

**Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting of the Wimbledon Primary Federation
30th June 2020 at 7pm**

Present

CHAIR: Jo Reynolds, (JR)

Executive Headteacher: Paul Lufkin (PL)

Lauren Clogg (LC) Susan Clucas (SC) Sam Dear (SD) Eric De Regnaucourt, (EdR), Katy Gandon (KG) Isabel Instone (II) Gemma Isaac, (GI) Kate Johnston (KJ)	Emeka Okorochoa, (EO) Rachel Morgan (RM) Heather Ponsford (HP) Raj Sood (RS) Chris Tregilgas (CT) Emma Walshe (EW) Rosie Williamson, (RW) Yvonne Young (YY)
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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.

No apologies were received.

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.

Governors were introduced to a prospective governor, Isobel Instone (IIIn), who shared her experience and passion for education. Questions were asked regarding her choice of school and particular skill set and it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Isobel Instone (IIIn) as a co-opted governor as per their discussion at the governing body meeting of 31 March. Governors **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the governing body meeting held on 14 May and 20 May.

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

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YY reported that she had undertaken a visit to Wimbledon Park during half-term to review Covid-19 safety and infection risk measures. A full walkaround had been undertaken to view preparations that had been put in place. Governors expressed their thanks to YY for the visit and expertise brought to demonstrate the level of rigour that had been brought at a strategic level to ensure that the school is safe.

Governors were encouraged to undertake relevant training during the summer, as well as consider potential link roles which they might like to take up.

Under Chair's correspondence, the Chair reported that she had received an email from a Mrs Corbett to thank everybody in the school community for all the hard work that has been going into getting through lockdown, but also getting the children back into school. A further letter had been received from a parent at Wimbledon Park asking that governors had undertaken due diligence on the decisions that had been made to bring children back into the school and the manner in which they were being brought back. A response will be made before the end of term.

An approach is to be made by the local MP and local councillors to the DFE regarding how they are going to bridge the financial gap in schools for the money that they will have lost as a result of lockdown. The school has agreed to join this communication.

Governors were appraised of a number of leavers from the governing body at the end of term as follows: Rachel Morgan, Susan Clucas and Ankur Agrawal, and it was **RESOLVED** to thank each for their sterling service to the school community as follows:

- Susan Clucas – for eight or nine years service to firstly Wimbledon Park and then the Federation community and being a rock helping to structure the approach to create a blueprint for a soft Federation which has been successful;
- Ankur Agrawal - for a fantastic job in dealing with an inherited deficit and bringing a level of financial rectitude at West Wimbledon to enable a joining with Wimbledon Park;

2. **RETURN TO SCHOOL**

Presentation by the Executive Headteacher

Governors received a comprehensive briefing from the Executive Headteacher on proposed arrangements for return to school and noted a range of initial considerations as follows:

Governors noted that the last discussion held by the body on 20 May had resolved to diverge from the government's standard model of bringing half the school back for all the time to bring all the school back for half the time. West Wimbledon has returned using the federation model and Wimbledon Park returns in the week beginning 6 July. The view of the school is that the return has been a success and surpassed anticipated expectations.

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The preparation, planning and delivery of the system by the leadership teams, admin and site support teams has enabled the number of children in school to rise from just 3% to 74% of children at West Wimbledon. Returning proportions at Wimbledon Park were around 70% on the first day and these numbers have crept up since to around 85% now. Experience has shown that the more children came back, the more children were encouraged to come back. The greater the positive feedback from teachers and staff about how the school is operating, the more enthusiastic those who were anxious or clinically vulnerable but looking to try to come back to school became.

At West Wimbledon, Treetops and Reception, Year 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 have children back (with nursery offering full day and half day child care). An average of 68% of children are back, ranging class by class from 38% to 83%. There has not been a noticeable week by week increase so far although numbers have increased marginally.

At both schools, behaviour, learning, managing social distancing and hygiene within the classroom and school has been easier than we had anticipated, with even the youngest children able to adapt well to the more limited environment and at-desk expectations.

Since return, the school has noticed a sense of appreciation and recognition amongst parents that it was important to do something different. The school had underestimated the importance of trying to get the children back into what feels like a more normal way of operating and has found that one can cover as much learning in a group of 12 for three hours where there is focus than can be done five hours over the course of a full day with 30 children in class. Teachers have been more able to pinpoint, track and support differences of learning when class sizes are small compared to when the 30 children in class.

The level of anxiety anticipated has not materialised and the settling process has typically taken a day before both children and parents know the routines.

LC commented that experience at Wimbledon Park had been less positive to date, although there are around 400 children in school. In response to a governor question (Q) about parental negativity, LC added that criticism seemed to centre on the order of return and perceived political nature of some correspondence. LC continued by reporting that learning has been harder and the experience of all teachers is possibly different in that there is a sense of exhaustion trying to repeat the same learning and the afternoon is delivered in the morning with the same sense of enthusiasm. The loss of close interaction with pupils is a particular difficulty, although the resilience and independence of the children has reinforced the decision to return in a particular manner decided upon.

In response to a governor question (Q) about the attitude of the teaching unions, LC observed that whilst the council had acknowledged that the school had done a better job than could be anticipated, the union response was challenging and a number of staff felt uncomfortable. YY's visit noted that measure at the school had been based upon the union checklist and there will be a need for further consultation once the numbers of children at school begins to rise.

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Governors reflected on the extent to which the decision of the school to deviate from the government plan was justified and concluded that the course of action was justified and corroborated by subsequent events.

Wimbledon Park has undertaken a lot of work on positive reinforcement of staff and governors **RESOLVED** to add to the reinforcement through a letter to staff at both schools from the Chair of Governors.

Governor Questions

A range of governor questions were raised as follows:

- *The report comments on teacher welfare and a lack of communal space. Are there any options in respect of this?* No. Wimbledon Park is limited for space, but that is the nature of the building at the best of times. And this is not currently the best of times. In terms of the use of communal space, staff have been meeting outside and the studio is being set up as a communal area from the autumn term, although this is dependent on timetabling.

3. SCHOOL UPDATE

Pupil roll

Wimbledon Park has witnessed a dramatic decrease in the number of applications for nursery. Whilst this has been slightly reflected across the borough, it is not as significant as in Wimbledon Park. The school believes that the reason for this is because it is not offering the 30 hours. The intake in the nursery is normally 104, although next year it will be 78 fifteen-hour places, the majority of which will be a single point of entry in September. Some of the nursery staff have been redeployed in response to this fall in numbers. Numbers are predicted to be full in early years and Key Stage One and around 98% full in Key Stage Two.

At West Wimbledon, pupil numbers declined very slowly across the year. In projecting forward for September, the school has not yet received any notification of leavers or moves out of the area. From September 2018 to September 2020, there has been a significant fall in the number of pupils in the school and the impact of falls in reception starts is going to impact on the school for some time if it is only 81 per cent full. Overall, we had a decent number of applications, we just had more families put us third or fourth on their preference list. So, although we maintained the number of families who put us on their preferences, we know that there are quite a number who are waiting places elsewhere. Nursery applications are up, however.

The following governor questions were asked in respect of pupil rolls:

- *Is there any sign of January entry or later entry after September to reception at West Wimbledon?* No, there's no waiting list at all;

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- *Is there going to be a knock-on effect next year for Wimbledon Park from nursery going into reception?* Not necessarily, since the school has the same long waiting list this year for reception that we normally do

Safeguarding

Wimbledon Park

During the school closure to all but children of critical workers, the school has ensured that there is a member of the DSL team on site at all times. A suggested addendum to each school's safeguarding policy was published by the DfE. This document, '*Coronavirus (Covid-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers*' was adapted slightly to reflect the school and shared with all staff.

Teachers have made every effort to keep in regular contact with their pupils and their parents via emails, phone calls and home learning provision and ongoing SLT contact has been made to check in with those families who were not responding to teachers' efforts to stay in touch.

The outgoing Deputy Headteacher has been focusing on the transfer of documents to secondary school and handover to the incoming inclusion manager as the designated safeguarding lead. Whole school safeguarding training is planned for September using material produced by West Wimbledon and an updated version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' takes effect from 1 September having recently been published.

West Wimbledon

The main safeguarding concern over the past term has been the reduction in the level of day to day contact with the vast majority of pupils. Despite more children now returning to school, there is still a high percentage of pupils who remain at home and with less interaction from their class teacher (as their focus is now on the teaching and learning of the children at school). Regular contact has been made with children offered respite in the key workers of vulnerable children group. Some part time support staff have been making regular links with children not attending through different zoom meetings or phone calls. Since the gradual re-opening of all Year groups, we have identified children from those who have remained at home, who would benefit from some continued support from a part time member of staff who are not assigned to a school bubble. Concerns centre on the stress which lockdown has placed on families.

PSHE / RSE consultation

The PSHE/RSE policies have both had staff and governor group consultation feedback and have been emailed to parents at both school of comments this half term. All comments received have been so far been positive supportive, and staff are excited about the opportunity to teach the new content. As yet, neither school has received any parent comments on the policies and it is anticipated that the finalised policies will remain unchanged. An ongoing training program for teachers is planned during the next academic year as some of the content is new or sensitive.

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Website

The new West Wimbledon Primary School and Wimbledon Primary Federation websites are live. The West Wimbledon Primary School site content has at this moment simply been transferred to the new website and now needs to be edited and developed. Alongside this, the page structure for the school information and curriculum information needs to be changed significantly before the beginning of September.

At Wimbledon Park, web pages have been restructured, although they remain to be set up. More content needs to be written.

September forward planning

The main focus of forward planning is to be on recovery and restart plans for September with a likely scenario that classes operate as bubbles without the sense of social distancing between children, but more as an infection control measures, should there be any virus outbreaks. The main forms of defence will be around making sure that that any symptomatic people don't come into school, high levels of hygiene and cleaning and the social distancing of adults. The challenges of operating in half day bubbles were outlined and governors were appraised of the intensity involved in this.

The federation is giving some thought to curriculum adjustments and considering if there is a case for some curriculum narrowing to focus on foundational skills with younger children and less curriculum narrowing with all the children.

Reading is likely to be the most straightforward core area with the fewest gaps, and phonics catch up will be the main focus. Maths catch up will be focused on missed curriculum from the prior year in the March – July period, and which of these units are critical building block for the current year's progression (e.g. fractions is a key unit throughout key stage 2 in the Spring and Summer terms that will not have been progressed enough). Writing across all year groups is likely to be the core subject where the children have regressed the most, and careful consideration and planning will be given as to how narrow these gaps. However, even within this, the school has seen that children are able to make significant progress relatively quickly within a short time of return.

School development plan

Priorities for the school development plan over the next year are a mix of rolling forward incomplete targets around curriculum development as well as ensuring that activities fit around return to school planning. Further priorities centre on the new staffing structures and support for leadership development at Wimbledon Park, maths at Wimbledon Park and linking the new early years curriculum and foundation stage profile.

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The following governor questions were asked:

- *Is there any appetite for the four days on and Friday off format to continue in light of comments around the intensity of the two bubbles?* Yes, although it is unlikely to be sustainable. One of the challenges is going to be how do teachers get their non-contact times ~~s-in-the~~ for planning and preparation, particularly when the idea of specialist teachers moving across lots of different classes is quite complicated in this idea of bubbling. One option to be considered is whether or not to make Friday afternoon non-contact time for the first half of the autumn term. A further option might be to consider the use of more inset days across the course of the term to enable planning. Whatever option is followed, it needs to be manageable and sustainable after return in September;
- *What is the position regarding government spending to help accelerated learning to make up the gap caused by the lockdown?* Not much has filtered through. Laptops have been sourced through charitable donations which have been far more successful and immediate and there seems to be no interest in supporting for lost income, where the budget impacts are significant. The 1 billion pounds announced is actually £ 650 million pounds for primary schools and works out at about 80 pounds per pupil. This is supposed to cover 12 sessions of tuition, with schools paying 25% of this amount. There is still no indication as to whether the amount is to be means tested.
- *Does the school need extra support in terms of technological solutions to any of the issues around returning to school?* This is being explored and the new computing lead at Wimbledon Park is to examine the potential to use Google Classrooms if needed to deliver specialist lessons, so that part of the curriculum can be kept, although there have been issues with the capacity of LGFL to cope. A further consideration is the need to ensure that children have equal access to virtual learning at home through the kind of financial investment that will ensure that meaningful online learning, particularly in specialist delivery, can be delivered. In many ways, there's no point in trying to reinvent a wheel in the form of Oak National Academy lessons, that is really effective in offering a home learning that can be tailored to school.

4. **RESOURCES**

Staffing

Governors were appraised of staffing changes across the federation for the autumn term, although both schools are fully staffed. Support staff leavers are not yet known, although at West Wimbledon, these have been covered in mainstream through redeployment. It is considered that support staff are less likely to move on this year given prevailing circumstances in terms of the employment market. All staff are aware of where they will be working next year. PL added that at West Wimbledon, staff exit interviews identified issues around staff environment which the school has tackled.

Governors recognised that leaving teaching can be an indicator of wider well-being concerns, and there has been less mobility this year in education jobs.

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- *Is the school seeking to replace the outgoing Deputy Headteacher at Wimbledon Park?* No. A completely different structure is in place with three new phase leaders and a new inclusion manager, which has strengthened capacity in the senior leadership team next year.

West Wimbledon budget and finance update

Governors noted that there was a significant error in the cost calculation in the West Wimbledon Budget approved by governors at the meeting on 14 May 2020. Three Microsoft Excel sum formulae for cost centres did not cover all the items above that had been put in the cost centre. The total costs that were left out of the approved budget totalled £67,000. Errors occurred as a result of reduced time available to spend on the budget during Covid as well as working from home arrangements which reduced efficiency and resulted in version control errors.

As a result of the short timescale involved and need to submit the budget by 1 June, an extraordinary meeting between the Chair of Governors, the School Business Manager and Executive Headteacher was held to discuss the error, and to reapprove the budget with changes. Additionally, the opportunity was taken to realign the estimates of income lost due to Covid within the school's childcare and after school clubs. A further £50,000 has been taken out of income.

The net impact is that the budget outcomes is £116,000 worse, which is covered by accumulated revenue reserves. Mitigation against this has been identified through price rises in After school and breakfast clubs from September, the potential deferring or addressing through a loan of £40,000 of maintenance and improvements works and the furloughing of contracts of after childcare staff. A business case for a substantial loan for maintenance and renovations has been submitted to the local authority and a response is awaited. At a time of unprecedented low interest rates, this will enable work to be undertaken without having a significant one-year budget impact.

Governors noted that both schools are moving into a period where having generated significant financial surpluses, they are now going to have to rely on these surpluses in order to meet budgeting needs for the next three years.

In response to a governor question (Q) as to whether Covid had had a similar impact at Wimbledon Park, PL commented that figures there were more conservative, although there was a possibility that public spending might continue for longer than anticipated depending on the pace at which clubs reopened.

Governors commented that there was a recognition of the errors and opportunity that had been taken to make a more accurate forecast of income and costs and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the actions taken, whilst noting the need for continued stringent budgetary management.

5. **CLOSING BUSINESS**

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Governors noted discussions on the future of the Base and personnel matters which are contained in part B and C of the minutes.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

A proposed calendar of governor dates has been circulated with Governor papers. The meeting schedule mirrors that which has been in place this year. Greater use of remote conferencing should also facilitate meeting attendance across the schools, although the suggestion is that this should be the exception rather than the rule.

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

Full governing body – 22 Sept - (Statutory assessment results update, pupil numbers, first weeks of term update, Governors training plan, Link Governors and visits) – 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 – 17 September (Pay and Appraisal policy, review appraisal/performance management outcomes and approve pay recommendations, headteacher's performance management) – WPPS, 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 9.30pm.

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____
Chair of Governors

Date: _____