

THE QUEEN'S SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THE QUEEN'S C of E SCHOOL
CUMBERLAND ROAD
KEW
SURREY
TW9 3HJ

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governors of The Queen's School
held at the school on 26 May 2011 at 7.30pm

Present: *Foundation Governors (8)*

Will Cavendish	Rowena Fuller
Phyllis Cunningham	Eleanor Garland
David Durie	Nick Macmillan
Debbie Fife	Bonney Venning (<i>Chairman</i>)

Non-Foundation Governors (4)

Susie Connor	Richard Laming
Jan Deykin	Vicky O'Neill

Non-voting

Joanna Brackenbury	<i>Clerk</i>
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Opening prayer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Pat Henchie, Telfer Saywell and Rev.Nigel Worn and were accepted.

2. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL & OTHER MATERIAL INTERESTS

Governors were reminded of the need to declare any direct or indirect pecuniary interest which might relate to any matter under discussion.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 31 MARCH 2011

The minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2011 were approved, and signed by the chairman.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

4.1 Update on Staffing

Katie Bentham, currently deputy head at Marshgate School in Richmond, has been appointed headteacher from September. Voulla Demitriou, currently a teacher at our school, has been appointed deputy head from September.

Steph Edmonds has accepted a fantastic job as deputy head at a school in Croydon. Governors offered their CONGRATULATIONS to Steph.

It is unlikely that there will be any teacher resignations by the deadline of 31 May.

Pat Henchie, Bonney Venning and Eleanor Garland have had two meetings with Katie Bentham to keep her abreast of decisions being taken. She is aware of the building plans that have been approved and is happy with them.

The Personnel and Pay Committee is to discuss the staffing structure with the leadership team in late June.

4.2 Academies

Bonney Venning and Katie Bentham recently attended a special governors' meeting of Christ's School, to which the chairs and heads of local C of E schools in SDBE were invited. A consultant presented on issues surrounding conversion of secondary schools, in particular church schools, to academy status. The new Education Bill, currently going through Parliament, is intended to give local authorities the power to start the consultation process that starts the process leading to academy conversion for state maintained schools. The local authorities will have more power over the state maintained schools than voluntary-aided schools, but the effect of converting state maintained schools to academies may make it less viable for voluntary aided schools to remain outside this system.

All the borough's secondary schools that are not currently academies are considering a move to academy status. If they were to convert, it is likely that they would look to gain benefits such as the addition of sixth forms or for Christ's School, an additional intake class from September 2012.

The meeting noted that if the formation of federations (eg of church schools) was considered to be desirable, it would be much more viable to do this at the point of conversion rather than at a later date. Christ's will keep our school informed of any developments.

4.3 Links to Local Schools

Our school has already decided that stronger links with Christ's school are desirable. Katie Bentham already has a good relationship with Richard Burke, the headteacher of Christ's, through her current job at Marshgate Primary school and Bonney is beginning to build a relationship with Christ's as well. She has raised the question of Christ's offering a link to children at The Queen's School for secondary places, and although Christ's is open to this suggestion, The Queen's School would be expected to commit to a two-way relationship before any change was considered.

This September 10 children from The Queen's School are likely to attend Christ's School; the number may rise as there are also children on the waiting list who will be offered places before September.

Bonney has met with governors from Kew Riverside School and from Darell School to establish links. Both Darell and The Queen's will have new headteachers starting in September. Kew Riverside has a new headteacher who started last September. The schools are talking about putting in place joint mentoring for the three headteachers, and working together as three linked schools rather than working as three separate schools.

4.4 Communications

Since the last meeting Bonney has received an email concerning the allocation of children to classes when classes are mixed. This has

been referred to Pat Henchie since governors have no input into how individual children are allocated to classes and the system of allocation is a school matter.

A letter received on a confidential matter is noted separately.

5. UP-DATE ON SECONDARY TRANSFER

This item is partially covered in 4.2 above. Progress on action points from the last meeting are as follows:

Responsibility for communication with year 5 parents on policy on secondary transfer to independent schools, and drafting of a reference format for the school to use will be passed to a named teacher once the new staffing structure has been agreed. **ACTION: Leadership**

Gathering evidence from staff about tutoring activity has begun with the help of the LA which has provided a copy of their guidance to schools which has been shared by staff. All staff are to be asked to complete a questionnaire (distributed today) to establish the level of activity.

Bonney will forward to governors a copy of the letter that has been given to staff on the subject and Vicky will forward to governors a copy of the questionnaire. **ACTION: BV & VO**

The Marketing and Communications Committee has not met since the last full governors' meeting but will discuss with Katie Bentham how offers and acceptance of places at independent schools is to be handled in school.

The M&C C'tee will also look at how to communicate statistics about secondary places this year. **ACTION: M&C**

6. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

This policy, amended from the draft presented at the last meeting in line with governors' comments, was circulated before the meeting and was unanimously **APPROVED** for review in three years.

7. APPOINTMENT OF H&V CONTRACTORS

The Tender Report for classroom refurbishment work to be undertaken during the summer holidays was circulated before the meeting. Tenders from 4 firms were considered in the report. A question was raised about the financial standing of the recommended firm, H&V Contractors, and Nick Macmillan advised that the firm was a substantial one, used by the diocese in the past, who are very satisfied with them. The recommendation to appoint H&V Contractors was unanimously **APPROVED**.

8. FINANCE DELGATION POLICY

Susie Connor explained that last year the finance committee had been uneasy about a decision that had been taken, and on reading the delegation policy had felt that it was ambiguous. Samples of policies from other schools had been read, and a new, clearer policy had been drawn up. Delegation limits are related to budget, and delegation for expenditure outside the budget has much smaller limits. The policy was circulated before the meeting. The policy was unanimously **APPROVED**.

9. GOVERNOR SUCCESSION PLANNING

At present all 14 appointed or elected governors are due to retire during the autumn 2013 term. Governors all agree that staggered retirement

dates, which allow for several new governors a year to join the governing body, will create a healthier governing body. Bonney Venning has already raised with governors the question of whether they would like to retire early, or to retire and put themselves forward for reappointment or re-election this year for a further four years. She has had several responses. One foundation governor will be working abroad from September and so will stand down. Two foundation governors would be willing to stand down but put themselves forward for reappointment.

The position is more difficult for elected governors since there is a greater risk that they will not be re-elected.

After a discussion it was agreed that a working group would look at means available to create a stagger. **ACTION: WC & PC**

10. BREAKFAST CLUB

Accounts for the breakfast club were circulated before the meeting. These show that the club ran at a loss in the year to 31 March 2011 and is forecast to run at a loss during the current year.

After a discussion it was agreed that the breakfast club provided a valuable service to some families and should be continued. The price should possibly be raised again, and more publicity should be given to the club, and in particular the fact that places can be booked the afternoon before. Over the next half term, the attendance should be monitored to see if there is a pattern which can be used to predict low attendance days and so provide scope for reducing the staff levels on one or two days to reduce costs. **ACTION: VO & CT**

11. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Information from the diocese about training opportunities was circulated before the meeting.

It was agreed that the school should have an INSET on Religious Education and Collective Worship and that this was a priority. The Personnel and Pay C'tee have looked at this and the new headship team will plan delivery of the INSET. **ACTION: Leadership**

Governors were reminded that they should advise Joanna if they had booked themselves on courses so that she could keep the database up-to-date.

12. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

An extensive FIR concerning sex education was circulated before the meeting. Subsequently a second FIR request has come in on another subject.

Bonney Venning has reviewed the school's FIR statement which is based on an old model provided by the LA. She recommended that the school should adopt a new statement based on the most recent model issued by the LA. This was unanimously **APPROVED**.

After a discussion it was agreed that all requests, other than very simple requests from parents, should be charged, even if the amounts that could be charged were small.

It was agreed that the schedule of charges for disbursements should be drawn up by Bonney and Pat Henchie, that this would be circulated to governors as soon as possible for approval by email. **ACTION: PH & BV**

It was agreed that it was essential that all personal information should be redacted before information was given out.

It was agreed that all FIR requests should be signed by the chairman of governors or a person delegated by her.

Debbie Fife offered to help with the first FIR which would involve many hours of work.

ACTION: DF

13. NEW LINK GOVERNOR STRUCTURE

The Curriculum & Standards C'tee did not believe that the existing system of link governors was working effectively and Jan Deykin and Bonney Venning were looking at an alternative structure.

A new structure has not yet been finalised, but is based around governors working in small teams, linking to ranges of year groups, and with some focus areas, such as music or sport, and with individual team members focussing on particular aspects.

There was a discussion about the system and it was agreed that a team structure was likely to work more effectively. It was noted that governors needed a clear understanding of questions they needed to ask, and why they were asking them. Governors also needed to report their findings to committees and to have a clear idea of which committee to inform. Staff need help in communicating with governors and understanding what governors need to know. It was important that meetings between staff and governors did not waste staff's time and were well-focussed.

It was noted that any new structure would have to retain the statutory link-governor posts.

Jan and Bonney were asked to continue with their work and report back.

ACTION: JD & BV

14. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The report was circulated before the meeting.

Governors noted that Pat has warned about the amount of time that Katie Bentham might be expected to spend on governors' committees.

Governors agreed that, although Pat's two predecessors had chosen to attend almost every governors' committee meeting, it was not a requirement or expectation of governors that the headteacher should do this. Indeed it was considered desirable that attendance at some committee meetings should be delegates to other senior staff. Bonney Venning will discuss this with Pat and Katie Bentham.

ACTION: BV

15. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports were circulated before the meeting.

15.1 Premises with Health and Safety Committee

There were no comments or questions.

15.2 Finance Committee

Attention was drawn to the following:

Previous budget report for the year to 31 March 2011 had forecast an excess of spending over income of £35,000 but the year has actually ended with a surplus of £12,000. This is due to additional funds being received from the LA at the end of their financial year and some small expenditure savings.

A Surplus Balance Return has been prepared to demonstrate that some of the reserves held at year end are already committed for expenditure in the summer, major items being the kitchen renovation, up-grading ICT, and classroom renovation. The balance after these deductions is within the permitted 8% of income. The Return was unanimously **AGREED** and will be signed by Bonney Venning.

15.3 Curriculum and Standards Committee

Governors' attention was drawn to two special meeting that had been arranged:

Data on 23 June at 6.30pm

Curriculum on 27 June 7.30pm

All governors are welcome to attend.

15.4 Personnel and Pay Committee

There were no comments or questions.

16. POLICY UP-DATE

David Durie submitted a written report, up-dating the situation on school policies. David was **THANKED** for his report which sets out clearly which reports have been approved, which are being drafted and what is still to be done and shows the good progress that has been made over the past year.

It was noted again that all policies should be posted on the public area of the school website unless governors had specifically agreed that they should not. Although many policies are on the website, there are some missing but this should be rectified when the new website is launched. There was a query raised about PSHE policies – should they be a single policy or several different policies. It was agreed that a single policy would be onerous to review and that separate policies for each aspect should be maintained.

It was noted that a review date had not been set for the Safeguarding policy and it was **AGREED** that this would be for annual review with the next review due by February 2012.

17. VISION UPDATE

Bonney Venning has started to put the vision agreed for the school into a new School Development Plan. The recruitment process has interrupted this work. Some things in the Vision were already happening, where enthusiastic staff had quickly taken control of their area of interest, and some areas were already being worked on by governors, such as secondary transfer.

Responsibilities for some areas could not be included until the new staff structure had been agreed. It was agreed that governors should be able to see a School Development Plan at their next meeting, even if some of the details were incomplete.

It was agreed that the Strategy Group of committee chairs, Pat Henchie and Katie Bentham should meet in the second or third week in June to complete the work of mapping the Vision into the SDP. Joanna will email all the relevant people to arrange a suitable date. **ACTION: JB & Strategy**

18. GOVERNOR TRAINING UP-DATE

No governors have attended training since the last meeting.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19.1 It was noted that Pat and Steph would both be leaving the school in July and that recognition of their contribution this year should be made at the annual staff party. Vicky O'Neill will consult the school calendar to find a suitable date for the party to allow the maximum number of staff to attend. **ACTION: VO**

18.2 Following the death of the author Katie Pearson last year, a former parent at the school, a proposal had been made to buy an elaborate chair for the library that could be used by adults and children to sit in to read stories aloud. Donations for the chair have not materialised at the levels originally anticipated. A stall at the summer fair will be selling cakes to raise more money and awareness that donations can still be made. Following a discussion it was **AGREED** that £200 would be donated from governors' funds towards the chair.

18.3 David Durie has paid for a plaque for Princess Alexandra to unveil when she visits the school on 8 June. He has also commissioned a local woman to make a curtain to be used for the unveiling. It was **AGREED** that the cost of the plaque and curtain, of about £150, should be paid from governors' funds.

19. DATES OF MEETINGS FOR NEXT YEAR

Thursday 30 June

Joanna Brackenbury will draw up a schedule of meetings for the next academic year and circulate this for comment, with a view to a final version being available at the next governors' meeting. **ACTION: JB**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

Glossary

LA Local Authority (London Borough of Richmond upon Thames)

VA Voluntary-aided school

ACTION POINTS

Will Cavendish	governor retirements with Phyllis
Phyllis Cunningham	governor retirements with Will
Jan Deykin	link governors structure with Bonney
Debbie Fife	assist with work of FIR request
Pat Henchie	draw up charging schedule for FIRs with Pat
	C/F from March – investigate SIP replacement service
Vicky O'Neil	circulate staff tutoring questionnaire
	monitor Breakfast Club attendance for patterns with Cathy
	advise on suitable date for annual party for staff
Bonney Venning	circulate letter to staff on tutoring
	draw up charging schedule for FIRs with Pat
	link governor structure with Jan
	discuss senior staff attendance with Pat and Katie
Leadership team	guidelines for year 5 parents on applications for independed secondary schools
	new reference format for secondary schools
Steph Edmonds	C/F from March - Inform staff about Restraints Policy
Cathy Tilley	monitor Breakfast Club attendance for patterns with Vicky
Marketing	publication of secondary school places
Strategy Group	complete draft SDP by next meeting
Clerk	organise date for Strategy Group meeting
	circulate a draft calendar for next year's meetings