

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body of
Garden Suburb Infant and Junior Schools
Held on Wednesday 24 March 2021 via Zoom**

MEMBERS

LA GOVERNOR (1)

Evathia Elsiwidy*

PARENT GOVERNORS (2)

Ruth Henrywood (Junior) (Co Chair)*
Sanaz Saifolahi (Infant)*

HEADTEACHERS (2)

Sarah Sands (Infant Headteacher)*
Eileen Bhavsar (Junior Headteacher)*

STAFF GOVERNORS (1)

Alexia Dobinson (Infant Support)*

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Julia Chalfen (Junior Support)

CO-OPTED GOVERNORS (12:

2Teachers; 2Parents from each Schl)

Francoise Wagneur*
Paul Cohen*
Anthony Shayle*
Adrian Hodgson*
Omar Shah (Junior Parent) (Co Chair)*
Biljana Elia (Infant Teacher)*
Janina Quinn (Junior Teacher)
Aneka Grover (Infant Parent)*
Tara Ward Ammoun (Infant Parent)*
Paola Riddle*
Pam Omeye Howell*

NON-VOTING OBSERVERS

Lisa Berger (Junior DHT)*
Sarah Jowsey (Infant DHT)*
Andrea Bailey- School Business Manager

AGENDA

Part I

21/21 **Welcome**

Governors were welcomed to the meeting. Anthony Shayle was welcomed, he introduced himself to Governors. Paul Cohen would be introduced shortly.

It was noted that information had been added to the Governor drive which all Governors should have access to. A document explaining this with a short how-to would be circulated.

21/22 **Acceptance/non-acceptance of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Biljana Elias and Andrea Bailey. Omar Shah had informed the Co-Chair that he would be slightly delayed.

21/23 **Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

No Governor present declared a pecuniary interest in the business to be discussed.

21/24 **Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2021**

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2021, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting, were virtually **CONFIRMED** by the Chair, as a fair representation of the meeting.

21/25 **Matters Arising**

Matters arising would be addressed during the meeting if not already completed.

21/26 Infant Headteacher's Report/Updates

Attention was drawn to the IHT report circulated prior to the meeting. Governor comments and questions were welcomed.

A Governor thanked the School for the quality of work and support provided to parents and children during the lockdown. It was questioned whether the School had undertaken any progress evaluation against the baseline since the children had returned and if so, what the overall conclusions of this were. The IHT explained that they were currently in the process of doing this, cautious not to make this the immediate focal point after the return. A staged approach would therefore be adopted with different year groups focusing on different areas. Following this, decisions would be made on what to assess with route map undertaken for Reading and Maths. This would allow for assessments in Reading, Writing and Maths to be completed by 6 May.

Following a Governor question, the IHT confirmed that the School were not expected to submit assessments to the Department of Education (DfE) this year but would still be completing them for the School's purpose, for measuring progress and transition into the next year.

The IHT added that the School would also be looking at the readiness for learning, using smaller and less formal assessment tools. She explained that on the first Inset day, Teachers completed an overview sheet for each child which contained a record of their engagement in online learning, where progress with learning could be seen- areas of the curriculum they had engaged with and any safeguarding concerns.

This summary sheet could then be used as a basis and springboard for discussions during the parent consultations. These discussions were also being used to highlight the value placed on parents and their role during the lockdown and online provision, with the possibility of extending this to a type of two way coaching.

It was recognised that whilst the School were providing the recorded lessons, these had to be *taught* through parents and it was therefore important to ensure that they were being provided with the resources and tools that could be accessed.

It was noted that the Phonics teaching and learning was also being reviewed to better identify and understand how much of this the children had been able to learn and retain. This would be discussed further with the Curriculum committee.

The IHT was thanked for her report.

21/27 Junior Headteacher's Report/Updates

Attention was drawn to the JHT report circulated prior to the meeting. Governor comments and questions were welcomed.

A Governor enquired into whether any progress evaluation against the baseline had been completed following the children's return to School and, if so, what the conclusions from this were. The JHT explained that some assessment had been undertaken during the Inset day in February which took into consideration all the knowledge on the children before the lockdowns, as data for that period was available, as well as looking at the work produced as part of the home learning.

The JHT confirmed that the children had engaged very well in home learning with the curriculum delivered, albeit with limits. She added that a data analysis of the assessments had been completed which showed a similar pattern to that of national with the biggest impact on the younger cohorts.

Following a Governor question, the JHT confirmed that all cohorts had made progress from the last assessment in October with the Y6 cohort teaching assessments looking on track to meet targets.

Whilst behaviour had been positive on return, the focus remained on mental health. Maintaining the structure of the school day had been helpful and beneficial as well as the appropriate monitoring for safeguarding purposes. The children were required to upload work daily and if not, they would be contacted.

A Governor questioned whether the School was, overall, applying the same strategy for the catch up funding as was used for Pupil Premium children this year and in previous years. The JHT explained that there had been a lot of research and training attended with similar strategies and approaches used for both types of funding, including quality teaching, specific interventions and wellbeing. She added that the main strategy was to ensure high expectations for all. It was noted that the previous week an Inset was held targeted at Pupil Premium and Disadvantaged children, although this would impact upon all children. The JHT explained that the focus was less on Pupil Premium children meeting their targets as these still may not be at national levels but rather, really focusing on the wider strategies.

A Governor questioned whether the School was planning to use some of the catch up funding for an extra staff member in Y3 and Y4 in the next academic year. The JHT explained that the funding currently only went to the end of this academic year and it was not clear what the position would be for the next year. She explained that funding was received in two sections, £16,000 in this financial year and a further £11,000 this term which went until September. She explained that there were a range of things that were being targeted, noting that Y3 was being prioritised.

A Governor questioned what the impact would be of fewer numbers of pupils coming up from the Infant school. The JHT explained that they were not sure whether this was the case yet. They were expecting all 115 children including those on the waiting list. Numbers would be confirmed in April as it was noted that these were not all priority one choices.

A Governor questioned whether there were any specific plans for transition from the infant into the Junior school this year. The JHT explained that the transition had always been very structured and collaborative and noted that it might be easier this year with many of the children not spending much time in the Infant school. Staff had also asked for this to be done with half a class at a time as this was more manageable for both them and the children. More support would be on offer for emotional health for example. The JHT added that she would also look to schedule more tours for parents.

The JHT was thanked for her report.

21/28 **GB priorities and Covid recovery planning** (for agreement on the general approach)

Governor attention was drawn to the presentation on GB priorities and Covid recovery planning that had been submitted prior to the meeting. The presentation was displayed on screen.

The Co-Chair provided an overview of the presentation, highlighting the need to agree strategic objectives for the School and a plan for these that would then inform decision making and plan for future recovery.

It was noted that these objectives were linked closely to the budget setting, with the notion that in order to meet these strategic objectives, it would be a challenge to set a balanced budget. If the latter was realised, a plan would need to be in place to combat this.

Following a Governor question, it was explained that the approach was not aimed at the notion of a fast catch up for the children but was rather being pitched at the appropriate levels with a whole child focus and how best to approach this.

A Governor noted the health inequalities that had been exacerbated by the pandemic and suggested that this be incorporated into the recovery themes noting the evident impact on education.

The JHT noted the number of positive strategies already in place. An example of this was giving children multiple choice questions which allowed them all the opportunity to access the work.

A discussion ensued amongst Governors regarding the best next steps. The Co-Chair pointed to the Barnet template document circulated with the papers and suggested that this be used and completed for the summer term to demonstrate how the additional funding had been spent and all the activities underway to help identify and plan to gaps in learning, parental engagement and targets for disadvantaged pupils. It could therefore be used as a specific Covid recovery plan and then moving forward into the next academic year, have a document that resembled an expanded SDP/SIP which had Covid themes built in. The focus of that plan would be on Covid recovery alongside academic progress, wellbeing, staff support etc. This helped to demonstrate the School's addressing of the Covid plans and then targeting additional funding accordingly.

Omar Shah joined the meeting at 7.05pm

A Governor questioned whether such a plan could be formulated in the absence of data. The IHT explained that this would help to refine and target it but it did not need to limit it. The JHT added that data in the Junior School showed that Writing was probably the most affected area as it had been hard to teach remotely. The Junior DHT noted that the Writing levels were often lower as there was often not as much evidence; it was hard to differentiate what the children had completed independently. Although progress had been made with grammar etc., the content and handwriting still needed work and all these elements counted for Writing grades as a whole.

The Infant DHT noted the similarity with Phonics teaching in the Infants with the challenge of identifying whether the children were able to apply what they had learnt. It was also difficult to coach parents to teach this remotely. Gathering data would help to identify the gaps and then plan to those.

The importance of viewing this plan alongside the budget implications for achieving these was noted. In order to achieve these strategic objectives, resourcing and funding would need to be sought. These were not available in the current budgets.

Governors discussed the option of external resources assisting with this, linking it back to the sustainability work initiated the previous year. This could focus on marketing and increasing numbers on roll which needed to be a priority for both the short and long term.

Paul Cohen introduced himself. He noted the limited amount of time available unless more resource was made available for this. He questioned how the quality of teaching would be raised and the gap bridged without further funding. He also asked for clarity on the implications of setting a deficit budget.

The Co-Chair reiterated the need to increase resource in order to deliver on the objectives and the implications for the budget. This meant that the Schools may have go into deficit whilst a plan was formulated to fund it.

The JHT noted that she had sought advice from a Finance officer at Barnet who had noted the benefits of setting a realistic budget.

The IHT explained that the Infant school currently had 44 vacancies, noting that each was funded £4,000 and therefore this equated to a deficit of £56,000.

Governors were reminded of the initial meeting the IHT and Alexia Dobinson had with the consultant on fundraising, noting that a proposed plan with offers and prices had been received.

To follow up on this, it was agreed that Françoise Wagneur would review the plan alongside Alexia Dobinson, Pam Omeye Howell and the IHT after the Easter holidays.

Action: Alexia Dobinson/IHT

It was also suggested that another group be formulated to create an action plan to present at the next FGB meeting to include both a Premises and Finance committee representative. The plan would need to look at how to generate donations with the option of recruiting a Lettings Manager as well as operations for generating sponsorship.

The Co-Chair was thanked for her work on this. However, some concern was raised about the number and time spent on creating plans and different strategy documents that would then be difficult to monitor. It was suggested that the SIP/SDP have a clear Covid recovery sub-section under each objective which would include monitoring and reporting. This could then be the first item on the committees agendas for the Summer term with a Governor responsible for supporting and monitoring.

21/29 **Finance documents** (for agreement in draft, and ratification at next GB)

SFVS

It was agreed that this would be reviewed at the next meeting. A number of Governors had not yet submitted their declaration of business forms and skills audits.

Action: All Governors

Budget ratification

The IHT noted that there had already been considerable discussion on this. She explained the £57,000 budget deficit caused by the reduced pupil numbers, highlighting that this had been reduced by removing items/resources that were actually necessary. For example, there were two more TAs that were required for catch up provision, statutory provision and Pupil Premium provision. Recruiting to these posts would inevitably increase the budget deficit.

The IHT explained that she would be discussing this further with Gareth Evans and Alison Dawes at the LA, noting the reduction in pupil numbers of approximately 11 each year over the last three years. It was confirmed that there was no capacity to cut staffing further.

It was noted that whilst Governors would not ratify a deficit budget, they would need to devise a plan of recovery.

Traded services

It was noted that Governors needed to agree the Traded Services the School would buy in to by 31 May. They continued to buy into BPSI for staff retention and development purposes.

The IHT reminded that she was a Director of a board which oversaw BPSI and therefore declared a potential pecuniary interest.

As a summary of the discussion, Governors noted the possibility that the IHT would have to submit a deficit budget and that the School would develop a plan for reducing that deficit as far as possible. They were however not willing to compromise on the delivery of service for the pupils.

The JHT explained that in order not to submit a deficit budget, the School would have to accept that it would not be delivering on its commitment to Covid recovery and wellbeing programmes for both the students and staff as well as compromising the quality of educating. In order to meet the recovery agendas it was also necessary to have one extra member of staff out of class.

The JHT noted that as a worst case scenario, the deficit would be £33,000.

As a summary of the discussion, Governors noted that possibility that the JHT would have to submit a deficit budget and the School would develop a plan to maximize income and mitigate the risk of a future deficit budget in order to deliver on its objectives.

Following a show of hands, Governors voted on both of these positions; accepting the risk that deficit budgets may need to be submitted. Governors voted to uphold this, bar one who abstained.

21/30 **Governor Training Update**

It was noted that Governors should have received an email from Governor Hub to sign up and create an account.

Any training undertaken could be added to the individual's Governor Hub account.

It was noted that Andrea Bailey had been working on the IT in terms of email and drive access and an update on 365 should be completed by the end of the week. .

21/31 **Minutes of Committees** (for information)

Minutes of the following committees had been added to the Governor Drive:

Premises
Finance
Curriculum

21/32 **Report from the Director of Education and Skills** <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/working-children-barnet/information-schools/school-governors/meetings-and-reports> (if available)

Governors noted the report and its contents.

21/33 **Any Other Business**

Francoise Wagneur confirmed that she had spoken with George Peradigou at the LA regarding one of the criteria stipulated on the Co-opted Governor form. This had since been removed.

21/34 **Dates of Committee meetings**

- I. Curriculum – TBC
- II. Finance – TBC
- III. Premises – TBC
- IV. Inclusion & Pupil Wellbeing – Wednesday 26 May at 8.30am
- V. Staffing – TBC
- VI. Heads and Chairs of Committees – Tuesday 27 April, Tuesday 8 June at 8.30am

21/35 **Dates of Governing Body Meetings** (all at 6pm)

Dates of future meetings were confirmed as:

- Thursday 13th May 2021
- Wednesday 23rd June 2021

The meeting ended at 8.30pm

