**Present**

CHAIR: Eric De Regnaucourt, (EdR)

Headteachers: Paul Lufkin (PL), Rosie Williamson, (RW)

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| Steve Coventry (SC)  Georgia Harris (GH)  Emeka Okorocha (EO)  David Pack (DP)  Meghan Peatey (MP) | Martin Pfutzner (MP)  Raj Sood (RS)  Chris Tregilgas (CT)  Milly Williams (MW) |

**In attendance (\* denotes Associate Member)**

Steve Cleary, Clerk (SAC)

Lisa Kingsbury (LK) (\*)

*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 9:00 and was deemed to be quorate. Governors confirmed that they had received and read papers received from the schools in advance.

Apologies were received and consented to from Katy Gandon (KG), Natasha Gourlay (NG) and Brent Madore (BM).

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 **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the full governing body held on 23 May 2023 and publish on the website.

1. **AUTISM ACCEPTANCE AND BASE EXPANSION UPDATE**

Governors received a presentation from Alison Lea, the head of Treetops at West Wimbledon, on autism acceptance and the current position on expansion.

The school is excited that they are part of the local authority’s safety valve as a result of high levels of spending on SEN and high needs children. There is a significant and increasing need for specialist provision in the local authority as a lot of local pupils end up in schools which are either very far away, or in private, independent provisions which are very costly. It is proposed that Treetops will be the largest ARP in Merton doubling from 4 classes and 25 children in 2021/22 to 8 classes and 50 children in September 2024. The number of classes will eventually reach that of the mainstream school bringing changes in identity, dynamics and practice as well as requiring the careful management of community expectations. Children will predominantly come from within Merton, although there will be a small number of children from other boroughs depending on their needs. Adaptations are to be required to the building and wider environment[[1]](#footnote-1), although there are likely to be potential benefits in working between Treetops and the mainstream element of the school in terms of cross-curriculum links as well as collaboration in other operational aspects. A key challenge at the moment is that it has been difficult to recruit appropriate staff for working in Treetops as there is not only a general lack of qualified staff, but also working as a teacher or member of support staff in the ARP is quite different to being in a mainstream setting. The school is currently looking for teaching assistants in the ARP. The staffing structure in the ARP has been amended to reflect the increase in classes and pupil numbers and it is expected that the ARP will be fully staffed by April 2024.

The school is working on raising the acceptance and understanding of autism as well as seeking to change the language used around autism and refer to it as a round rather than linear spectrum. All staff in the school have visited Treetops and there has been a special week with assemblies and other activities dedicated to autism. It is hoped that the school will not only be able to develop it’s identity as a single unit and carefully manage its unique context, but also to undertake outreach and support other schools in their SEND provision over time.

* *Given the desire to be seen as one school, why does Treetops have a different name?* It is proposed that the mainstream element will be called Woodlands in the next year. Both elements of the school have different admissions criteria and approach.
* *What does the one school identity look like in practice?* A significant amount of this is easy to do, because over the years, although there has been a desire to have alignment and opportunities to collaborate with each other, the two areas of the school have different approaches. There are now more balanced teams as well as opportunities to support each other. Inclusion is likely to be stronger and there has always been a team approach where possible. Treetops has always been within the school grounds and children do not treat it as a separate entity.

1. **SCHOOL REPORTS**

**Wimbledon Park**

PL shared a report on the following areas of school life at Wimbledon Park.

*SEND*

The SEND Policy and SEND information report has been renewed and the next update will be completed for July 2024.

*Attainment and progress*

Statutory assessment has been carried out for:

Y1 Phonics (89 pupils. One working below test level, not attending school)

Y2 Phonics recheck (16 pupils)

Y2 Tests and Teacher Assessments (90 pupils)

Y4 multiplication tables check (75 students. One working below test level)

End of Key Stage Y6 tests (73 pupils)

Results were received on 11 July and will be analysed in due course to be reported at the autumn term governor’s meeting. A governor attended the KS2 test morning on 10 May and observed the test administration process (visit report received by governors at the last meeting).

Wimbledon Park received a Merton assessment moderation visit on 20 June to moderate teacher assessment levels in writing. The moderators validated the judgements made and gave positive feedback over writing and organisation in our year 6. Wimbledon Park teachers are part of Merton’s moderation team and have been part of the assessment moderation at 6 schools this half term.

Reading and writing assessment outcomes at the end of Year 2 are low and well below the target levels. A detailed review of this cohort’s early reading and writing journey has been carried out and a number of changes implemented. A more detailed report and review will take place with governors at the next meeting (alongside a review of all assessment outcomes).

*Extension and enrichment activities;*

This term, the school has had 48 extra-curricular clubs running and a recent survey revealed that overall 94% of children attend at least one extra-curricular activity. Places are offered to all pupil premium children and around half take up the offer.

Music enrichment is an area of focus and growth and competitive sports opportunities are extensive in year 3 upwards (but very little below year 3) with 80% of the children in years 3-6 and 55% of children with SEND in years 3 to 6 having taken part in a competitive sports fixture. Before and after school childcare has continued under the same arrangements and Kidsology is growing, particularly amongst younger families. The demand for wraparound care from reception parents is very significant and the spaces used are full. Demand for reception places remains high and few families are leaving. The staff survey has been followed up with some consultative workshops with groups of staff and responded to in terms of changes to communications. Staff absence remains high although discounting strikes, they are still close to historic levels. Staff turnover is low and the school has appointed four new year group leaders from amongst the class teachers. A number of staff members are taking on new leadership responsibilities next year. Governors were advised that the structural deficit creates issues around staff recruitment and a potential lack of provision for children with SEND support.

A governor raised issues around shortfalls in the provision of music tuition where children do not appear to be getting the full amount of time allocated. The school responded that it does not have a quality control role which covers the peripatetic music teachers although it could feedback on this and query whether it could develop its own music tuition provision.

Governors expressed their pleasure that the after-school and enrichment activities are strong at Wimbledon Park and, noting that the revenue received equated to an additional teaching assistant asked what particular lessons could be learnt at West Wimbledon. PL responded that there is a high level of affluence in the local community, such that families can afford clubs and there is less price sensitivity. The provision of clubs is aligned to demand. Computing is popular as is verbal / nonverbal reasoning in year five, because it sets the children up for secondary school, and gardening is also popular. A Turkish club has been facilitated with the Turkish Embassy. Most club providers charge around £10 per club and pay a 15% lettings fee back to the school (moving to 20% next year). RW reported that the range of clubs at West Wimbledon has improved significantly although there are challenges in terms of fewer pupil numbers, a different demographic and affordability of clubs for disadvantaged families where even £5 per club can be difficult. A suggestion was made to involve parents in running clubs.

Governors raised the following questions:

* *What is the school going to do to ensure that support staff provision is balanced across classes and educational provision is the same?* This was discussed at the budget meeting and it is acknowledged that the school is structurally unable to meet the staffing levels needed from the funding received. Prices and pay continue to rise. The school has reviewed the timetable for support staff and is seeking to ensure that every hour is allocated to support in some way, although there is an inevitability that needs will not be met in some areas.
* *What are other schools doing to choose to have support staffing?* They are not. Part of the problem derives from the budget and the national funding formula as well as the fact that historically, the allocation of funding to both Merton and to us as a school through local deprivation rates are very low. Wimbledon Park’s per pupil funding in Merton has been in the bottom three schools every year. The shift to national funding has also impacted although the school’s outcomes remain broadly high and through quality first teaching and curriculum design, Wimbledon Park remains a high achieving school.
* *What is the position with year 2?* This has been a complicated journey that has resulted in where they have got to. A number of actions are in place in terms of home reading and phonics, but one underlying factor is the lack of recovery from Covid.

**West Wimbledon**RW shared a report on the following areas of school life at West Wimbledon.

All statutory testing and assessments have been completed and submitted to the local authority via the DFE website. Treetops children have accessed where they can and an analysis will be provided of attainment and progress by category. Outcomes are looking strong, particularly in year 2 phonics and the school is undertaking a significant amount of work focused on early reading.

The school has not been moderated although the Year 6 team attended the LA writing moderation consensus meeting to support making judgements and colleagues from Merton monitored outcomes during the spring term (see positive report as circulated). The LA also conducted a writing review, with the Year 6 team in the autumn term which was very positive and reinforced our assessments of the children’s writing. In addition, an external writing moderation with a local school in the summer term was organised, alongside the school’s own internal moderation cycle which supported all teachers, including Year 2 teachers, making writing judgements. The EYFS team worked with our cluster of schools to moderate judgements at the end of Reception. In all statutory year groups, children were prepared by having the opportunity to practise past papers.

47.5% of the school population have attended at least one after school club. 28 pupil premium children receive funded places for one club. In the 2022/23 financial year, there was a net contribution of £10,930 to the school which was less than predicted although it is considered that the cost of living crisis is having an impact on the up-take of clubs. The extended school provisions is entirely school led and offers a friendly and familiar environment for our pupils. With our continued decrease in pupil roll and a sustained impact on numbers following the pandemic, pupil numbers remain low and staffing levels are being constantly reviewed. Costs will fall next year due to reductions in staffing to account for the lower numbers of pupils requesting a place and the school is going to market and promote both provisions, particularly breakfast club which has been running at a loss this year. In response to a governor question (**Q**) as to the point at which it could be said that the breakfast club is not worth running at all, RW stated that the provision is under constant review, although there is a case for continuation where it is still meeting the needs of children in the particular context of the school and costs are being met.

An annual staff survey has been conducted which indicates that whilst the percentages across the school are low, when comparing outcomes to last year’s staff survey, there is a steady improvement in most areas. The omission of certain issues within the written comments, such as the significant staff restructure which has taken place this year and no reference to ‘communication’ is an indicator that staff are content regarding these areas. The areas where there has been the most positive shift is around staff well-being. 23% more staff feel they are treated fairly and with respect, 18% more feel well-supported and 16% more staff feel that workload is taken into account when implementing policies and procedures. Teachers, as a group have responded much more positively to most areas than the other key groups. This may well be due to the changes in structure to the professional development, increased PPA this year and a continued focus on peer to peer support, through the phase leadership structure and core subject leader support.

Key areas of development:

The TAs are communicating that they feel less supported than the teachers and a higher proportion feel that leaders do not take workload into account when developing and implementing policies and procedures. Concerns are expressed about how the impact of the staffing re-structure will affect their role next year. The school is looking at how it can incorporate an additional break into the TAs working day.

Lower graded responses are evident in all key staffing groups in respect of behaviour. This will be unpicked more, during the staff training days in September but concerns are likely to be around;

* the impact of staff absence, during playtimes.
* issues related to ‘unfunded pupils’ and the impact on TA/SLT support
* fewer numbers of TAs following the re-structure
* Some growing concerns about the general conduct and manners of some of the children

In response, the whole staff are going to review ‘non-negotiables’ in relation to how we expect pupils to behave in school and their overall conduct and manners as well as review the ‘behaviour’ policy and systems. The school is applying to become one of three pilot schools to explore ‘trauma informed practice’ as well as review playtime structure in light of fewer pupils and staff.

The school has had an active ‘staff well-being’ group this year and will continue to offer a year-round holistic approach to help staff and sign-post them to services which can be of support. The outcomes of last year’s staff survey was used to help address staff-well being issues such as the reducing PD meetings for teachers, the introduction of a TA appraisal system, the creation of a prayer room and a continued focus on how SLT communicate. Next year, there needs to be a focus on how we can improve the well-being of support staff who appear to be the key group which are the least happy.

The school continues to monitor and offer support to members of staff who have a higher number of absences. 19 members of staff have each lost at least 10 working days this year. 58% of these are support staff and 42% teachers. All Merton employers are entitled to up to 5 discretionary authorised days of absence once staff have reached 5 days, any further absences will often be unpaid and monitored. The absence of four members of staff is being monitored and reviewed using the staff absence policy and with the support of Merton human resources and occupational health.

We are making reasonable adjustments for four members of support staff, in response to occupational health advice and recommendations. Treetops absences are covered using an agency. Where possible, teacher absences are covered through re-deployment of PPA staff and/or SLT. Mainstream support staff absences are rarely covered although moving ahead, with fewer support staff, this may well not be sustainable into next year.

Governors reflected on the proposed staffing structure at West Wimbledon (copy on file) and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the 2024/24 proposal for leadership, class teaching, TAs and admin.

1. **FEDERATION UPDATE**

The Chair reported that following the request received to dissolve the federation, consultation had been undertaken with stakeholders and others. No responses had been received from parents or other parties except the local authority who had written to thank governors for the work put into the federation. The view was expressed that the level of responses received reflect the fact that both schools are working well within their community. Governors unanimously **RESOLVED** to dissolve the federation as requested, to aim for a closing date of 1 September 2023 and to communicate the decision to the head of governance at the local authority. Governors reviewed the potential instrument of governance for successor governor boards and noted that there is a need for a minimum of seven on each board, consisting of a local authority governor, at least two parent governors (elected where possible), Headteacher, staff governor and co-opted governors as appropriate. The following initial pattern was proposed:

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|  | WEST WIMBLEDON | WIMBLEDON PARK |
| Headteacher | RW | PL |
| Staff (x1) | MP | GH |
| Local authority | EdR[[2]](#footnote-2) | tbc[[3]](#footnote-3) |
| Parents (x2) | tbc | MP, tbc |
| Co-opted | CT[[4]](#footnote-4), DP, SC, BM | MW, NG |
| Associate |  | LK |

with each school confirming its own arrangements from September in due course. RS, KG and EO indicated that they are looking to cease being a governor at the end of the current academic year and were thanked for their service.

1. **CLOSING BUSINESS**

Governors **RESOLVED** to approve SEND policies and SEND information reports as presented (copies on file).

All prior actions have been completed. The meeting closed at 11am.

1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**West Wimbledon[[5]](#footnote-5) –** 20 Sept, 11 Oct, 8 Nov, 7 Feb, 20 Mar, 22 May, 10 July

**Wimbledon Park[[6]](#footnote-6)** – 19 Sept, 10 Oct, 7 Nov, 6 Feb, 12 Mar, 21 May, 2 July

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Print Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The expansion is also planned to include some outdoor space and is scheduled for the summer holidays. Funding has been obtained for the required works from the local authority [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2023/24 academic year only [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The local authority is aware of the need for a local authority governor. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 2023/24 academic year only [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. All meetings at 8am, [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. All meetings at 6.30pm [↑](#footnote-ref-6)