

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

**DRAFT Minutes of the Virtual School Governing Board
Virtual Meeting held: 30th November 2023, 9.30am**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

Independent Chair of the Board of Governors	Rachael Pryor
Director for Education Services Kingston & Richmond	Charis Penfold
Director of Children's Social Care Kingston & Richmond	Alison Twynam
Executive Headteacher and Associate Director of Education Standards in Care	Suzanne Parrott
Head of Governor Support	Angela Langford
Kingston Headteacher Early Years (RBK)	Esther White
Education AD SEND (RBWM)	Katie Worley
Richmond Primary Headteacher	n/a
Secondary Headteacher (RBWM)	Walter Boyle
Foster Carer	Ruth Sinclair
Kingston and Richmond NHS Representative	Debbie Clark (on MAT leave) Nikki Richards covering
Associate Director for Corporate Parenting (RBWM)	Marie Bell
Elected member RBWM	Cllr Amy Tisi
Elected member Kingston	Mayor Diane White
Elected member Richmond	Cllr Phil Giesler

Absences with apologies: Ruth Sinclair

Absences without apologies : Kate Worley, Marie Bell

In attendance:: Ruth Gusterson (Assistant Headteacher, Extended Duties)
Joy Chapple (Clerk)

	Discussion/Actions	Action
1.	<u>Welcome & Apologies for absence</u>	
1.1	The new Chair introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2	The Chair led a round table of introductions and experiences from the board.	
2.	<u>Minutes of the last meeting 4th July 2023 and Matters Arising</u>	
2.1	Minutes of the meeting dated 4th July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.	
2.2	<p>Matters arising from the previous meeting were noted as complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikki Richards, Interim Nurse for LAC, to be invited to future meetings. <i>Clerk acknowledged and Nikki was in attendance.</i> • The Assistant Headteacher (Extended Duties) agreed to alert the Heads of Services and Team Leaders when any child was absent, suspended or excluded from school. <i>Weekly alerts are being issued to social workers for absent or persistently absent children via a welfare call.</i> • An update on PPG funding and how this is being used to be discussed at the next meeting AT : <i>Noted as being on today's agenda.</i> 	
3.	<u>Update on PPG Funding:</u> Alison Twynam	
3.1	It was reported that following a meeting with VS leaders, allocation of funding and how the money was spent last year was done well.	
3.2	It was suggested monitors are put in place to review spending allocation via monthly reports, including how additional funding is awarded.	
3.3	The Chair recommended a financial report be given in this forum to provide the board with an overview on what projects are agreed to be funded.	
3.4	The Executive Head acknowledged this is already being done on an annual basis as a function of the role on the board.	
3.5	<p>ACTION : Executive Headteacher to provide annual report and PP report on projects, and policy on how funds are spent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted statutorily, the PP policy should be published showing decision making and how funds are spent, ensuring funding is not returned to the DfE and spent on improving outcomes for children. • The Executive Head acknowledged it is noted against each child where school funding is allocated and no child's information is published. 	SP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 budgets are reviewed and scrutinised on an annual basis. • Top slicing was discussed and agreed to carry forward to the next meeting to review decisions on the policy. • PEPS are reviewed every term looking into completion and quality rate, team reviews based on Ofsted rating grades, and each PEP is audited based on observations. 	
3.6	ACTION: A review on impact and quality as well as completion of PEPs to be discussed at the next meeting.	RP
3.7	ACTION: Governors advised they had difficulty opening linked documents. Documents to be shared as attachments going forward.	CLERK
4.	<u>Terms of Reference and Expectations:</u>	
4.1	Expectations: The Chair expressed her experience in the VS and the importance of setting expectations for the board, and its role in getting it right to oversee the important work of the VS as corporate parents for all children.	
4.2	As a board it should have transparency and feedback using collective knowledge to improve outcomes and education for children and young people's education. Cultural capital should also be recognised, other recommendations noted : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board should ensure it covers the purpose well including membership. • Have a clear understanding of who is represented, including Health. • The board should be tabulated and reflected within the Terms of reference and not as an index. • Meeting cycles and quoracy (including half the membership) should be included. • Include role descriptors for the Chair including good corporate parenting, and working with the Executive Headteacher in producing the Headteachers report. • The Chair agreed to work with the Executive Headteacher to review roles and functions and proposed a 2 year cycle be included. • A clear view of responsibilities and link positions should be included. • A review of expectations and how information is collated. • A review of how the board develops and moves forward to be impactful with oversight on effectiveness. <p>Q: RBWM are not well represented on the board. A: They are, although attendance is not evident at this meeting.</p>	
4.3	Induction and Training: The Chair advised training for the board in “governance for schools” plus an induction program is required, plus a review of current and future experience is needed.	
4.4	The board was informed recent VS training for Governors was well attended across all 3 boroughs.	

4.5	It was recommended the board attend VS CPD sessions as a good oversight on how the VS is delivering its message to schools.	
4.5	Individualised training through the VS was considered an efficient way to upskill the board in the schools missions statements.	
4.6	The Chair noted there was a need to capture and revisit this area to consider the support needed for the board to fulfil its duties and provide the right support through induction for effective governance.	
4.7	The Executive Teacher advised she would be happy to invite the board to meetings. 10:00 Walter Boyle joined the meeting.	
4.8	<p>Collaborative Activity (Jamboard discussion):</p> <p>A jamboard session took place covering the following questions to the board (see attached PDF for full questions and responses). Some of the points raised and discussed were :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the core similarities? ● Reflection is helpful. ● It's less easy in VS to engage with parents. ● It would be good to reflect on why we are here. ● Some areas of governance do not apply to the VS. ● We should have a critical friend approach. ● Have a code of conduct and what is expected of the board. ● The VS is unable to review the disparity between classes. 	
4.9	The Chair agreed to review the Jamboard results to help set out a programme of work for future meetings and to consider how roles and responsibilities are different between Governing Boards for school, and those of the VS.	

5.	<u>Headteacher Report:</u> Suzanne Parrott	
5.1	<p>The Executive Headteacher reported that children's achievements were above the national average and closer in closing the gap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS4 progress for attainment 8, Progress 8 data from Nova is not currently available. • KS5 continues to do well since the Virtual College opened during covid. • Extended Duties - St Mary's University research on AfC VS approach was strong and will be discussed later within the meeting. 	
5.2	<p>Attendance, data summary:</p> <p>The board was informed that the role of extended duties report shows substantial progress and attendance continues to be a national issue. More work needs to be done and we should not become complacent on persistence absence.</p>	
5.3	Schools with Attachment Awareness Gold awards could become beacons to other schools in their community, using opportunities to train other settings in Attachment Aware principles, and the difference it can make to a school's narrative.	
5.4	<p>It was reported there is a financial conflict due to regulations with Ops 1 focusing on belonging and Ops2 on high needs with children stuck between. AfC VS advised they are working with the DfE and presenting the problems caused and decisions that need to be communicated nationally ensuring children are not caught in a financial conundrum. There is a national issue for those with EHCPs.</p> <p>The Transition hub is now supporting 100 children a year targeting attendance with a range of strategies. It provides 360-degree support reviewing negative patterns of attendance to reduce persistence absence.</p>	
5.5	<p>Q: Do we have many boarding schools providing beds, SpringBoard not accepting children falling outside of deadlines.</p> <p><i>A: There are 1 or 2 boarding schools used plus SpringBoard. From a wider pool of children identified, 9 children are likely to benefit, however, this solution does not work in all cases.</i></p> <p>Where Local Authorities place children on a CIP or CP plan into boarding provision, this may offer the family stability, prevent children going into care and reduce spending.</p>	
5.6	<p>Q: Schools are bound by an admission code with admission dates. Holyport has no beds left which is a barrier to children getting in.</p> <p><i>A: It was advised that Springboard plans 18 months in advance for Y5 requirements to reduce these barriers.</i></p> <p>Q: Are we receiving feedback on the impact of social worker training?</p> <p><i>A: There has been a culture shift on the understanding of education and attendance with smart targets for those on a social care plan, these are now being reviewed by</i></p>	

<p>5.7</p>	<p><i>social workers during visits looking at plans and what the smart targets are. Where barriers exist, it is important to know how to promote change.</i></p> <p>ACTION: Executive Head to raise attendance and impact at social worker away days to upskill staff and support clinics.</p> <p>Q: Are most of the pupils in regular or special schools? <i>A: We have children in special schools. We can provide exact details as we have a comprehensive school register covering information in many areas.</i></p> <p>5.8 The board was advised to escalate any concerns with Heads of Service.</p> <p>5.9 The PQI are looking at attendance data and the CWSW cohort reviewing absence data and ensuring it is always on the radar.</p> <p>5.10 The Chair reported it was good to see the voice of the child on feedback.</p>	<p>SP</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p><u>Attendance Update:</u> Ruth Gusterston</p> <p>Impact on Attendance (Average Absence): CIN: Since Feb 2023 there has been a decline in absence in Richmond and RBWM, seeing only Kingston 2% above the national average in Oct 2023. CP: In Feb 2023 all areas were above the 19.5% national figure, in October 2023 all areas improved to below the national figure. CLA: In Feb 2023 all areas exceeded the national absence figure. Oct 2023 has seen improvements in all areas with Kingston and RBWM significantly below the national figure.</p> <p>St. Mary's evaluation Report: The extended duties provide support in the following areas : transition hub, safeguarding clinics, data, support PLAC children plus an attachment awareness awards programme.</p> <p>The Theory of Change plan sets out targets for each year and the long term aims of the extended duties to include strengthening partnerships and improvements in wellbeing and achievements. With GDPR approval an attendance data collection system has been produced with high levels of school compliance.</p> <p>Attendance Reporting - raising awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting should be used to raise awareness as high priority at every meeting including DSL's. ● Review average and persistent absences and conduct deep dives into CIC and consideration for mental health issues, which teams can provide support? ● Audit carried out of 24 children on CP protection plans across all sectors, working towards all plans having smart education targets. ● Sarah Gardener, Ops1 is reviewing the plans in collaboration with the VS. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ripple out effect from Extended Duties showed an offer of 70 clinics last year with Ed Phy providing 50 min time slots, supporting social workers with solutions. • Clinics are reported to be full again since October. • Safeguarding clinics are being trialled in Ops2 for Headteachers and DSL's to discuss solutions. This would be good to roll out into Ops1. • The VS EWO has been visiting schools working on behavioural issues- impactful in Ops 2, working towards implementing in Ops1. <p>Q: Is health contributing to absences and non-attendance? <i>A: Information to be provided at the NEET meeting. Having a health representation and collaborative working would support this process.</i></p> <p>Q: There is a concern locally and nationally around Early Years and attendance of those with a social worker not being collected to review attendance patterns. <i>A: The Executive Headteacher would be supportive in this area and happy to discuss.</i></p>	
6.5	ACTION: Clerk to issue report on St Mary's Evaluation of the introduction of Extended Duties with the draft minutes.	Clerk
8.	<u>Any Other Business</u>	
8.1	None	
9.	<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>	
9.1	Thursday 14th March 2024 11:00 - 12:30	

The meeting ended at 12.30pm.

Attachments:

Terms of Reference

Jamboard results

Executive Headteachers update

St Mary's Evaluation of the introduction of Extended Duties

St Mary's V2 Report LA 1 Report v2

Signed by the Chair _____

Date_____

Summary of Actions

3.5	Executive Headteacher to provide annual report and PP report on projects, and policy on how funds are spent.	SP
3.6	A review on impact and quality as well as completion of PEPs to be discussed at the next meeting.	RP
3.7	Governors advised they had difficulty opening linked documents. Documents to be shared as attachments going forward.	Clerk
5.7	Executive Head to raise attendance and impact at social worker away days to upskill staff and support clinics	SP
6.5	Clerk to issue the report on St Mary's Evaluation of the introduction of Extended Duties with the draft minutes.	Clerk