

**The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames  
and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

**Minutes of the Virtual School Governing Board  
Virtual Meeting held: Wednesday 8 July 2020  
3-4 pm**

**Constitution, Membership and Attendance**

Director for Education Services, Kingston and Richmond	Charis Penfold
Director of Children’s Social Care, Kingston and Richmond	<b>Alison Twynam</b>
Virtual School Headteacher	Suzanne Parrott
Head of Governor Support	Angela Langford
Primary Headteacher (LBR)	Carmen Palmer
Secondary Headteacher (RBK)	Tom Gibson
Primary Headteacher (RBWM)	Gemma Donnelly
Foster Carer	Ruth Sinclair
Kingston and Richmond CCG	<b>Vicky Fraser</b>
Associate Director for Corporate Parenting (RBWM)	Marie Bell

**Apologies (in bold)**

**Also attended:** Julia Hunt (Clerk)

		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	CP welcomed governors to the virtual meeting and introduced Marie Bell, Associate Director for Corporate Parenting (RBWM) who will be joining the Board. Apologies were outlined as above.	
<b>1.2</b>	In line with advice for all governing boards during this time, the meeting focused on how the Virtual School has supported young people during COVID-19, its impact on young people, and next steps/future developments.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting 3 December 2019 and Matters Arising</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	Minutes of the meeting dated 3 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record. Matters arising were as follows - all other actions complete.	
<b>2.2</b>	4.5 - Terms of Reference to be considered at the March meeting - to be discussed later in the meeting.	
<b>2.3</b>	5.3 SEP to consider differences regarding in and out of borough persistent absence data. 2018-29 Average Absence in borough was lower than out of borough for Richmond and higher in borough than out for Kingston and RBWM.	

<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b></p> <p><b>3.2</b></p>	<p><b>Headteacher Report</b></p> <p><b>Spring Review</b></p> <p>SEP gave an overview of the Spring term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Over half the pupils at KS4 are SEND however outcomes in English and Maths were significantly higher than CLA nationally.</li> <li>- NEET figures are very low in Richmond (7%), Kingston's figure is higher at 17.9% but lower than 2019. RBWM's figures are in line with last year (18%). These compare well against the national average of 39%.</li> <li>- School stability figures are of concern. 27% moved school during the last 2 years in Richmond, 26% in Kingston and 34% in RBWM which equates to 7 school moves for a third of CLA. This lack of stability is a significant factor in why CLA perform less well than their peers. School stability is a key focus for the Virtual School this year and education needs to be a priority when any placement move is suggested.</li> <li>- Fixed term exclusions are in line with the national average for CLA (11.7%) but are still high; 8.8% in Richmond, 11.3% in Kingston 11.3% and RBWM 11.7%.</li> <li>- The percentage of CLA in a Good or Outstanding school are 90% in Richmond, 92.9% in Kingston and 98.6% in RBWM.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q. Why are young people moved from a school?</b></p> <p>A. Sometimes a young person needs to be moved to another area if they are vulnerable in their current setting. The Rees Centre have published a report which considered the factors within social care and education that impacted on the outcomes of CLA children and lack of school stability has a significant impact. In RBWM, school stability is included in their services impact plan as there is recognition that this needs to be improved. The Assistant Virtual School Headteacher is included in many meetings with social care. In Richmond and Kingston, Alison Twynam is also keen to look at how stability can be improved.</p> <p><b>Q. What consideration do councils give to CLA when planning a regeneration of areas such as the Cambridge Road Estate?</b></p> <p>A. Planning does involve other aspects including social care and the new school will prioritise local children but CP agreed to discuss this further to ensure all opportunities have been seized with Matthew Paul. In terms of exclusions, SEP confirmed Richmond and Kingston schools very positively support CLA. The support within RBWM is more varied but SEP hopes the attachment aware programme will be helpful in addressing this.</p> <p><b>Update on Educational Provision During COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Virtual School maintained a RAG rated spreadsheet outlining whether young people are in school or at home and how much learning they have accessed. Some young people have responded very well.</li> <li>- School based Primary attendance figures are: Richmond 81%, Kingston 85% and RBWM 81%. Secondary attendance is slightly lower at 66% for Richmond and Kingston, and 57% for RBWM but higher than the national average of 14%</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Carmen Palmer joined the meeting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Throughout this period, engagement with Foster Carers has been very positive.</li> <li>- Year 11 students have been out of school since March and SEP is concerned for this group as these 6 students are at risk of being NEET.</li> <li>- PEP completion for the Spring was 100%.</li> <li>- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires have been rolled out and these are</li> </ul>	<p>CP</p>
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	<p>triangulated with Health and Social Care teams in Richmond and Kingston.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research from Bristol University regarding children at the edge of care recommended that Virtual Schools take over responsibility for this group of children. Other local authorities have adopted this approach, however the Virtual School does not have the capacity to do this without additional funding.</li> <li>- The Virtual School has offered virtual training to Designated Teachers on resilience, transition training to Year 6 and 7 teachers and training for foster carers on anxiety.</li> <li>- 5 staff have been recruited for the Transition Hub since the Spring term and the external team evaluating the Hub are pleased with progress.</li> <li>- Advice and support for previously looked after children has continued via newsletters and 121 support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q. Do all young people have laptops?</b> A. Some already had them but laptops for the others only arrived last week.</p> <p><b>Q. Does the Virtual School's responsibility end when a young person goes into custody?</b> A. No. In addition, young people in custody who are not CLA become the Virtual School's responsibility.</p> <p><b>Q. Has the careers officer role developed well during COVID-19?</b> A. The careers officer is very experienced and has offered 121 support. There will be further support over the summer in relation to exam results.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> CP understands that foster care placements have largely remained stable but asked RS to give her perspective. RS confirmed that it has been a challenging time but many foster families have found the additional time spent with their foster children really beneficial. Foster carers have appreciated the good levels of support and improved communication from the Fostering Team as well as the support from the Virtual School.</p> <p><b>3.4 Transition and Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing the Virtual College is the next big focus and Pupil Premium Plus funding will be used to fund additional staffing support so the college can open from September.</li> <li>- The Summer School has been adapted for online activities and promoted with carers.</li> <li>- SEP is pleased to have been able to offer 80% of the Virtual School services, the only negative impact has been the ability to conduct face to face visits, staff morale has been very positive and many benefits can be taken from this challenging period of time.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p> <p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>Terms of Reference Update</b></p> <p>CP reminded governors that a revision of the Terms of Reference had been discussed at the last meeting in December 2019. A revised document was discussed further with SEP, Alison Twynam and Lin Ferguson.</p> <p>All Boards should self-evaluate and AL undertook a benchmarking exercise against other boards across London which demonstrated a wide variety of governance arrangements.</p> <p>SEP is held to account across three boroughs by a number of stakeholders including her direct line manager in RBWM Social Care, and all three member LA's Corporate Parenting Forums. It is therefore suggested that the current arrangements for this Board need to be updated and for its aims to be refocused on educational attainment, similar to that of a traditional Attainment and Standards committee.</p>	

<p><b>4.4</b></p> <p><b>4.5</b></p> <p><b>4.6</b></p> <p><b>4.7</b></p>	<p>It is suggested the Board changes its name to the “Virtual School - Education Achievement Board” however representation from the existing membership of the Board should remain unchanged to fully ensure the Virtual School leadership team are held to account for the full remit of their social care and educational responsibilities. It was proposed that the Board may consider expanding its membership to include representation from other areas of expertise such as a SEND as appropriate.</p> <p>SEP strongly feels that when considering educational attainment, it is important to be mindful of the impact of social care (e.g. <a href="http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/linking-care-and-educational-data-the-educational-progress-of-looked-after-children-in-england/">http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/linking-care-and-educational-data-the-educational-progress-of-looked-after-children-in-england/</a>)</p> <p>It was agreed that Governors should consider this more fully and the draft Terms of Reference be revisited in the Autumn Term.</p> <p>Governors thanked SEP for all of her hard work and asked if their thanks could also be passed on to her team.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates</b>  9 December 2020 (3.00 - 4.45 pm)  29 March 2021 (3.00 - 4.45 pm)  5 July 20201 (3.00 - 4.45 pm)</p>	

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm

Signed by the Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Summary of Actions**

<b>3.1</b>	CP to discuss with Matthew Paul engagement of the planning team with other services when considering regeneration projects to ensure all opportunities have been seized.	<b>CP</b>
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