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# The Orchard School Governing Board

## Bridge Road, East Molesey, KT8 9HT

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Minutes of a meeting of the full governing board held on  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 at 6pm.

**Governors Present:** Mark Waters (MW) (Chair)  
Sally Cary (SC) – Head Teacher  
Joe Elliott (JE)  
Sarah Adams (SA)  
Toby Stevenson (TS)  
Katie Donaldson (KD)  
Kate Mole (KM)  
Nina Vlahos (NV)  
Marcel Norval (MN)  
Victoria Campbell (VC)

**In Attendance:** Harriet Hill (HH)  
Anna Mantle (Clerk)

**Apologies Received:** Damian Norris (DN)

Meeting started at 6.05pm.

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b><u>Board business</u></b> Apologies received and accepted from Damian Norris. Kate Mole joined the meeting late at 7.40pm.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate throughout.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b><u>Declaration of Interest</u></b> No declarations of interest with reference to agenda items were declared.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b><u>Constitution</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Succession planning</u></b> MW introduced Harriet Hill to the governors. She is currently Vice Chair of Governors at St Lawrence School. MW approached HH following a discussion about succession planning which revealed none of the current board are in a position to put themselves forward as Chair when he resigns at the end of the academic year. Governors welcomed HH to the meeting so that she could meet the board and find out more about how it works, with a view to putting herself forward for the Chair's role. They thanked her for her interest.</p> <p><b><u>Associate Members</u></b> Nicola Wise has been approached with regards taking on an Associate role, moving into a full governor role in the next academic year. She has taken on a new position at work recently which prevented her from joining the meeting, however she is still very interested in joining the board and will complete the necessary paperwork and DBS with a view to joining in July.</p>	



	The other candidate who was approached with regards an Associate role has declined in favour of taking on a full role elsewhere.	
4	<p><b><u>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</u></b></p> <p><b>Governors unanimously agreed that the minutes from the last meeting (19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 Parts One and Two) were a true and accurate record.</b> Hard copy signed and filed at school.</p> <p>Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still to receive the Trust obligations summary document from Rhian Nunan, Burhill Governor. Will add this to the agenda for the July meeting.</li> <li>• Outstanding DBS to be completed ASAP</li> </ul>	Clerk
5	<p><b><u>Chair's Actions</u></b></p> <p>MW confirmed that he had not undertaken any emergency actions on behalf of the board since the last meeting.</p>	
6	<p><b><u>Head Teacher's Report</u></b></p> <p>SC's report had been circulated for review ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>Governors commented on the evolution of the document over the course of the year so far and thanked SC for her thoroughness and the accessibility of the information for governors.</p> <p>SC highlighted areas of particular interest:</p> <p><b><u>Staffing update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One member of staff on long term sick leave</li> <li>• One on maternity leave and one going on maternity leave at the end of the academic year</li> <li>• ECT has completed their first term and has settled well.</li> <li>• Member of staff referred to OT returns to work tomorrow and a phased return will be implemented. SC expressed her gratitude for the flexibility of the team to step in to provide the one-to-one support for children whilst this member of staff is off.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governors asked about LSA numbers for the upcoming academic year.</b> SC confirmed that the numbers needed would depend on the new intake. She stated that there seemed to be a high level of need in this year's intake.</p> <p><b>Governors asked whether there was funding to support the need.</b> SC explained that she was aware of 8 children with special educational needs who had indicated The Orchard would be their first choice. Of those, one has a formal EHCP and the other 7 are going through the process. However, the processing of EHCP applications is slow.</p> <p><b>Governors discussed whether there was anything that they could do to help expedite the process and expedite the delayed funding for the Centre.</b> SC confirmed that, from her conversations with local and Surrey Heads, they were not alone. There is a meeting arranged for after Easter with the Surrey SEND team leads.</p> <p><b>Governors asked how SC planned to prioritise staffing.</b> SC said that she had not yet had the opportunity to map out skills and to recruit to fill gaps. She ran through one option to create a position for a shared SEND resource out of class who could support children without formal EHCP funding who require assistance. There was a discussion about the legal requirements around EHCP provision and SC explained how the SENCO manages and plans the timetable for children for SEND children to deliver on their funded hours.</p> <p>MN indicated that there might be some educational charities who could help. He will send some details to SC.</p> <p>There was a discussion about ways to anticipate and calculate the cost of staffing requirements. SC explained that it was difficult to anticipate because there were some children not attending nursery or children where significant need has yet to be identified. She said that they did as thorough a review as is possible and would then make plans based on that scenario. The 1<sup>st</sup> April is the final date for accepting school places.</p>	



<p><b>SEND</b>  Further to the detail in her report, SC provided governors with an overview of SENCO activities, including a recent visit to Chandler’s Field to support a child moving to their specialist ASD unit. SC highlighted the networking and information-sharing that goes on in the SENCO network.  SC also provided information about the SEND staff training and development undertaken this term by all staff, including teachers and LSAs.</p> <p>Governors commented that they were pleased to see the number of trips and local celebration events that the school participates in.</p> <p>There was a discussion about whether the frequency of the newsletter is sustainable. Several suggestions were made to assist with distributing the workload for the newsletter across a wider base, to free up SC’s time. Parent governors expressed the value that the newsletter brings, however it was acknowledged that this should be balanced against the time it takes up.</p> <p>Jenell Chetty, SIP, visited the school on 22 March. Her report will be circulated when it is received.</p> <p>Governors commented on the list of training completed by staff this term. SC said that she was grateful for the free training opportunities that they had been able to take advantage of.</p> <p>SC had circulated the updated SIP to all governors ahead of the meeting.</p> <p><b>With reference to the pupil wellbeing questionnaire (Target 5 “Wellbeing questionnaire completed with pupils analysed by staff and any worrying responses were dealt with immediately by teachers.”), Governors asked about the worrying responses.</b>  SC explained that there had been some children, mainly in Y2, who had checked a frowning face against some of the questions. Staff had spoken to the children to understand why they had marked that and found that there were no concerns to flag. In most cases the child had not understood the question.</p> <p>There was a conversation about school dinners. SC said that she had not received many responses from the school questionnaire to parents, however there had been some feedback about the lack of choice for school dinners. She said that she had discussed logistics with the kitchen team and that there will be a trial of meal choices for Y2 next term. She commented that encouraging independence in the food hall will also help with transition to Junior School.</p> <p><b>Governors asked whether their visit to school to discuss Foundation subjects with the subject leads was of benefit to staff. They expressed their opinions that it was a useful and positive meeting from their perspective and valuable in providing them information.</b> JE said that staff had found it useful and appreciated the opportunity to articulate their subject lead roles. SC added that one of the main recommendations from the recent Ofsted report was on developing subject leadership. These meetings help to provide a forum to practise articulating curriculum plans and development.</p> <p><b>Premises update</b>  Land transfer has gone through.</p> <p>Work is due to start on the carbon neutral project soon. The materials will be on site by the end of March. A planning meeting is scheduled for the last week of term to discuss timelines etc.</p> <p><b>Investors in People report</b>  SC informed governors that they would not be participating in Investors in People next year due to the cost. The parent questionnaire had not revealed any new insights.</p> <p><b>Parent questionnaire</b></p>	
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	<p><b>Governors asked about the comments on bullying in the questionnaire.</b> SC stated that the question was difficult to interpret because parents are unlikely to know about the school's process for bullying if their child is not experiencing bullying. She said that 100% of respondents indicated that they would recommend the school.</p> <p><b>Governors asked whether there had been any feedback following the strikes.</b> SC said that parents had been supportive and she had not received any complaints.</p>											
7	<p><b>Attendance</b> Attendance figures good at 95.9% (national average 92.4%)</p> <p>Persistent absence is particularly low; 8.5% in comparison to national primary school average 23.1%.</p> <p>SC reported that the Inclusion Officer is due to meet with one family, however this is proving challenging and has been flagged as a safeguarding concern which is being raised with other agencies.</p>											
8	<p><b>Admissions</b> 1<sup>st</sup> April final date for accepting school places.</p>											
9	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>SFVS</b> Deadline for submission of the SFVS was 17<sup>th</sup> March. The document was reviewed in detail by TS and submitted by the deadline. All governors received the document ahead of the meeting. <b>Governors signed off the SFVS.</b></p> <p><b>School budget and FMR</b> Governors had received the FMR and accompanying notes from Katie Carter, School Business Manager, ahead of the meeting. SC updated governors that they have consulted with a number of Strictly advisors who are assisting with the set up of the new CFR reporting system for April, which should allow for accurate reporting in the next financial year. The current financial year looks like it may finish in surplus.</p> <p><b>Governors asked about contributions to the school fund. They suggested that it might be worth sending out further reminders.</b> SC expressed her gratitude for the generosity of parents and for their ongoing support with Amazon wishlists and PTA activities. KD agreed to meet with her to discuss comms ideas to promote the fund.</p> <p>Governors recognised the hard work that KC has done in tightening processes and reviewing systems.</p>											
10	<p><b>Partnerships</b> Voice Education Trust due to meet again in June/early July.</p> <p>Meeting with St Lawrence School governing body scheduled for Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30pm.</p>											
11	<p><b>Data</b> Governors received the Analyse School Performance data reports from the last academic year which were not available before.</p>											
12	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>SC reported on numbers of children identified as meeting Surrey's four levels of need for families:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Threshold</th> <th>Number of children</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Level 1 – Universal</td> <td>207</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 2 – Early Help</td> <td>47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 3 – Targeted Help</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 4 – Specialist</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>SC updated governors on safeguarding training and reassured them of the safeguarding procedures in place.</p>	Threshold	Number of children	Level 1 – Universal	207	Level 2 – Early Help	47	Level 3 – Targeted Help	2	Level 4 – Specialist	1	
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	<p>She reminded governors that one of the outcomes from the safeguarding audit was to include a review of online internet blocks picked up on the school firewall. She said that she had instructed the IT manager to check every two weeks from now on and that they had run a check from September until present which had not called up any concerns.</p> <p>Governors reviewed who on the board had completed Safer Recruitment training: JE, SA, MW and SC have all completed the training. SC and other SLT members will renew their training next term.</p> <p>Governors are reminded that they must renew their DBS.</p>	
13	<p><b><u>Academisation</u></b> Update provided by the working group (SA, KD and KM). The group are in the process of gathering intelligence and researching. They have spoken to the previous Chair of Governors at Thames Ditton Junior School about their journey to becoming part of the MAT linked to Hinchley Wood Secondary School. They discussed, in detail, the process that they had gone through and shared some of the SWOT analysis and reflections documentation that they had drawn up to inform their decision. Other meetings are planned and the working group will report back at the July FGB.</p> <p>Governors thanked the working group for their thoroughness and work.</p>	
14	<p><b><u>Governor Monitoring Visits</u></b> Governors expressed how useful they had found it to visit and find out more about the Foundation subject curriculum and development from the subject leads. It was discussed that it would be good to observe PE and music lessons. Governors also discussed attending sports day and music assemblies. It was agreed that governors would liaise directly with school to organise to visit a PE lesson preparing for Sports Day and music lessons in preparation for the leavers' performance.</p>	
15	<p><b><u>Policies</u></b> The following policies had been reviewed in detail by the governor named in brackets and was ratified by all governors at the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aid (reviewed by SC and reviewed by DN)</li> <li>• Children with health needs who cannot attend school (this had been significantly rewritten by SC and reviewed by SA – no further changes suggested)</li> <li>• Protection biometric information (reviewed by MW – date updated no further changes)</li> <li>• Supporting pupils with medical conditions (rewritten by SC following the model policy and reviewed by JE)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Staff Leave Policy</u></b> This has been circulated to all governors for comment. SC informed governors that she had benchmarked it against other schools in the area and it seemed to be standard not to offer paid leave. Some governors felt that the policy as presented offered sufficient flexibility but was clear and fair in its approach. Others wanted limited paid leave to be available, within strict, clear boundaries. It was agreed that SC would include some of the possible scenarios in which the policy will be used and re-submit this at the April FGB.</p>	Add to April agenda
16	<p><b><u>Pay Committee</u></b></p> <p>No meeting since July meeting.</p>	
17	<p><b><u>Training</u></b> Check National College log ins for all governors</p>	
18	<p><b><u>Date of next meeting</u></b> It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April to accommodate the budget submission deadlines.</p>	
19	<p><b><u>Part Two</u></b> Confidential minutes taken and filed separately.</p>	

Meeting closed at 9pm

Advice given by Governors at this school is incidental to their professional expertise and is not being given in their professional capacity



**Professional Negligence Statement:** Advice given by governors at The Orchard School is incidental to their professional expertise and is not being given in their professional capacity.

**Confidentiality Statement:** Governors should respect the confidence of those items of business which the Governing Body decides and not disclose what individual governors have said or how they have voted within a meeting.

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

Name: ..... Chair of FGB

### Summary of Action Points

	Agenda Item	Action	Who	When	STATUS
<b>29 September 2022 FGB</b>					
1	2	Declaration of Interests to be completed by absent governors	KM, KD and TS	ASAP	COMPLETED
2	3	Confirm Pupil Premium lead governor at the next meeting	TS	November meeting	COMPLETED
3	3	Review cluster groupings for Foundation Subjects	JE	Ahead of November meeting	COMPLETED
4	3	Add Foundation Subject lead governor roles to November meeting agenda	Clerk	November meeting	COMPLETED
5	4	Nominate TS and MW as Foundation Governors at the next Voice Education Trust meeting	SC	Next Trust meeting	
6	4	Add succession planning to the next meeting agenda	Clerk	Nov meeting	COMPLETED
7	7	Code of Conduct to be signed by absent governors.	KM, KD and TS	At next meeting	COMPLETED
8	8	Appointment of external advisor for HT appraisal to be minuted at the next meeting	Chair	November meeting	COMPLETED
9	12	Governors to review and submit questions about the SIP to MW in advance of next meeting	All	6 Nov	COMPLETED
10	14	Review all academisation agenda items and consider joining the working party. Group to be set up at next meeting	MW	November meeting	COMPLETED
11	15	Complete Safer Recruitment training	SA	ASAP	COMPLETED
12	15	Confirm having read KCSIE 2022 via email to the Clerk	All	ASAP	COMPLETED
13	18	Suggest dates for Foundation Subject visits before the end of the Autumn term.	SC	At November meeting	COMPLETED
<b>17<sup>th</sup> November 2022</b>					
14	2	Update register of interests on the website	Clerk	ASAP	COMPLETED
15	3	Make contact with prospective new governors	MW	ASAP	COMPLETED
16	4	Circulate dates for learning walk	SC	ASAP	COMPLETED
17	4	Governors who have not yet done so to renew their DBS	All	ASAP	ONGOING



<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	Gather succession planning feedback	KD	ASAP	<b>COMPLETED</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>					
<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	Review SFVS and present to FGB at March meeting	TS	At March meeting	<b>COMPLETED</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	Circulate review of Trust's obligations	MW	ASAP	PENDING
<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	Present research findings at next FGB	KD, KM, SA	At March meeting	<b>COMPLETED</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023</b>					
<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	Presentation of Trust obligations doc to be included on July agenda	Clerk	July meeting	
<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	Report from working group ref Academisation to the FGB – July	KD, KM, SA	July FGB	
<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>	Staff Leave Policy to be added to April FGB agenda	SC	April FGB	
<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	Check National College logins for all governors	Clerk	April FGB	