**Present**

VICE CHAIR: Raj Sood (RS)

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

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| Natasha Gourlay (NG)Emeka Okorocha, (EO) | Katy Gandon (KG). Chris Tregilgas (CT) |

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

Steve Cleary, Clerk (SAC)

Dan Wilson (DW) – School Business Manager

*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 9.30am 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 Eric De Regnaucourt, (EdR), and given the focus on teachers’ pay, Georgia Harris (GH), Meghan Peatey (MP) and Lisa Kingsbury (LK) did not attend.

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 20 September and 17 October as well as the HR committee held on 29 April 2022 subject to amendments noted in the finalised version.

PL reported that the statement of roles, responsibilities, financial terms of reference and scheme of delegation and authorisation levels had been amended to remove references to the executive head teacher and school business committee. All business formerly dealt with by the school business committee is now dealt with by the full governing body. Governors **RESOLVED** to approve this proposal as well as the scheme of financing for schools[[1]](#footnote-1) (copy on file).

KG reported that she had updated the skills matrix and is currently in the process of seeking new governors to join.

1. **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

**West Wimbledon**

RW circulated a report on the current status of West Wimbledon and the following key points were highlighted:

* The planned deficit has risen from £123,000 to £190,000 and reserves have fallen to a concerning level of just £67,000. The original three year plan is no longer feasible given high inflation and nationally unfunded pay rises of around £100,000 which need to be factored into forecasts. Spending would have been within budget had the unfunded pay rises not occurred.
* The school is working on a plan to restructure staff in light of the increased costs and reducing pupil rolls. An informal meeting has been held with Merton HR to ensure that lessons learned from last year around clear communications to staff are applied. A meeting is to be held with staff at the end of November to update them on the business case for next year. Various options such as part-time working, sabbaticals and staff moving on at the end of the year will be looked at, prior to consideration of voluntary redundancies. Whilst there might be natural wastage or other means to deal with issues, there is a potential for the reduction of two teachers and further staff depending on the configuration of staffing. The staffing structure is a key driver in reducing costs and governors will be regularly updated on progress.
* The school has asked the after-school provision to reduce hours in response to reduced pupil numbers.
* Additional income received has been offset against additional expenditure in terms of pay and changes to pension costs. Vacant posts have been filled by part-time roles as well as the use of a unqualified teacher in the form of a TA who is training to be a teacher. Costs are impacted by 2 additional teachers who are being recommended to go through the threshold as well as a reduction in hours from the admin team.
* The school has overspent on pupil premium and is reducing the offer to pupil premium children in respect of clubs.
* There is concern over the costs of day to day agency usage. In response, the school is looking at the configuration of classes as well as the use of the leadership team in teaching.
* The next step for the school is to consider the minimum amount and configuration of staff that the school needs from September and prepare a business case for consideration prior to governor and union consideration and presentation to staff by early December. Any redundancies need to be worked through by April.
* Further potential one-off funding is awaited from the local authority around falling rolls which might provide some cushion.
* The school is seeking voluntary parental contributions to the school fund. There is a clear guarantee that no child would be treated any differently or get altered access to anything and parents are merely being reminded that there is an opportunity to donate should they wish to. Governors RESOLVED to endorse the approach being taken on this aspect.
* Given the budgetary pressures, the secondary stage of the rejuvenation of the outside play area has been paused although there are concerns over the site and potential staff absence over winter. The expansion of Treetops is positive although redeployment opportunities need to be carefully handled. A further challenge is to need to sensitively handle discussions over the trust and align these with other aspects such as the restructuring.
* The school has a dynamic staff wellbeing group which is running again, as well as an “kindness week”. There is currently good morale, trust is being built up and the importance of staff well-being is clearly recognised. All this is important in the process of restructuring so that staff are fully aware of the realities in relation to the future of the school and there is clear and transparent communication which reflects the needs of particular staff groups.

The following governor questions were asked:

* *Why is there such a thing as an unfunded pay rise and what does this mean in practice?* The budget was set on the basis of a 3% pay rise as advised at the time. The latest government offer is a minimum of 5% with some grades getting more than that. Teacher unions are seeking significantly more and planning industrial action in January. The unfunded element is the gap between the original and current suggested amount. This gap is more significant on the support staff side which is in region of 9 to 10% and which will be backdated to April. In respect of teachers pay, the government has put no new money into funding the final settlement.
* *What would happen if reserves go negative?* There would be a need for discussions with Merton as to how the situation could be addressed. They would challenge the school as to actions undertaken to prevent the set of circumstances and they could agree a loan on the condition of a range of actions being undertaken such as a partial restructure from April followed by a full restructure from September.
* *What is the position with the solar panels?* Only two thirds are working and the scaffolding is more expensive than it will save the school. The panels are owned by the local authority.

Governors **RESOLVED** to commend the school leadership for the approach taken and offered their support in respect of required actions.

**Wimbledon Park**

PL reported on the current position of Wimbledon Park as follows:

* There are similar underlying pressures as West Wimbledon in terms of financial and other pressures.
* There are some aspects of net positive income from EHCPs which were not in the original budget, as well as some grants for catch up tutoring, AECT training and a literacy specialist. School clubs are also fuller than planned.
* Expenditure is higher than expected, particularly in staffing and supply costs, as well as forecasted unfunded higher teacher and support staff pay rises and additional staff members for EHCPs.
* The school had forecast using up around about £140,000 of reserves, a figure which has risen to around £155,000 with the overall level falling to around £264,000. A restructuring is not envisaged at this stage.
* Whilst the Kidsology income is increasing by around 50 per cent, the bottom line profit share is not increasing as significantly. The reasons for this are being investigated.
* The latest advice from Merton who fix energy costs is that the school should forecast bills to double rather than triple, as previously indicated.
* Higher building maintenance and staff agency costs are expected and staff CPD costs are likely to rise as the school has a higher number of teachers, where professional development is being supported.
* The school is considering parental support for contributions on a voluntary basis, as part of maintaining the underlying financial health of the school.
* The school has not previously been in a position where reserves were being completely used up as now. With inflationary pressures likely to feed through into continued wage inflation and without clarity of public sector finance, the time is right to consider voluntary parental contributions. Governors affirmed their view that this would be a prudent approach.
* The asset register has identified obsolete equipment which equates to around £18,000 on its purchase value basis. Governors **RESOLVED** to approve its disposal.

Governors reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve virements as reported.

1. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Governors were apprised of policies around health and safety and queried whether or not there was a lone working policy. PL affirmed that a policy is in place and will be reviewed, particularly as a result of less lone working through staff managing their worklife balance. Suggestions were made over the inclusion of the statement around monitoring Covid in line with government guidance and references to a well being champion and governors **RESOLVED** to include these references into the policy, as well as to include elements related to mandatory strategic training as outlined by EO. PL advised those present of updates on the critical incident names and contacts, and it was noted that there had been no significant change in underlying procedures. Governors made a number of suggestions around the formatting and content of the names and contacts, site information and communication process which the schools undertook to incorporate.

1. **HR**

[The section of governor minutes with the Pay and Appraisal focus is confidential]

Governors **RESOLVED** to approve the pay recommendations from each school[[2]](#footnote-2) as well as the pay and appraisal policies as circulated.

**Exit interviews**

Governors received summaries on staff exit interviews carried out by two former board member and noted comments on the connection between Treetops and the mainstream school at West Wimbledon which were corroborated by the staff survey undertaken at the school. RW responded that the school is addressing issues through increased opportunities for inclusion as well as mainstream staff visiting Treetops to observe good practice in lessons and align approaches.

PL added that at Wimbledon Park, there is a desire to change the culture to establish channels of communication and line management structures which would enhance a sense of staff being listened to. The school recognises a need to work on the engagement between the SLT and staff.

1. **COMPLIANCE**

Governors **RESOLVED** to assent to the adoption of the following policies with minor amendments (noted on file):

* WPF Appraisal and Pay Policies, Financial Statement of Roles and Responsibilities
* WWPS Health and Safety Policy, Critical Incident and Business Continuity
* WPPS Health and Safety Policy, Critical Incident Procedures
1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Governors **RESOLVED** to record their congratulations to Wimbledon Park staff on their recent Ofsted report – see <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50198638> - and to convey this to those concerned.

1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING 7th February 2023 at 9:30am at Wimbledon Park Primary School**

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

All previous actions were noted as being complete. New actions were identified as follows:

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| **Action Points arising from 2022-23 meetings:** |
| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***By*** | ***When*** | ***Status*** | ***Note*** |
| 3 | Review skills audit against potential co-opted governors | EdR, KG, RS, EO and CT | - | IN PROGRESS |  |
| 4 | Attend SLT Day | CT | 21 November 2022 | IN PROGRESS |  |
| 5 | Upload safeguarding presentation slides to the USO as well as circulate tests for the governors on their understanding.  | MP | - | IN PROGRESS |  |

The meeting closed at 11.45am.

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

Chair of Governors

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

1. Last revised February 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Whilst noting that the approvals are still subject to an ongoing dispute between the government and unions on aspects of the school teacher’s pay and conditions document and the potential for industrial action. The appraisal and pay policies also needs to replace references to the HR committee as this no longer currently exists. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)