

MINUTES OF THE KING'S CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOUNDATION GOVERNING BOARD – AUTUMN#2 2023

Date: Thursday 23 November 2023

Time: 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Venue: The King's CofE School

Present

Janine Farrance (JF) – Co Chair	Foundation Governor (SDBE)
Larissa Sutton (LS) – Co Chair	Parent Governor
Aidrian Corke (AC)	Headteacher
Caroline Baird (CB)	Foundation Governor (St Anne's)
Reverend Dr Melanie Harrington (MH)	Co-Opted Governor (St Luke's)
Mark Ivory (MI)	Foundation Governor (St Anne's)
Kennan Michel (KM)	LA Governor
Marian Mollet (MM)	Foundation Governor (St Anne's)
Vasiles Polydorou (VP)	Foundation Governor (The Barn)
Tania Sesay (TS)	Staff Governor
Karen Verge (KV)	Deputy Headteacher – Associate Governor

In Attendance

Nicola Cheshire (NC)	Wandsworth Governor Services
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1. Welcome

JF welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

2. Opening Prayer

AC led the opening prayer.

3. Governing Board Procedures and Administration

3.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Reverend Canon Dr Giles Fraser (GF), Auriol Hale (AH) and Deidre Carswell (DC). The meeting was quorate.

3.2 Governor appointments

JF welcomed Tania Sesay (TS) the newly elected Staff Governor to her first FGB meeting and said how pleased they were that she was joining the Board.

The Board unanimously approved the appointment of two new Foundation Governors nominated by the Parochial Church Council of St Anne's, Kew, Caroline Baird (CB) and Lynn Tandler (LT) for a period of four years effective from 23.11.23. The Board welcomed CB and thanked her for agreeing to join them. Owing to prior commitments LT was unable to attend the meeting.

3.3 Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest and governors confirmed that their declarations of interest on GovernorHub were up to date.

3.4 Approval of the minutes of the previous FGB meeting (25 September 2023) and matters arising

The minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 25 September 2023 were agreed and approved.

Action – JF & LS to sign the minutes as approved on GovernorHub and as a paper copy for retention at the school.

All matters arising had either been completed or were on the agenda.

3.5 Committee and Link Governor appointments

Governors agreed that based on the skills, knowledge, and interests of the new governors they would join the following committees:

- People & Resources – DC.
- Curriculum – CB & TS.
- Faith & Wellbeing – LT.

It was also agreed that JF and LS would join the Admissions Committee and that GF and MH would sit as advisers on that committee.

Action – Committee membership on GovernorHub to be updated as agreed.

3.6 Governor training update

Governors were reminded of the importance of undertaking training and keeping themselves up to date, but also of the need to ensure this is done in a cost-effective way. Options governors were encouraged to consider included the use of in-house resources and networking as well as the free online training offered by GovernorHub and The Key and the National Governance Association. Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SBDE) training courses and Achieving for Children (AfC) options should also be explored although it was noted that AfC had recently started charging for training that had historically been free.

Following a discussion about the possibility of school staff offering short training updates for governors at FGB or Committee meetings, AC agreed to explore this.

Action – AC to explore the possibility of staff running short training sessions for governors.

4. Chairs' Report

The Chairs' Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and JF and LS took the opportunity to thank all governors for the positive way they had approached the changes and challenges facing the Board, and how impressed they were with the level of engagement with the school and staff and the amount of time being spent in school seeing plans in action.

As Co-Chairs, JF and LS had decided to alternate as FGB Chair and based on their skill sets and interests LS was tending to lead on People and Resource issues and JF on Faith and Wellbeing and were jointly involved with Curriculum, but wanted to reassure governors that they kept each other updated on everything going on. As the Co-Chairing arrangement was new to everyone on the Board, JF and LS asked Governors to send them feedback on how things were working and suggestions for doing things differently or on ways of improving things.

Action – Governors to send JF & LS any feedback they have on new Board arrangements.

5. Headteacher's Report

Governors had been provided with a copy of the Headteacher's Report (available on GovernorHub) in advance to focus time at the meeting on governors' questions. Before giving a brief overview of the report AC said that he would welcome feedback from governors on the style and content of his Headteacher's Report, which had been revised and restructured around the four categories of the Ofsted inspection framework:

- Quality of Education – intent, implementation, and impact.
- Behaviour and Attitudes.
- Personal Development, and
- Leadership and Management.

AC also asked for his thanks to all members of staff who had contributed to the work in the report be placed on record, particularly KV, Andy Rooney (AR), School Business Manager and Polly Watkinson (PW), SENCo/Inclusion Lead.

Key highlights for governors to note included:

- The positive progress that had been made towards achievement of the objectives in the SDP.
- The work being undertaken in the Learning Review.
- Progress being made with the Curriculum Review and the development and introduction of new schemes of work.
- Review of educational trips planning and payment processes.
- SEND report and the increasing demand and workload.
- Ringfenced grant from Richmond Schools Trust for the development of the wildlife area.
- Positive SIP visit.
- The Senso software for monitoring and filtering had gone live.

Q – Has there been any feedback from parents about the clear change of tone in relation to the payment for school trips being compulsory?

A - We have not received any complaints about it, but the office has had to chase a few families for money even though they are in a financial position to pay. It is more time consuming but in the current financial climate we cannot continue to use the budget for this purpose.

Q – Are you being flexible with families who may not meet the criteria for Pupil Premium grant but are close to the threshold and struggling?

A – Yes, we have asked families to let us know if they have concerns about payments and the school will deal with each case as it arises. This year we will also give families earlier notification of the more expensive Year 5 and Year 6 trips (£550 this year) and ask for payments to be made in non-refundable monthly contributions enabling payment to be spread out over a longer period, but also ensuring that the school does not incur financial losses for this.

Q – Now that trips must be paid for, do we allow people to pay for other families?

A - No, we have not allowed this to happen to date, but if people do want to donate the school would suggest they donate to the Governor Fund.

Action – Scrutiny of the issue of payment for trips to be delegated to the People and Resources Committee and Curriculum Committee to be kept updated.

Q – The SEN report from PW was very informative, can you explain the process for getting an EHCP for a child and if EHCPs were processed faster would this give the school more money?

A – There is a set process that schools must go through to put an EHCP in place and receive funding for it. Once a child with a need has been identified two terms worth of evidence has to be collected and it then takes 20 weeks for a decision to be reached and there is no way of speeding this process up. So, it can often be a whole academic year before a school receives funding.

Q – Is the funding backdated to the start of the claim once an EHCP has been agreed?

A – No, the school must meet all costs until the EHCP is agreed and even then, payment for an EHCP is woefully inadequate and has not been increased for 10 years.

Following a discussion about the increased SEND demands and workload it was agreed that a business case to address this from the start of the next financial year would be prepared for consideration at the People and Resources Committee.

Action – Business case to address SEND staffing issues and workload management for the next financial year to be taken to next People and Resources Committee.

Q – Is the assessment prediction data in line with, or better than expectations?

A – At this stage, the data is based on the mid-term assessments by teachers at a very early stage in the year. The data might be a bit low but think this is because of an abundance of caution from teachers. Assessments are still subject to moderation and are ongoing throughout the year and become more robust as the year progresses.

Q – Can you tell us more about the positive SIP visit?

A – The SIP visit was very constructive and the overall feedback positive and supportive and based on robust judgments. The significant progress that had been made by the school was acknowledged and it was suggested that consideration be given to an outstanding rating for Behaviour and Attitudes in our Ofsted self-evaluation. Positive comments were also received for the excellent results achieved by Year 6 last year, which were amongst the best nationally. Advice given for areas to work on was sound and sensible and will help the school further develop and build on the strong foundations already in place. The overall feeling after the visit was that everyone connected to the school should be pleased and proud.

6. Strategic Priorities

Curriculum and Standards

6.1 Update report from the Chair of the Curriculum and Standards Committee (VP)

The Curriculum and Standards Committee had a positive first meeting where they looked at the changes being made to geography and history. Member of the committee had also been on a learning walk at the school. The learning walk had been hugely insightful for putting theory into context and hearing from the subject leads about their plans, had increased understanding of how the 'whole school journey' will work across all year groups. All governors were recommended to go on a learning walk at school.

6.2 New terms of reference for the Committee.

As the scope and remit of this committee had not changed it was agreed that the current terms of reference for the Curriculum Committee would stand.

6.3 Update from Link Governors

A link governor report on the learning walk had been posted on GovernorHub.

6.4 Date of the next Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting.

The date of the next Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting had not been agreed.

Faith and Wellbeing

6.5 Update report from the Chair of the Faith and Wellbeing Committee (GF)

The Faith and Wellbeing Committee had not yet met but an update report, prepared by GF, was available on GovernorHub. As GF was not at the meeting it was agreed that any questions about the report should be sent to GF directly.

6.6 New terms of reference for the committee.

The new terms of reference for the committee would be drawn up and discussed at the committee's first meeting with the aim of bringing them back to the next FGB meeting for ratification.

Action – New terms of reference for the Faith and Wellbeing Committee to be agreed and brought to FGB for ratification.

6.7 Update from Link Governors

Governors had attended different school assemblies and been very impressed both by the delivery and content of the assembly but also the engagement of the children and were keen to hear more about the feedback from children and their families on how the assemblies had been received.

Q – The subject matter of the whole school assembly attended was Independence, one of the school's Learning Certainties. A video clip was used to show the Israelites leaving Egypt and trying to be independent but needing God's help. The video used had images that could be construed as frightening and used the word Israelite which made me wonder how this would be received by a child, particularly in the current international context of Gaza and Israel and what they might be hearing and seeing outside of school?

A – Careful consideration was given to this before delivering that assembly and discussed further afterwards. The focus of the assembly was on building independence, one of the learning certainties, and about not giving up in the face of adversity and used the example of the Israelites not giving up despite having to wander the desert for 40 years. Feedback from parents is that these assemblies tend to encourage children to think about bible stories and how they relate to contemporary life and can help them make links and connections with stories in the news. But the school is aware that they need to consider such issues carefully and make balanced and considered judgements about appropriateness and impact.

Governors had a wider discussion about this issue and the importance of being aware and sensitive to it but also the power of interfaith discussions in creating in peace and of raising awareness of different viewpoints and beliefs.

Action – Faith and Wellbeing Committee to further explore and monitor the sensitivities around Bible teaching in the current climate.

6.8 Date of the next Faith and Wellbeing Committee meeting.

The date of the next meeting had not been agreed.

People and Resources (including statutory obligations)

6.9 Update report from the Chair of the People and Resources Committee (KM), including:

- **2023-24 Budget Plan monitoring**

Governors were asked to consider and decide on the following issues:

Cleaning contract

The proposed new cleaning contract had been sent to governors in advance of the meeting and was available on GovernorHub. The contract required FGB approval because of the financial value and JF confirmed that AR had completed all necessary due diligence in reviewing the cleaning contract. **Governors unanimously approved the new cleaning contract.**

Action – New cleaning contract to be signed and introduced.

DfE Invoice for building work

The school has received an unexpected invoice for £18k from the DfE for additional building work carried out when the school was built (c 6 years ago). Because of the poor quality of the original work the school had incurred substantial additional costs for remedial work and had asked the DfE to offset these costs against this historic invoice, but they had refused. Governors agreed that it was unreasonable for the DfE to request this payment from the school after such a long period of time and agreed that AR should continue negotiations with the DfE about not paying this invoice based on the poor quality of the original build and the costs the school has incurred for remedial work.

Action – AR to continue negotiations with the DfE about not paying this invoice for historic building work.

Additional Teaching Assistants (TAs)

The school needed to recruit an extra two TAs not included in the current budget, owing to the additional needs of children joining the school. These additional costs would be pro-rated for the remainder of the financial year and would be for 1.2 wte (2 members of staff on 0.6 wte contracts).

Action – Governors agreed to these additional costs.

- **School Financial Value Standard (SFVS)**

Action – KM to speak to AR about this and agree arrangements for completion and return in accordance with timescales set.

- **Review of Financial Procedures and documentation including adoption of LA Financial Handbook and approval of Scheme of Financial delegation.**

The LA Financial Handbook had been adopted and all financial procedures and documentation had been reviewed. The People and Resources Committee would review the Financial Scheme of Delegation to ensure all current limits were appropriate before bringing it back to FGB for approval.

Action – Scheme of Financial Delegation to be reviewed and updated by People and Resources Committee and brought back to FGB for approval.

- **Pay Award 2023**

Both the teachers and support staff pay awards had now been agreed and the budget would be adjusted accordingly.

- **Pupil Premium Report**

From next year Pupil Premium Fund money would be ringfenced to ensure that the costs of trips for all Pupil Premium children is met from this budget.

- **Review and update of School's Risk Register**

The Board had not previously had a Risk Register, but it was agreed that it could be a useful and that a subgroup of governors would discuss this further and bring it back to FGB.

Action – Establishment of a Risk Register to be discussed outside of the meeting and brought back to FGB.

- **Family Monthly Contribution**

Meetings were being held with families to explain the current financial situation at the school and to ask them to consider making a voluntary monthly contribution of £10 per month, or more if they were able and wanted to, to help with the running costs of the school. Governors would also have a stall at the school fayre to raise awareness of this issue.

Q – Do we know how other schools are dealing with these financial pressures and is there a way for the school to share resources or achieve economies of scale?

A – What you are talking about is really a vision of a MAT (multi academy trust) where schools share resources. This would be something that the diocese would lead on and think that options to do this informally are limited in Kew, as there are only three other state schools in the area. But it could be worth putting the question to Achieving for Children (AfC) and the Diocese and raising it via the Chair's network.

Action – Opportunities for sharing resources and economies of scale to explored with AfC, the Diocese and the Chairs' network.

It was also agreed that KM and MM would arrange to meet with Sarah Wilkins, Grant Director of Richmond Parish Lands Charity, to get a clearer understanding of their remit and whether this could be a future source of funding.

Action – Meeting to be arranged with Richmond Parish Lands Charity to discuss their remit and funding opportunities.

6.10 New Terms of Reference for the Committee.

The new Terms of Reference for the Committee were currently being drafted and would be agreed at the next meeting of the People & Resources Committee and come back to the next FGB for ratification.

Action – People and Resources Committee Terms of Reference to be ratified at next FGB meeting.

6.11 Date of the next meeting of the People and Resources Committee.

The next meeting of the People and Resources Committee would be held week commencing 08.01.24.

7. Statutory Policies and Compliance

7.1 To agree the new Policy Review Schedule for the academic year.

This is being drawn up by Andy Rooney (AR) School Business Manager and will come back to FGB once finalised.

Action – New Policy Review Schedule to be agenda item at next FGB (01.02.24).

7.2 New/updated policies requiring FGB approval.

There were two policies which had been updated and required FGB approval, the Complaints Policy, and the SEND policy.

Complaints Policy

This had been revised to include the option of the school being able to exclude parents from school premises because of abusive or aggressive behaviour, a change which had sadly become necessary following recent incidents. **Governors approved the revised Complaints Policy.**

SEND Policy

This policy had been updated to ensure that it was compliant, however it was noted that the school planned to completely rewrite the current policy to better reflect current practice in the school and would be brought back to FGB for approval once this review had been completed. **Governors approved the updated SEND Policy.**

7.3 School Website Compliance

The school website is currently being updated and will include an update of all Governance information. To assist with this all Governors were asked to ensure that their GovernorHub record is up to date.

Action – All governors to be sent a reminder to update all aspects of their GovernorHub record.

8. AOB

People and Resources Committee Update at next FGB.

It was agreed that the People and Resources Committee would nominate another member to present their committee update to the next FGB (01.02.24) in KM's absence.

9. Date and Time of next Meeting

The Spring#1 meeting be held on **Thursday 1 February 2024 at 7pm at the school.**

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
Janine Farrance (Co-Chair)

Actions agreed at The King's School FGB Meeting on 23 November 2023.

No.	Agenda Item	Action	Who	Date
1.	3.4	Minutes of FGB 25 September 2023 to be signed as agreed and approved on GovernorHub and as a paper copy for retention at the school.	JF & LS	30.11.23
2.	3.5	GovernorHub to be updated to show these Committee membership changes.	NC	21.12.23
3.	3.6	Staff running training/update sessions for governors to be explored.	AC	01.02.24
4.	4.	Governors to provide feedback on new Board arrangements to JF & LS if they want to.	All Governors	Ongoing
5.	5.	The issue of payment for school trips and donations to be discussed at the People and Resources Committee and Curriculum Committee to be kept updated.	AC, KM & VP	01.02.24
6.	5.	Business case for SEND staffing review for the next financial year to go to next People and Resources Committee for consideration.	AC & AR	Tbc
7.	6.6	Draft terms of reference for the Faith and Wellbeing committee to be agreed at the next committee meeting.	GF	Tbc
8.	6.6	New Terms of Reference for the Faith and Wellbeing Committee to go to next FGB for ratification.	GF	01.02.24
9.	6.7	Faith and Wellbeing Committee to further explore and monitor sensitivities around Bible teaching in the current climate.	GF	Ongoing
10.	6.9	FGB approved new cleaning contract and AC and AR to action.	AC & AR	Tbc
11.	6.9	Negotiations to continue with DfE about not paying invoice for historic building work.	KM & AR	01.02.24
12.	6.9	School to recruit two additional part-time TAs as agreed by governors.	AC	01.02.23
13.	6.9	SFVS – arrangements for completion and return in accordance with timescales set.	KM	01.02.24
14.	6.9	Scheme of Financial Delegation to be reviewed at People and Resources Committee and brought back to FGB for approval.	KM	01.02.24
15.	6.9	Risk Register to be discussed further and brought back to FGB.	JF & LS	01.02.24
16.	6.9	Opportunities for local economies of scale to be explored with AfC, the Diocese and the Chairs' network.	KM	01.02.24
17.	6.9	Meeting to be set up with Richmond Parish Lands Charity to discuss their remit and funding opportunities.	KM & MM	01.02.24
18.	6.10	People & Resources Committee revised Terms of Reference to be ratified at next FGB.	KM	01.02.24
19.	7.1	New Policy Review Schedule to be agenda item on next FGB.	AC & AR	01.02.24
20.	7.3	All governors to be reminded to update their GovernorHub record to help with school website update and compliance.	NC	30.11.23