

**Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting of the Wimbledon Primary Federation
22nd September 2020 at 7pm**

Present

CHAIR: Jo Reynolds, (JR)
Executive Headteacher: Paul Lufkin (PL)

Lauren Clogg (LC) Sam Dear (SD) Katy Gandon (KG) Gemma Isaac, (GI) Kate Johnston (KJ) Emeka Okorochoa, (EO)	Heather Ponsford (HP) Raj Sood (RS) Chris Tregilgas (CT) Emma Walshe (EW) Rosie Williamson, (RW)
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In attendance (* denotes Associate Member)

Lisa Kingsbury (LK) (*)
Steve Cleary, Clerk (SAC)

*The features of effective governance from the competency framework: -
Strategic Leadership, Accountability, People, Structures, Compliance, Evaluation*

All original papers are available on the LGFL MyUSO drive.

1. GOVERNANCE

The meeting began at 7pm¹ and was deemed to be quorate.

Governors confirmed that they had received and read papers received from the Executive Headteacher in advance.

Apologies were received and consented to from Isabel Instone (II) and Eric De Regnaucourt, (EdR).

In accordance with the Education (School Government) Regulations, governors were invited to declare any interest they might have in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made and governors confirmed that they would complete the annual declarations which had been sent by the school.

Governors **RESOLVED** to elect Jo Reynolds as Chair for the 2020-21 academic year and Emma Walshe as Vice-Chair for the same period.

The Chair reported on key activities undertaken over the previous academic year and commended governors for their contributions during a difficult period and ensuring that the schools had worked together well. Succession planning is to be a feature of business for the next year.

¹ Owing to government restrictions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held online via Zoom

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The Chair reported on the resignation of Yvonne Young (YY) as a governor and those present noted the need to seek additional governors. Governors were appraised of the need for further board members who were ideally not associated with either school from a parent perspective, and had a range of skills that would benefit the federation. The school is to add information on requirements onto the website and recruitment organisations are to be contacted to seek additional candidates. Governors agreed to undertake a further skills audit to benchmark progress in learning against key competencies of governance as well as outline potential gaps in the board's skill base.

Governors reflected on committee arrangements and **RESOLVED** to keep membership, chairs, terms of reference and link governor roles the same as in the previous year subject to the following amendments:

- note KG as a co-opted governor rather than associate member on the Standards, Teaching and Learning committee and amend the website accordingly;
- to appoint II as a member of the Standards, Teaching and Learning committee with a view to deputising for the committee chair;
- to appoint CT as safeguarding link governor

Governors discussed the need to keep on track with training updates from Merton, making sure that the training when done is reported and leads to a more effective impact on governance as well as arranging inductions for new governors as necessary. KG offered to undertake the training link governor role and it was **RESOLVED** to duly appoint her to this position. Governors noted that training has generally moved to virtual learning and were encouraged to identify areas for personal learning. The Clerk added that training also included CPD undertaken in a professional context which adds value to the school.

The need for governors to undertake financial control as well as pupil premium was highlighted and it was noted that II is to take on the latter role.

In terms of governor visits, both schools are operating a very limited limiting visitor policy which is likely to become more stringent. Classroom learning walks are not currently possible as a result of restrictions on space to keep adults safe. The key question for governors is how they are going to continue to challenge and support critically from a distance in what's probably going to end up being a virtual way this year. Advice on best practice is being sought from the local authority and governors were encouraged to think through how their role could be undertaken on a virtual basis.

Governors **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the governing body meeting held on 30 June subject to the Clerk removing the sub-heading on page 4 entitled Governor Questions.

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2. RETURN TO SCHOOL

Report from schools

- Considerations around Covid have dominated the operating mode of the school and as a result a significant amount of time has been spent on operational and reactive areas rather than strategic or development focus. The start-up at both schools has been really successful, particularly in relation to classroom size, although there have been logistical problems in relation to pupil movement with a limited number of adults.
- At West Wimbledon, there are pinch points around staff availability, the impact of pupil absence through sickness on learning, and difficulties around ensuring consistent social distancing. Whilst anxieties are high and roles have had to be adaptive, staff morale, communication and unity remain strong and there has been a sense of teamwork at the school level.
- At Wimbledon Park, a member of staff has tested positive for Covid, the DFE helpline was contacted and Year 1 was closed. The key focus has been around staff well being and trying to maintain some semblance of community, which had been lost in the summer term. Staff space has been dedicated and lunch arrangements and timetabling changed. A transition to home learning has occurred and Year 1 is scheduled to reopen on the 30th of September unless any more positive cases are found in which case the period would be extended.
- Despite lockdown, West Wimbledon has managed to keep focus on the continuity of professional staff development which is well aligned with the school business plan. All meetings have now moved online at both schools.
- Governors were advised that a key issue centred on pupil number updates and in particular tracking the number of children in reception. Outside of reception, a few children have joined the school but at reception and Key Stage 1, the school is only three quarters full. As previously indicated, whilst the school is still getting relatively high numbers of applications, families are putting the school lower on their acceptance list and taking places elsewhere. As a result of this, there is likely to be a significant long-term strategic issue in terms of foregone income that is likely to follow this cohort all the way through their school life;
- Wimbledon Park is 96 per cent full. The majority of children leaving the school end of year 5 last year got the same independent school as previously.
- Wimbledon Park has one initial teacher trainee this year against a previous small community of two or three and the school community has done a good job of bringing them into the fold very quickly.
- Online learning is ongoing, although it has been difficult to effectively deploy support staff during lockdown. As a result, support staff were encouraged to undertake CPD and there has been a significant takeup of free online training with a high level of positive feedback.

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Governor Questions

A range of governor questions were raised as follows:

- *Does the school have a sense of how soon the pupil roll improves after an improved Ofsted?* Whilst it might be anticipated that a better OFSTED would help to fill up reception places, it is unlikely to fill existing gaps;
- *What is the position with breakfast club and after school income?* Breakfast and after school clubs are both running but in a different way and both schools have experienced a significant loss of income in respect of extended services;
- *What is the rationale behind having the whole school at Wimbledon Park finishing at the same time?* Classes cannot be split into groups of 6 on the basis of surnames as other schools are doing because pupil numbers are too large. If exits were being staggered by year groups, there will be a potential for parents to have to wait up to half an hour and congregating in groups, which would raise the risk level. Because the school is dismissing from four different gates, there is less chance of congregating. Feedback at both schools has been positive;
- *How often is it required to update risk assessments?* Assessments are generally updated weekly when additional information comes from the local authority and it is a dynamic process. Fundamental procedures are not changed.

3. SCHOOL UPDATE

Safeguarding

Governors confirmed that they had read and signed the safer working practices agreement and the Code of Conduct and would read the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 document and school safeguarding policy. Signed confirmation would be sent to the school. Governors noted that safer recruitment training had been completed by the Chair and GI and that CT and HP are to undertake this training in due course. The safeguarding audit needs to be reviewed for both schools. In response to a governor question (Q) as to the factors generating a sharp increase at West Wimbledon in the number of children needing early help support from 7 in 2019 to 19 currently, RW replied that the number was cumulative and that the sudden increase has not occurred as a result of all cases becoming live in September. In addition, there has been a rise in the number of families from Treetops who have experienced additional pressures during lockdown. A further factor is that the school has become more focused at picking up cases at an earlier stage and providing a more comprehensive offer.

A new DSL has been appointed at Wimbledon Park and is being supported with transition into the role.

In response to a governor question (Q) regarding staff morale at Wimbledon Park as specifically related to events occurring in 2019, LC commented that staff are resilient and had processed any issues in their own networks. Safeguarding training included an emphasis on whistleblowing and thresholds in terms of raising concerns.

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A safeguarding governor is in place and both schools have completed statutory safeguarding training.

In response to a governor question (Q) as to the extent to which Covid related processes are being complied with, the Executive Headteacher commented that this was dependent upon the adults who conform to different levels and had different risk thresholds. One impact of the Covid case at Wimbledon Park was that the reality of Covid became more clear across both schools.

Governors **RESOLVED** to adopt the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy as presented by the school.

Governors noted that records of DBS checks for governors are kept on the single central register and updated by the school on a regular basis. Any requirement for governors to renew their checks is handled by the school.

Website

The website is being enhanced through design changes, although a gap remains in relation to the curriculum. Both school and federation websites are better integrated although there is a need to improve the flexibility and coding to allow for ease of updates.

Appraisal

It is expected that appraisal processes will give greater emphasis to not being live in the classroom, but looking at outcomes. Appraisal processes will be likely to adjust if the school is operating under conditions where collaboration is restricted. Newly qualified teachers need observations and monitoring for the moment and the schools have been working on a training programme for NQTs to make up for time missed. Observations are ongoing with NQTs to ensure that they are ready and confidently meeting the required standards. Governors agreed that the Standards, Learning and Teaching committee would discuss the training programme for NQTs further.

4. **RESOURCES**

Pay, appraisal and performance management

GI reported that the HR committee had met on 17 September and had examined staffing updates for both schools. The school teacher review body recommendations for 2020-21 are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-review-body-30th-report-2020> and that measures are focused on trying to address issues around the recruitment and retention of teachers, particularly in London where there is a significant gap between what they earn in comparison with other graduate level industries and professions. The recommendations propose to start teachers at a higher rate, change the pay progression structure to provide a clearer progression in the classroom as well as further review the upper pay scales. It is further proposed to increase starting pay by 5.5 per cent against the federation's budgeted 2.5 per cent which is likely to provide increased pressures on school

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finances. It is likely that the affordability of teachers pay is going to be significant strain to resources.

The HR committee has received summary spreadsheets of the individual appraisal outcomes and pay recommendations for both schools and noted that at West Wimbledon, there were 10 basic ratings and 17 standard. At Wimbledon Park, all staff were rated as standard. Teachers on main scale at both schools have been moved to 1 of the main scale advisory points from the school teacher review body payscale. The committee approved a teacher's application to pass through the threshold onto the upper pay scale and governors **RESOLVED** to ratify this approval.

Governors **RESOLVED** to adopt the pay and appraisal policies as recommended from the HR committee.

Staffing morale

Exit interview feedback has been discussed by the HR committee and it was noted that at Wimbledon Park, all the feedback on the school and leadership team was generally very positive following previously more negative responses. Key themes centred on teacher workload (as particularly impacted by curriculum planning), the training development of support staff, staff wellbeing and whether the core academic focus compromised any social enjoyment for the children. At West Wimbledon, only one of the five leavers completed an exit interview, although this was positive. Future developments are to include common questions for the interview / survey across both schools and the potential use of governors to sit in on the interview. In response to a governor question (Q) regarding the regularity of the staff survey, LC commented that it is planned to undertake this on an annual basis although the period since March had been a particularly abnormal one. Governors noted that apart from surveys, contact with staff has been ongoing and the school has historically been good at running drop in sessions to discuss wellbeing. HP offered to facilitate virtual sessions on Zoom as part of her link governor role although it was recognised that parent governors in particular might need to swap and focus on the school where their child was not present.

Financial update

The Executive Headteacher reported that the likely financial impacts of Covid are going to be greater than originally anticipated during the last round of updates. Key issues are likely to arise over lost income from clubs and extracurricular activities, as well as additional costs from hygiene and staff cover.

Premises

Wimbledon Park has had the boiler flue repaired, although the boiler itself is now leaking and there is a need to deal with this before the heating is turned back on from 1 October.

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5. COMPLIANCE

Governors were appraised of a GDPR breach in the summer term at West Wimbledon which had been linked to the extension of home learning and associated security. An investigation by the data protection officer and LGFL established that whilst the breach was potentially severe, the actual risk and harm was very low and no referral to the ICO was made. As a result of the incident, the school is moving away from the use of USO for home learning and implementing Google tools.

Governors received a copy of the risk assessments at both schools for Covid operations (on file) which summarise detailed checklists and operating procedures around each area that are in place. Risk assessments conform to the local authority standards and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the documents as presented.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Meetings are scheduled to last for a maximum of 2 hours.

All committees meet at 8am and governing body meetings at 7pm.

Full governing body –WPPS, 1 December (committee business, performance management, school development plan, standards, target setting, policy approvals, Headteacher’s report, MEP reports) – WWPS, 30 March (committee business, policy approvals, Headteacher’s report, MEP reports) – WPPS, 6 July ((committee business, school development plan, policy approvals, Headteacher’s report, next terms chair/vice chair, membership of committees and link governors) – WPPS

HR –30 April (Pay affordability scenarios, staffing strategy and structure) - WWPS

Pupils and Community – 18 November (WWPS), 17 March (WPPS), 16 June (WWPS)

School Business – 11 November (WPPS), 10 March (WWPS), 11 May – Budget special (End of year monitoring/outcome, 12 months budget and 3 year forecast) – open invite to all governors 7:00 pm WPPS (note change of time).

Standards Teaching and Learning - 4 November (WWPS), 9 February (WPPS), 19 May (WWPS)

The meeting closed at 9.11 pm.

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____
Chair of Governors
Date: _____