absences were due to religious absences as well as trips already booked before joining the School due to other schools' holiday timetables.

The IHT agreed to add a note on measles to the School newsletter.

Action: IHT

The IHT was thanked for her updates.

24/16 Updates from the Junior School

Governor attention was drawn to the JHT report and supporting documents, added to the drive prior to the meeting.

In terms of staffing, the JHT noted that Miss Buck had delivered her baby and Mr McGwinn had returned from paternity leave. Ms Vitow was leaving the school at the end of the Spring Term but Ms Siddiq was returning from maternity leave and so there were no gaps. It was expected that there would be some resignations and so advertisements for September would be necessary.

The JHT pointed to the section in the report which detailed the various training that the staff had completed. She added that the Business Managers had been working very hard on installing the new VOIP system which would be detailed further later in the meeting.

She added that there had been a significant focus on wellbeing with the staff policy being updated for example.

She also drew Governors' attention to the SDP which outlined the progress being made. Science remained a key area with the SIP also focusing on this during their recent visit. The report had been very positive and was again indicative of good external feedback.

The JHT highlighted the different activities that continued to take place to support the creative curriculum. This particularly focused on sharing and celebrating the diversity in the School. The School also continued to work on the Travel Plan.

Following a Governor question, the JHT confirmed that there had been no suspensions this year but there had been some incidents regarding the events in the Middle East which the School continued to manage carefully.

The School had also had a visit from a number of Magistrates from Willesden court which helped to teach the children about the ethos of respect, British values and the understanding of the law more generally. The sessions were highly enjoyed by the children.

Following a Governor question, the JHT noted that pupil numbers had increased with this currently at 341 with 90 in Y3.

In terms of safeguarding, the JHT confirmed the School's focus on this. The RSHE policy had been shared with parents at a meeting in January which had been attended by 80 parents.

It was noted that the School had decided to change the venue of the School journey. This would be moving from the Isle of Wight to Ashford. It would be the same Kingswood centre but would mean that less time would be spent travelling and the site was also slightly more up to date. The JHT added that the School made a lot of effort to ensure that all pupils could attend the trip, contributing supporting financially where necessary.

A Governor questioned whether the financial pressures had impacted upon the amount of sports activities available. The JHT explained that this was not the case and there had only been a few less events due to the fact that Mr McGwinn had been on paternity leave.

She added that in the summer term, all Y4 students would be going swimming in two week blocks.

Following a Governor question, the JHT explained that the School asked for voluntary contributions for school trips but were increasingly seeing the impact of the cost of living crisis on families. Looking forward, the School would need to review how they managed this.

The JHT added that parents would be given a list of activities/trips planned for the year at the start of the year so that they could plan in advance.

Following a Governor question, the JHT explained that attendance figures were increasing but there was still work to do. There were still a number of persistent absentees that the School continued to work with. The Schools worked closely on this where there were siblings.

The JHT was thanked for her updates.

24/17 Policy ratification

The following policies, circulated prior to the meeting, were received and noted by Governors:

Anti fraud policy
Charging policy

There had been one change to the policy to note that children in the JS no longer had to pay for school meals.

Financial management policy

There had been one change to clarify the process of virements.

Lettings policy

School Security policy

Whistle Blowing policy

RSHE (juniors) policy

Teaching and Learning Policy (Juniors)

Assessment Marking and Feedback Policy (Juniors)

PSHE (Infants)

Relationships and Health (Infants)

Following a show of hands, Governors **RATIFIED** the policies.

24/18 SFVS and Q3 Forecasts

It was noted that both Schools had reviewed their Q3 forecasts, details of which were included within the Environment, Audit and Resources committee notes. The School had looked at benchmarking as part of this as well as approving the use of traded services for the year ahead.

The IHT noted that the budget forecast for the Infant School continued to be similar to the previous report. They continued to work closely with the LA and were in the process of formulating their Five Year Plan.

Governor attention was drawn to the Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS) which was a checklist that was completed to evidence that a school was meeting the standard.

Governors **APPROVED** these for both Schools and they were signed by the Co-Chairs.

The Business Managers provided an overview of the intention to move to a new system- Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). This was a complete telephony service with a number of features and provided a comprehensive range of facilities that helped to improve operational efficiency of the telecommunications in school. It was confirmed that a best value exercise had been completed and they had also been able to get a further 9% reduction in costs following negotiations. The School were still remaining with the same provider- SCG and therefore there would be no downtime. The use of the application also allowed greater functionality and could be used if the main system failed at any point. The intention was to start installation after the Easter holidays, including training for office staff.

24/19 Committee meeting minutes

It was noted that Committee minutes would be uploaded into the GB folder on drive and could be reviewed at the next meeting. Final minutes would also be added to Governor Hub.

24/20 **LA report** (<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/working-children-barnet/information-schools/school-governors/meetings-and-reports>)

It was noted that the report had not yet been updated.

24/21 **Governor training**

Governors were reminded to report any training they had completed at each meeting.

Luisa Pettingrew and Tara Ward Ammoun had completed training entitled Financial management for maintained schools on 27 February.

Tara Ward Ammoun had completed training entitled Governor Hub- how to manage meetings on 14 March and on Complaint Handling and Managing Appeals on 20 March.

It was suggested that the Complaints policy be updated to make it more transparent and clearer particularly in terms of the timings. It was agreed that this would be discussed in the HT and chairs committee as well as at the next FGB meeting.

Action: Co Chairs

24/22 **AOB**

It was noted that the minutes and Governor list on the School website needed updating.

Isabel Clarke noted that her term of office was coming to an end in September.

24/23 **Future Meeting dates**

The meetings were confirmed as:

At 6pm

Thu 16 May - online

Tues 25 June - in person

Governors discussed whether to continue having meetings online. It was agreed that the current schedule would remain and this would be discussed at the start of the next academic year.

24/24 **Committee meeting dates**

Committee meeting schedule:

Staffing – 27th March @9.30am & 19th June @ 9am

Curriculum –& 18th June @ 9am – 11am

Pupils – 24th April @ 9am-11am

Comms – 23rd April @ 9.30am

Envt, Audit & Resources – 30th April @ 2pm (Premises policies) & 14th May @ 9.30am (budget ratification)

Heads and chairs of Committees – 7th May @ 9.30am

The meeting ended at 7.51pm