**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

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| **Date of Meeting** | 21 March 2024 |
| **Venue** | Harbinger Primary School |
| **Chair** | Martin Young |
| **Clerk and Minutes** | Jenni Opoku-Gyimah |
| **Time** | 5:00pm |

**MEMBERSHIP:**

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| **GOVERNOR** | **CATEGORY** |
| Martin Young\* | Co-opted (Chair) |
| Nimesha Nagahawatte\* | Headteacher |
| Caroline Hurley\* | Co-opted |
| Vaughan Pilikian\* | Co-opted |
| Rev Tom Pyke | Co-opted |
| Faisal Mumtaz\* | Co-opted |
| Sudhir Saseedharan | Co-opted |
| Srividya Srivathsan (Vidya)\* | Local Authority |
| Nafisa Ayub\* | Parent Governor |
| Kiran Rahman\* | Parent Governor (Vice Chair) |
| *Vacancy* | *Staff Governor* |
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| **Also, In Attendance** |  |
| Jenni Opoku-Gyimah\* | Cover Clerk – Strictly Education |
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(\* represents attendance)

**Part 1 – Open Section**

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|  | **BUSINESS ITEM** |
|  | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** |
|  | The meeting started at 5:03pm and was declared quorate.  Apologies were received and accepted from Sudhir Saseedharan (SS).  Rev Tom Pyke was with apologies.  The chair informed the governors that BB was no longer a governor.  It was suggested that governors may not have known where to direct their apologies so the clerk must include a RSVP with the meeting invites.  **ACTION: Remember to add a RSVP to meeting requests to governors. CLERK** |
|  | **Declaration of Interest *(including potential conflict – financial or otherwise)*** |
|  | There were no conflicts of interests or pecuniary interests. |
|  | Membership  * To report the election of **NEW GOVERNORS** as a co-opted governor with effect from **DATE** for a term of four years and assign **GOVERNORS** to a Committee. |
|  | **Resolution: The governors approved the appointment of Faisal Mumtaz (FM) and Sudhir Saseedharan (SS) as Co-opted governors for a four-year term with effect from the 21st of March 2024.**  SS was assigned to the Curriculum and Standards committee based on a prior conversation he had had with the Chair and FM was assigned to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.  **ACTION: The chair agreed to compile and circulate a list of Link Governors to everyone after the meeting. MY**  CH requested to attend a FGP meeting as an observer first, before committing to it.  **ACTION: Invite CH to the next FGP Committee meeting as an observer. CLERK**  The HT highlighted the following as the areas which needed Link Governors:   * Safeguarding * SEN * Golden Threads – Oracy, Trauma Informed and Anti Racist * EYFS * Curriculum and Standards – KS1 and KS2   and   * Health and Safety   *VP joined the meeting at 5:10pm*  KR asked governors to consider a request from parents for a Parent Hub. This would be a 30-to-60-minute forum for them connect with each other and the school. KR had discussed this with the HT and the suggestion was to use the Caretaker’s Cottage.  **Q: Most of the parents who attend this if it is taking place on school property would not be DBS cleared; so, would this be supervised?**  **A:** KR explained that she had offered to supervise the sessions. They are currently considering one morning or afternoon, every half term in consultation with the HT, with the possibility of more sessions if there is a demand for it.  **The governors were happy to support and approve this if the school’s maintenance contractor – G4S approve.**  The HT informed the governors that Coffee Mornings had already been advertised in the newsletter to parents. The plan would be to do more is there is a demand for it.  It was suggested that the Stay and Play that was previously closed could be re-opened as some parents have offered to help set it up The governors asked KR to liaise with the HT regarding that. |
|  | Minutes and Matters Arising – 30 November 2023 |
|  | **Resolution: The Minutes of the meeting held on the 30th of November 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and would be signed by the Chair via GovernorHub.**  **A hard copy was signed in the meeting.**  There were no matters arising not discussed elsewhere in these Minutes. |
|  | Significant Updates from Committees |
|  | Finance & General Purposes Committee – 22 February 2024 *The minutes for the FGP meeting on the 22nd of February 2024 were circulated amongst the meeting papers for this meeting in advance of the meeting.*  SVS reported that the school currently has no School Business Manager (SBM) as the previous one left, but the school has since appointed one.  The school currently has a deficit carry forward of £35k. This would have been lower but the school had borrowed £35k from the Local Authority (LA). The HT has worked hard to keep within the budget and the Pearl Class and staff movement have helped with that. There may be a small surplus of £5k but the actual bottom line will be evident by mid-April.  The target for the school is to increase marketing to increase the Published Admissions Number (PAN) to fulfil 45 in all year groups and move to two year groups. Also, the school cannot go another year cutting curriculum.  SVS highlighted the need for the school to maximise its income potential to improve the student experience and suggested the use of the Caretaker’s Cottage to generate income.  The school had advertised the SENCO post but have not had much interest so it is looking internal for staff stepping up. It would keep the SLA in the meantime.  SVS asked governors to consider the HT’s wellbeing as she has been working excessive hours.  **Q: Does the school make external requests for funding?**  **A:** The HT explained that the school had tried that in the past but had not been successful. The HT will commission the new SBM to look into that again.  The PFI stands at £338k, up 75k from last year. It is a complicated process to exit although the school could leave before the two years was up if it wanted but, the cost will be expensive.  SVS explained that in two years the school would be in a much better position. There are currently 2 to 3 staff in PFI and £100k in maintenance contracts. It would be best to take it one year at a time and concentrate on increasing the numbers as previously discussed.  **Q: Is the LA not concerned enough to step in?**  **A:** It would be expensive for school to go on its own so it would be best to go through the two years. The LA have started the process but it is a slow approach. The LA will take liability and is offering the Minimum Funding Guarantee to cover some costs.  The governors asked for the school to ensure that the LA gives the school transparency in what they say to ensure the school is happy with what is being said.  SVS reported that the school had a positive candidate for the School Business Manager.  **Resolution: The governors approved the Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS) and the Chair signed it.**  Curriculum & Standards Committee – 29 February 2024  *The minutes for the* *Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting on the 29th of February 2024 were circulated amongst the meeting papers for this meeting in advance of the meeting.*  CH reported that a presentation was given on Gold Threads.  There is a gap in Humanities and Maths which was highlighted by OFSTED Deep Dives.  It was a positive meeting and it was good to be able to see what OFSTED saw.  In the meeting, the HT went through the data and details can be found in the minutes.  .  The policies were reviewed by the Committee and recommended for ratification. All the policies can all be found on GovernorHub.  **Resolution: The governors ratified the policies presented.**  **Q: How was the school maintaining the bank of policies?**  **A:** Policies are generally kept in the school office. Public policies are uploaded to the school website, and staff policies in kept in SharePoint.  Part of the new SBM’s role would be to oversee the management of policies. |
|  | Headteacher’s Report |
|  | *The Headteacher’s Report was circulated along with the meeting papers for this meeting in advance of the meeting. This included the Self-Evaluation Summary (SEF) and School Development Plan (SDP).*  The HT highlighted the following items for emphasis:  **School Development Plan**  This is still ongoing post Ofsted and staff know what the priorities are. The Golden Threads have been included.  The governors asked the school to make sure the SDP was aligned with the school’s values and ensure Pupil Voice is incorporated in addition to the areas of improvement identified by OFSTED.  The HT explained that during the staff half-term Teaching and Learning meeting, implementation, addressing areas of learning and stretching Greater Depth pupils was discussed. Staff have also started peer reviews and coaching conversations with the HT, and the HT wants to keep ongoing.  **Q: Do staff get feedback?**  **A:** Staff have been feeding back to each other but will be getting feedback from the HT too.  **Q: Are staff able to accommodate observations in the timetable?**  **A:** Yes, staff have been looking at creative ways to do that.  The HT reported that staff have been looking ways to promote and market the school to improve the numbers. This year the number of applications were low. Last year the school roll was 317, but the number dropped this year so funding will be based on 279. Per child funding has increased but that is not a real increase.  **Q: How many applications did the school receive for next year?**  **A:** 37 for Reception and 29 for Nursery but would like to get that up to 45 which is why staff are considering ways to advertise.  It was noted that other schools were proactively calling families and holding additional Open Days so the school would need to be mindful that it is competing with other schools. Also, the positive effects of the recent OFSTED inspection would not be evident until next year.  **Q: Has turning the school into a one form entry school ever been considered?**  **A:** The LA are not in favour of that. This has been a conversation for almost ten years. There is a premium in having one form. SVS added that due to the falling birth rate in London this might be a necessity but there is a disadvantage. It could put the school under scope for closure and, with the PFI it would not be sustainable.  The Chair added that turning school into a one form entry school would be a major change that would have to considered meticulously and carefully.  The governors discussed the various ways the school could advertise including using a banner or leafleting plus the effects of falling rolls, and the cost implications. Also, the possibility of using social media, Isle of Dogs media groups and whose responsibility it might be.  They decided that the school would have to work out what parents want to know and when they want to know it and engage PTA, use word of mouth, and the Coffee morning to help. They agreed that the school should not feel shy in selling itself.  **If anyone has any marketing and promotion ideas, they should email them to the HT.**  **Q: Are falling rolls due to pupils moving to other schools on the island itself or due to them moving out of the island?**  **A:** Some have moved out due to the housing crises, migrating population, and also due to there are too many places.  **Attendance**  The school’s attendance currently stands at 92% and needs to be raised to 96%.  This has been caused by the persistent absence of the same children.  The school currently has an Attendance Welfare Advisor (AWA) who comes in once a week and has meetings with the parents. The AWA also has workshops for parents but parents have not been attending.  **Q: Are parents being fined?**  **A:** The school has been trying to implement fines but parents are able to circumvent them.  Interventions do not work and this is a national issue.  *Further details and actions planned are in the HT’s report.*  **Behaviour**  *Details are in the HT’s report.*  **SEN**  *Details are in the HT’s report.*  **Pearl class**  Pearl class now has ten children. This is a two-year pilot project with another school.  The part-time SENCO has been supporting teacher. It is made up of children with autism from Nursery up to Year 3 on a rotation. Some children have been spending time in Reception.  This is resourced with additional funding.  **Safeguarding**  *Details are in the HT’s report.*  **Staffing**  As discussed before plus further details in the HT’s Report.  **Staffing and Staff Attendance**  Staff attendance has been difficult.  There have been a lot of staff changes this half-term. Fiona has stepped up as Acting Deputy HT and will be undertaking training, but it has been a slow transition.  The school has had to have interim arrangements due to the loss of the SBM and has been managing the Long Term (LT) Sickness absence of Admin and Support staff.  One has been on leave since September. The HT reported that she has been in contact with HR and had an attendance meeting with external mediators but the staff member did not want to engage. They requested a working from home arrangement but that is not something the school is able to offer. Also, they have exhausted all their sickness pay.  The governors agreed that there is a potential reason for fair dismissal so the HT will arrange a panel and suggest some dates. **It was recommended that governors have training before sitting on the panel.**  The governors thanked the HT for the pictures included in the report and were pleased to see the wonderful things going on.  The governors also thanked the HT for the work put into producing a well written and comprehensive report.  Thanks to NN open up opportunities for children from a young age for children to aspire to introducing careers. |
|  | Online Safety / Cyber Security training for Governors (led by Nimesha Nagahawatte) |
|  | The HT will send the link for the Online Safety course to governors and governors must inform the school once they complete it. Governors must complete the course before Friday the 31st of March.  HT confirmed that schools need a member of SLT to lead on Filtering and Monitor (which would be herself) and a governor (who would be the Safeguarding Governor).  **ACTION: Set up a confirmation on GovernorHub for the course. Clerk** |
|  | Progress of School Development Plan |
|  | This was covered within the HT’s Report. |
|  | Policies |
|  | This was covered within the Curriculum and Standards section. |
|  | Reports from Governors |
|  | **Lead Pipping**  VP raised the concern of lead piping poisoning in the school. Water from lead piping can be very poisonous and children absorb more than adults and so, he wants the Local Authority to do something about it because, there are no safe levels. He wants the governing body to collectively lean on the LA.  **Q: How do we know the school has lead piping?**  **A:** It was confirmed from a survey done years ago. The LA arranged to get the survey done with procedures to flush it out.  The HT forwarded an e-mail to G4S management asking for reassurance but the issue is with Tower Hamlets. The piping needs to be replaced. The HT has also asked G4S about works that were done previously.  SVS agreed that governors would write to the LA and believes the person to direct this to would be Michael Woollard.  **ACTION: Write to the LA about replacing the lead piping in the school. SVS**  **ACTION: Add lead piping as a standing item to the Finance and General Purposes agenda. CLERK** |
|  | Chair’s Action |
|  | The Chair reported that he was delighted to have approved Fiona, a former pupil as deputy head teacher.  He was:   * also delighted about the positive news on the School Business Manager. * had approved the settlement for a member of staff to be released under the advice of the HR advisor. * And is currently reviewing Job Share relationships with St Lukes. |
|  | **Date of Next Meeting -** Thursday 23 May 2024 (Budget Approval) at 5:00pm |
|  | **Future Meeting Dates** |
|  | **Dates Meeting Type**  Thursday 9 May 2024 FGP  Thursday 16 May 2024 Curriculum and Standards  Thursday 23 May 2024 GB (Budget Approval)  Thursday 11 July 2024 GB |

**The meeting closed at 6:35 pm**

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

**PART 2 - CONFIDENTIAL**

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|  | **Confidential Items** |
|  | No confidential items to report. |

**The meeting closed at 6:40 pm**

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