### LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

### GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

**MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

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| **Date of Meeting** | 6th July 2023 |
| **Venue** | Harbinger Primary School |
| **Chair** | Martin Young |
| **Clerk & Minutes** | Sabrina Begum |
| **Time** | 5:00 p.m. |

# MEMBERSHIP:

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| **Governor** | **Category** |
| Martin Young (Chair) | Co-opted |
| Rebecca Abrahams (EHT)\* | Head |
| Caroline Hurley\* | Co-opted |
| Vaughan Pilikian\* | Co-opted |
| Rev Tom Pyke\* | Co-opted |
| *1x Vacancies* | Co-opted |
| Lawrence Houldsworth | Associate member |
| Kiran Rahman\* | Parent Governor |
| Nafisa Ayyub\* | Parent Governor |
| *1x Vacancies* | Parent Governor |
| Srividya Srivathsan (Vidya)\* | Local Authority Governor |
| Eddie Miller\* | Staff Governor |
|  |  |
| **Also, In Attendance** | **Role/Title** |
| Nimesha Nagahawatte (Head of School) | Observer |
| Mai-Anh Dien (School Business Manager) | Observer |
| Sabrina Begum | Clerk |

(\* represents attendance)

**Part 1 – Open Section**

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|  | **ITEM** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** |
|  | Apologies for absence was received and accepted from Martin Young.  **Resolved** Kiran Rahman acted as Chair. |
| 2. | **Declaration of Interest** |
|  | There were no declarations of pecuniary interest. |
| 3. | **Membership** |
|  | The Chair reported the resignation on Ben Brickley would come into effect from 21 June 2023 and note the three co-opted vacancies.  The Executive Headteacher (EHT) recalled that Reverend Tom and Martin Young had been reappointed as Co-opted Governors.  Vidya Srivathsan suggested for the Clerk to send the Chair and Headteacher a list of profiles to fill in the one remaining vacancy for a Co-opted Governor.  **Action: Clerk**  The Chair noted that there was a parent governor vacancy.  Nimesha Nagahawatte reported that it was advertised for the second time and there was still no interest. Mai-Anh Dien added that there was an online meeting when it was first advertised to introduce parents to the role of Governors. There was only one parent who attended but was no longer interested to join. They would try again in the new academic year with the new cohort of parents.  The Chair enquired if parents from other schools could join the Harbinger’s Governing Body. Vidya responded that they could, but it would not make them Parent Governors, they would become Co-Opted. Vidya suggested to invite parents to some of the meetings as observers.  Eddie Miller reported that his membership would come to an end in September. He had talked to various staff members to fill in his role as Staff Governor but there had not been any interest from staff either.  Vidya suggested to offer the Staff Governor role to the ECTs (Early Career Teachers) as it would be a beneficial experience for them. |
| 4. | **Minutes and Matters Arising – 25 May 2023** |
|  | The Minutes of the meetings held on 25th March 2023 were agreed and would be signed by the Chair via GovernorHub.  There were no matters arising not discussed elsewhere in these Minutes.  Matters Arising  VP noted that his was assigned as an Early Year link governors which he was content with. |
| 5. | **Significant Updates from Committees** |
|  | The Chair noted that there were no Committee meetings since the last Governing Body meeting, but minutes were available for GovernorHub for review.  The Chair reported on the outcome of her action from the Finance Committee. She contacted the Mayors Advisor for Sports and Wellbeing, Shuhel Malique, to visit Harbinger and he had responded that he would visit. The Chair would like to organise this before the new academic year but if there was no date available this term then this would be arranged for September.  Nimesha inquired if the support would be funding. The Chair responded that the Advisor briefly mentioned that there was a source of funding available, but he did not state the amount as it would depend on the needs of the school. The Chair shared that this could also be used towards SEN provision.  The Chair inquired on the safety of the caretaker’s house as it was a concern of the parents. The Chair reported that parents and other members of the community would help in refurbishing this space. The EHT reported that the space was not safe to use because of the wiring which was not an immediate concern to resolve.  The EHT reported that it was discussed with the Local Authority to create a resource base at Harbinger. A resource base would be a part of the borough’s SEN provision targeting a level of need.  The site was examined by the Local Authority, but Lewis Teasdale brought up the partnership with Phoenix School. Harbinger was successful in the application and there would be a specialist class from September 2023. The specialist class would be in Harbinger for Harbinger SEN pupils only.  The EHT clarified that the idea of a resource base and refurbishing the caretaker’s house would still be carried out, but the Local Authority have been prioritising the specialist classes as many SEN children could not get a space at Phoenix.  The Chair noted that the Governing Body would need more members for the Committees. |
| 6. | **Executive Headteacher’s Report** |
|  | Governors received the following the documents:   * Headteacher’s Report Overview July   The HT highlighted areas of the report and took questions:   * The report presented three different external views of the school, all of which reported positively on the provision of the school. * Staff have been feeling overwhelmingly pleased with the improvement of the school compared to a few years ago. * Attendance continues to be a problem for Harbinger and the lack of pupil roll impacts the finances. Harbinger would need to achieve a positive Ofsted judgement to increase in pupil roll from the Local Authority. Ofsted have notified schools that they would be holding inspections up until January 2024. * The EHT, Nimesha and Martin had a separate meeting with Alison Gawthorpe from Tower Hamlet Education Partnership (THEP) for her advice on whether Harbinger should request an inspection. The conversation led to a practice inspection with Daniel Burton and whether he sensed that Harbinger was ready but there was a delay in his visit and so it was too late to request an inspection from Ofsted. * It would be a concern if the Ofsted inspection took place in the Autumn Term because some of the experienced staff members would be moving on after the Summer Term, but the work of those individuals would not be lost.   School Roll  Vidya expressed her concern on the roll since there was a total of 60 vacancies across on the Isle of Dogs. She commented that if Harbinger achieved a good rating and became a two-form entry, it could not guarantee that there would be enough pupils to fill Harbinger’s vacancies.  Vaughan commented that they need conviction from the Local Authority on whether Harbinger should become a one form entry school. The idea had been implied many times but there had been no action taken by them.  Vaughan added that families had been leaving London due to cost of living and have moved out of housing and placed randomly in outer boroughs of London which makes it harder for primary school pupils to commute. The Ofsted rating could change the perspective of the those outside of the local community.  The EHT replied that Harbinger had always received pupils from the local community and majority of parents would like their children to go to George Green’s so this could secure Harbinger’s pupil roll.  The EHT commented that parents dislike the mixed age classes because they think that their child would struggle to catch up. There were no other schools on the Isle of Dogs that have this set up and teachers had found it difficult to deliver a curriculum to a mixed age class.  Caroline inquired on what the students think of being in mixed-age classes. The EHT replied that the children do not seem bothered to which Eddie added that they dislike too much change and especially if they were not with their friends.  Safeguarding  **The Chair inquired** the data page 8 of the report under the category of number of children deemed to be missing from education.  The EHT explained that this was a boy who enrolled in January 2022, and he would not speak. By the autumn, he was speaking confidently as he learnt a lot of English and he was engaged in the lessons. However, after the Christmas break, he would not speak to anybody. He was refusing to come into school, and he would cello tape himself to his mum by the wrist. There were a lot of agencies involved in this case and the family had trouble with their housing. The family came and went, but it was not clear if they were still living in Tower Hamlets. The EHT had permission in writing to remove the pupil from the roll. This should only be done when once the pupil had been rolled at another school, but this was not the case. As a result, this pupil was marked under a missing child from education.  **The Chair further inquired** if that would reflect negatively on the school. The EHT reported that it would not as the school had been clear and thorough on the situation.  SEN Provision  Vidya noted that the number of SEN children had almost reached 20% and inquired if this was because of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) highlighted this. The EHT confirmed that there had been some EHCP processed.  **The Chair further inquired** if this number represented the pupils who were in process of being assessed or children who have undiagnosed SEN. The EHT responded that it was both. There was no Educational Psychologist available until recently, so a lot of the plans were processed. There had also been additional SEN capacity since Easter which helped with the workload.  Vidya noted from the report that the Special Need Coordinator (SENCO) role had not been filled. The EHT replied that it was a late time in the year to advertise a job so this would be advertised again in the Autumn Term. The EHT explained that Jubeda was the SENCO and stepped up as Deputy after Matthew’s departure, so to lighten her workload, a SENCO would be recruited to assist with the administration of the EHCPs. The SENCO would be working full time as there would be a lot of teaching capacity with the specialist classes coming in September.  **The Chair** inquired if the school was allowed to request someone well-experienced. The EHT responded that this was allowed, and it was stated in the advertisement.  The EHT shared that St Luke’s had recruited two SENCOs at different times and both candidates had no experience in the role, but they were passionate about working with children and teaching. On both occasions their role was supplemented with a Service Level Agreement from the Local Authority for their first year so they could have a mentor to work alongside. Subsequently, they moved on to do the National SENCO award which all SENCOs must do in three years of being appointed. The EHT explained that the candidate would need to be passionate about working with SEN children and embody the school’s values.  Ofsted  **The Chair inquired** if the Ofsted inspection could take place early in the Autumn Term. The EHT replied that it would be unusual for Ofsted to come soon in the Autumn Term but if they do it would be around the third week because of the arrival of the Early Years.  The EHT commented that the school’s self-evaluation document would be a helpful guide to Governors when Ofsted would speak to them during the inspection. Vidya added that the Headteacher and End of year report would also benefit Governors. The EHT added at the evaluated school development plan would also be given to the Governors by the start of the Autumn Term.  Vidya requested if an Ofsted folder could be made on Governor Hub to have all these recent documents put in so it would be readily accessible.  **Action: Clerk**  The EHT explained to the Governors the process of the Ofsted inspection. There would be an initial one-hour phone call, and this would give an insight on what lead inspector would be looking for during their visit such as the subject deep dives and who they would like to speak to. The inspector would have already seen the website in detail and read reviews written about the school prior to the phone call. The conversation would be a series of questions to test the Heads and the inspection date would be set at the end of the call. The EHT would then contact Governors on availability and to set up a preliminary conversation to review key areas.  Vaughan noted that the EHT would be resigning before the Autumn Term begins. The EHT assured that she would still be available to give guidance and support but believed that Nimesha and the other leaders would do their best as Daniel Burton was also impressed with their work. |
| 7. | **Annual Safeguarding Report** |
|  | *This item was covered within the Headteacher’s Report.* |
| 8. | **Attendance Review** – Staff, pupils, and governors |
|  | *This item was covered within the Headteacher’s Report.* |
| 9. | **Policies** |
|  | There were no policies to review. |
| 10. | **Reports from Governors** |
|  | Visits Reports  Reverend Tom reported that he made a visit to the school on Monday 3rd July where he was guided through the different safeguarding processes. He also reviewed the single central register and had been doing this once a term since September 2022 as Ofsted would be checking this on the day of the inspection. The EHT thanked Reverend Tom for his work and reported that staff members had been reassured by his visits.  The Chair reported that she had arranged with Nimesha and another parent the coffee morning and afternoon for Monday 10th July and Friday 14th July. This would be for Year 4 and Year 5 parents so that they could start thinking about the secondary school applications during the summer term. The Chair would also like to inform parents that TfL would still be doing a free journey in assisting children with their navigation for when they go to secondary school. The Chair had also emailed the Local Authority for ideas and researched online for secondary school booklets which were not available.  Vidya added that the deadline for these booklets was end of June and this would made available in September.  Caroline shared that there was a dedicated transition helpline on the Tower Hamlets website which she could share.  **Action: Caroline**  The Chair noted that SEN application could not be done online and the deadline for that is within the first week of October instead of the end. The EHT highlighted that the paper application would be for the SEN children with an EHCP plan and are involved with the SEN department. If SEN children do not have a EHCP by the point of applying for a secondary school, then they would not be able to name their school.  There were no reports for Governor Training. |
| 11. | **Chair’s Action** |
|  | The Chair reported two actions. The first had been a religious organisation requesting to use the Harbinger which was rejected because it did not align with the school’s ethos. The second action was that he had approved unpaid term time leave for a senior leader staff member. |
| 12. | **Meeting Dates** |
|  | The Governing Body considered the following meeting dates for the next academic year:   * Thursday 7 September 2023 - Governing Body Safeguard Training * Thursday 12 October 2023 - Curriculum and Standards Committee * Thursday 19 October 2023 – Finance and General Purposes Committee * Thursday 9 November 2023 – Governing Body * Thursday 22 February 2024 – Finance and General Purposes Committee * Thursday 29 February 2024 – Curriculum and Standards Committee * Thursday 21 March 2024 – Governing Body * Thursday 9 May 2023 – Finance and General Purposes Committee\* * Thursday 16 May 2024 – Curriculum and Standards Committee * Thursday 23 May 2024 –Governing Body (Budget Approval)\*\* * Thursday 11 July 2023 – Governing Body   \**subject to change to 23rd May due to local elections*  *\*\*subject to cancellation if budget would be agreed via email*  Vidya highlighted that there would need to be a two-week gap between the Finance Committee and the full Governing Body meeting. She suggested that the budget should be circulated via email after the Finance Committee for approval and details could be discussed in the July meeting. She further added that email circulation should include a week’s deadline and a synopsis of what was discussed at the Finance committee.  Reverend Tom inquired if ratification was allowed via email and whether the Terms of Reference reflected this.  Vidya clarified that the sub committees go through the details, and it would be brought to the Governing Body for approval. The Local Authority have not had an issue with email ratification so long as there was a recorded trail of both committees having a contribution. The budgets would also be by the end of May which is a tight deadline and so this method would be quicker than a meeting.  The Chair suggested that the Terms of Reference should be adjusted in the September meeting to include ratification over email.  **Action: Clerk**  Caroline inquired on how the budget should be ratified online. Vidya answered that the email should be responded to if there were concerns otherwise no responses would be taken as no objections.  Caroline stated that she would be agreeing to the dates now, but her circumstances could change as her schools had not set their dates.  Next meeting agenda (Autumn Term) items to include:   * School Uniform Update * Link Governors * Review Terms of reference   The Chair highlighted that the next Governing Body would finalise the Link Governor roles. |

**The meeting closed at 6:32 pm**

**Chair’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| 13. | **Confidential Minutes –** 25 May 2023 |
|  | The confidential minutes of the meetings held on 25th May 2023 were agreed and would be signed by the Chair via GovernorHub. |
| 14. | **Staffing Update** |
|  | *This item was covered within the Headteacher’s Report.* |
| 15. | **Any other confidential items** |
|  | There were no confidential items to report. Governors thanked the EHT for her hard work. |

**The meeting closed at 6:33 pm**

**Chair’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**