

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

**Minutes of the Virtual School Governing Board
Meeting held: Wednesday 08 March 2017
5.15 pm**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

Director for Education Services	Charis Penfold (CP)
Director of Social Care	Alison Twynam (AT)
Head of Service for Children Looked After	Fiona Cisneros (FC)
Virtual School Head Teacher	Suzanne Parrott (SEP)
Head of Governor Support	Angela Langford (AL)
Primary Headteacher	Paul Clayton (Heathfield Schools Partnership) (PC)
Secondary Headteacher	Tom Gibson (Holy Cross School) (TG)
Young Care Leaver RBK	Anzene Kabombo (AK)
Young Care Leaver LBR	Gabriella Kitto (GK)
Foster Carer	Suzanne Proetta (SP)
Health Representative	Kathy Godwin (KG)

bold = absent

Apologies: Angela Langford

Absent without apologies: Not applicable

Also attended: - Clerk

		ACTIONS
1.	Apologies/Declarations of Interest	
1.1	CP opened the meeting and apologies were recorded as above. It was noted FC would join the meeting slightly late. No declarations of interest were made.	
2.	Membership update	
2.1	<i>Appointment of Councillors.</i> With SEP reporting to Lead Members regularly, it was agreed that additional councillor representation on the Board was not required at this stage. Minutes from all Governing Board meetings will however be forwarded to Lead Members (Cllr Hudson and Cllr Healey) together with Cllr Craig and Cllr Hodgins for their information.	Clerk
2.2	<i>Young Care Leavers.</i> Difficulties continue in contacting the two care leavers and Governors discussed how to ensure the voice of young people is heard within the work of the FGB. The role of the CIC Council was discussed together with the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) meetings, termly meetings where young people discuss their school experience. It was agreed that SEP circulate an overview report drawn from Viewpoint annually to Governors. AT agreed to contact Michael Connors to discuss how best to liaise with the care leavers to gain their input/feedback to the governing board.	SEP AT

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p>	<p>KG now works independently of the Local Authority and felt it would be beneficial to have the CLA Designated Nurse (Angela Stephen) form part of the Governing Board. It was agreed SEP approach Angela Stephen in this regard.</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct.</i> This document is reviewed annually and was circulated prior to the meeting. No amendments were made and governors agreed to adopt the Code.</p> <p><i>Terms of Reference.</i> This document is reviewed annually and was circulated prior to the meeting. The following amendments were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under “membership” the young care leavers names are “to be confirmed” and will be updated following AT’s conversations with Michael Connors (see 2.2) - Council members to be removed as per 2.1 <p><i>Annual Declarations of Interest.</i> Governors across all school settings are required to complete an annual declaration of interest and governors agreed that the Virtual School Board should adopt a similar approach. Clerk to circulate a template for governors to complete.</p>	<p>SEP</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting dated 28 November 2016 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>2.2 - AL to contact both Lead Members, Cllr Andrea Craig and Cllr Paul Hodgins, to ascertain their availability for the next meeting, or receive their suggestion for suitable deputies. Action complete - issue of councillor representation on the Board is resolved. (see 2.1).</p> <p>4.3 – AL to make contact with both AK and GK to propose an alteration to their membership on the Board to Associate Members. AL unable to make contact and AT to discuss care leavers input with Michael Connors (see 2.2).</p> <p>4.10 – SEP to explore Education section on ICS with AT – see 5.6.</p> <p>5.4 - SEP to feedback at Spring FGB following SEND Social Care VS Protocol meeting. SEP has met twice with Anna Chiva to discuss the establishment of a protocol. Hazel Gordon, AfC’s Associate Director for Permanency is supportive of the need for a protocol and further meetings will take place to move this forward. Q. Do we have a clear protocol around placement breaking down for children with SEN? A. No, this needs to be included in the protocol.</p> <p>6.5 Clerk to send out link governor information. Action complete.</p> <p>7.1 – Governors to feedback on their link responsibilities at the Spring meeting – see agenda item 6.</p> <p>7.2 SEP to contact link governors to discuss their role and ensure VS staff make contact with the relevant link governor. Action complete.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">FC arrived at 5.40 pm</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2.1</p>	<p>Virtual Headteacher’s Report</p> <p>Termly reports were produced for each borough and were circulated prior to the meeting together with an updated Two Year School Improvement Plan. SEP updated governors on four keys areas of focus and will meet each link governor to discuss their specific areas in greater depth.</p> <p><i>Attainment and Progress (Mission Statement 1).</i> At KS4 there are 11 pupils in Richmond and 9 pupils in Kingston. Q. If we currently have 11, how many pupils come in and out? A. Our population is quite stable and the Became Looked After Date (BLAD) is used to track the children. It was agreed that SEP provide governors with the report issued to Corporate Parenting by Ian Dobbs.</p>	<p>SEP</p>

<p>5.2.2</p> <p>5.2.3</p> <p>5.2.4</p> <p>5.2.5</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p>	<p>Projected KS4 outcomes in Richmond: 17% will make expected level of progress rising to 25% if the borderline pupil is able to convert. The new GCSE grading structure comes into force this year and a level of 1-9 will be awarded instead of grades A*- G.</p> <p>Q. So only 2 out of 11 will make that expected level? A. Yes, last year it was 12.5% not including E and M, 0% including E and M. Governors were concerned at this figure but SEP stated that a child’s starting point needs to be considered as part of the overall picture and a breakdown of all 18 Year 11 students was provided to Governors.</p> <p>Some children also go onto achieve GCSE’s in Year 12 however this data is not reported nationally as part of these figures. The new assessment system makes it harder to chart progress which in turn makes it difficult to challenge schools about progress being made. Q. How many of the 11 are in mainstream and how many are in special schools? A. SEP undertook to provide this information to governors however data shows that CLA achieve more in mainstream schools. Q. Do children take exams in Year 12 because they are out of year? A. Some will be in college and will be retaking their GCSEs. Q. So what pressure do you put on schools? A. Last year the ePEP process was changed and 3 ePEPS are produced per year instead of 2. This enables SEP to monitor targets and if they are repeatedly not being reached the school is contacted. Q. Do you make many calls to schools? A. Yes, the Assistant Heads are in communication with schools and SEP outlined what interventions have been put in place.</p> <p>Projected KS4 outcomes in Kingston: 4 out of 9 pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard. 1 pupil is borderline and SEP gave governors some anonymised background. With the Local Authority Ofsted inspection due, governors stressed the importance of giving inspectors context/case studies alongside pure data. SEP confirmed that case studies were written and on file at the Virtual School. Educational stability is clearly important but keeping the CLA safe is of paramount importance. Q. Are the inspectors trained in Virtual Schools? A. Yes, the inspectors are very experienced.</p> <p>SEP tabled a summary of Year 2, 6 and 11 cohorts and explained the Virtual School’s way of tracking pupils using mountains as a descriptor. Later in the year the report will contain detailed transition information for Years 6/7 and also for Years 11/12 to ensure these pupils do not become NEET. All of the Virtual School children are tracked throughout all stages of their school life, not just at key assessment points.</p> <p><i>ePEPs (Mission Statement 4):</i> SEP summarised the current position. In Richmond, a 92% improvement in Post 16 completion rates has been achieved. 97% of statutory school age pupils had a completed ePEP in Autumn 2016 compared with 84% in Summer 2016. In Kingston there has also been an improvement in Post 16 ePEP completions – now at 97% rising from 79% in Summer 2016. 98% of statutory school age pupils had a completed ePEP in Autumn 2016. New ePEP templates are in place and 3 ePEPs are completed per year instead of 2. There has been a transition from paper to electronic PEPs and Designated Teachers have been trained to lead PEPs where this was previously carried out by the Virtual School giving ownership to the schools. This term’s focus is on the quality of ePEPs and the Virtual School have introduced a Quality Assurance Tool using Ofsted style criteria. The aim is to have a good percentage of good/outstanding ePEPS and SEP outlined the criteria.</p> <p><i>Attendance (Mission Statement 2):</i> In Kingston, average absence in the Autumn Term was 8.1% improved from 10.8%. In 2015 Kingston had no reliable mechanism for collecting data. Welfare Call is now used to track attendance and if 3 successive days of school are missed the Assistant Heads contact the school. Persistent Absence has improved from 26.9% in 2015/2016 to 20% in Autumn 2016.</p>	<p>SEP</p>
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<p>5.5</p> <p>5.6</p> <p>5.7</p> <p>5.8</p>	<p>In Richmond, average absence figures were 4.35% in 2015/16 in line with National CLA and improved from 5.36% in 2015. In Autumn term 2016 the absence was 9.25% which is expected to even out over the year. Persistent Absence had also improved from 9.84% in 2015 to 8.1% in 2015/16 although currently is at 12.8%. This is being tracked and interventions are being put in place.</p> <p><i>Exclusions (Mission Statement 2):</i> These are closely monitored, Richmond’s exclusions are at 6.7% for the Autumn term which is an improvement on 2014’s figures of 14.6%. 9 children were excluded in Kingston and SEP gave some context to these figures and outlined what steps were being taken to overcome the issues. Q. Are there more exclusions at secondary level? A. Yes.</p> <p><i>NEET:</i> The number of NEET students in Richmond is 16.7%, a decrease of 44%. In Kingston, data was only being collected for Year 12 but has now been extended to include Post 16 through to the end of Year 13. This data is being monitoring closely. Governors queried whether the NEET figures correlate with those of Eamonn Gilbert and SEP agreed to liaise with Eamonn Gilbert.</p> <p><i>Children Missing in Education (CME):</i> There are 4 CME within the Virtual School and Kerry Crombie (Assistant Head) attends the CME panel.</p> <p><i>Educational Provision (Mission Statement 3.</i> In order to improve provision the Virtual School has asked schools to complete a self-assessment tool using the NAVSH (National Association of Virtual School Heads) quality standards framework. To-date, one return has been received. Educational stability is very important for the Virtual School pupils with 2 years stability rising in Richmond to 69% in Autumn 2016 compared with 59% in 2014-15. In Kingston 2 year educational stability has improved from 90% in Summer 2016 up from 73% in 2014/15 however this has fallen in Autumn 2016 to 77%. The Virtual School is working closely with partners to improve educational stability. In Richmond 93% now attend good or outstanding schools (rising to 97% for out of borough schools). In Kingston in Autumn 2016, 98.6% of pupils attended a good or outstanding school. Q. Do we have risk assessments for these who are not in good or outstanding schools? A. Yes and the provision is monitored. Circumstances may dictate that it is better for the pupil to remain in a RI school because of stability of attachment concerns.</p>	<p>SEP</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Update from Link Governors on Missions Statements 2,3 and 4</p> <p>PC’s visit focused on educational provision. Lots of data was produced and PC was very impressed by the staff’s knowledge of the children and their passion and drive to improve things. Q. What were the challenges? A. Complexities around placements and how data could be distorted given the small numbers involved.</p> <p>KG echoed PC’s comments on the staff’s motivation and desire to improve things. KG’s focus was on ePEPS which is an unfamiliar area but was well explained. Given her professional background, KG is very interested in how health links into education. Q. Did you see evidence of emotional health? A. A further visit is needed to really understand things better.</p>	
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Chair’s Update</p> <p><i>Windsor & Maidenhead:</i> This local authority is in the process of becoming part of AfC. Their Virtual School is led by a consultant and discussions are underway to see whether AfC can take over this responsibility. CP and SEP are due to meet with them shortly. Q. How big is their Virtual School? A. It is a similar size to that of Kingston or Richmond.</p> <p><i>SIP Report.</i> As is the case with all schools, the Virtual School has a School Improvement Partner (SIP) the report was circulated prior to the meeting for governors’ information.</p>	

7.3	<i>Practice Week.</i> Across AfC a practice week will shortly be taking place. This is a “deep dive” into services and the Virtual School is one of the selected services. 33 children will be selected and case studies will be produced. Any key themes arising out of the practice week will be shared at the next meeting.	
8. 8.1	AOB SEP is involved in a Literacy and Attachment research project with UCL and PALAC (Promoting the Achievement of Looked After Children). This information exchange programme aims to support the development of practice in schools and improve outcomes for children in care. The findings of this research are being shared with designated teachers and SEP handed out the publication “Taking Action for Looked After Children in School” which gives further information and includes a study she has previously led which is now being carried out in the Virtual School with Designated Teachers.	
9. 9.1	Dates of Future Meetings 5 July 2017 – 5.30 pm at the Twickenham Training Centre, Grimwood Road, Twickenham. It was agreed that the Assistant Head Teachers be invited to the Autumn term FGB meeting to update governors on pupil progress.	

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____

Summary of Actions

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible governor</i>
2.1	Approved minutes to be circulated to Lead Members and councillors after each FGB	Clerk
2.2	SEP to circulate Viewpoint report annually to Governors	SEP
2.2	AT to contact Michael Connors re care leavers and their input to the governing board	AT
2.3	SEP to approach Angela Stephen regarding her potential appointment to the governing board	SEP
2.6	Clerk to circulate Declarations of Interest proforma	Clerk
5.2.1	SEP to provide the report circulated to Corporate Parenting by Ian Dobbs.	SEP
5.2.3	SEP to provide breakdown of whether pupils attend mainstream or special schools	SEP
5.6	SEP to liaise with Eamonn Gilbert regarding NEET reporting	SEP