



# GOVERNING BODY OF STEPHEN HAWKING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brunton Place, London. E14 7LL; Tel: 020-7423-9848; Fax: 020-7423-9878

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023 at 4pm**  
**Venue: Stephen Hawking, Brunton Place.**

Clerk to Governors  
Salma Siddiqua  
Email: [salma.siddiqua@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:salma.siddiqua@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Position	Name	Date of Appointment	End of Term of Office
LA Governor	Arrash Yassaee	17/06/2020	16/06/2024
Parent Governors	Sabha Khan	29/11/2023	28/11/2027
	Tamanna Begum*	22/06/2021	21/06/2025
Staff Governor	Georgina Rahman*	07/12/2021	06/12/2025
Co-opted Governors	Roseyna Jahangir*(Vice Chair)	22/03/2022	21/03/2026
	Louise McLaughlin*	22/06/2021	21/06/2025
	Susy Gilvin*	05/07/2017	04/07/2026
	Tuhel Uddin*	05/12/2023	04/11/2027
	Ade King	19/03/2024	18/03/2028
	Vacancy		
Executive Headteacher (Ex-officio)	Gail Weir*		

Also invited: Sasha Sullivan, Sue Jeffery, Lisa Payne and Clerk

*\*Denotes attendance*

*The meeting started at 16:11*

## **PART 1**

### Governing Body Organisation

#### **1. Apologies and Declaration of Interests**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Governors introduced themselves.

Apologies were received and accepted from Sabha Khan, Ade King and Arrash Yassaee.

Gail Weir declared that she was employed by Waverly School.

Lisa Payne declared her husband did some maintenance work for the school.

## **2. Membership Updates and Governance Matters**

### 2.1 Co-opted governor vacancy update

Two candidates have been introduced to GW and SG. The candidates will be invited to visit the school.

### 2.2 LA governor reappointment update

The Clerk informed that Arrash Yassaee's application for re-appointment has been approved for a term of 4 years.

## **3. Minutes and Matters Arising**

### Minutes FGB meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and will be marked as signed by the Chair on GovernorHub. There were no matters arising.

## **4. Updates from Committee Meetings**

### 4.1 Resources Committee

Roseyna Jahangir gave an update from the last Resources Committee Meeting.

- Committee members went through the school budget. It is in a good financial position. The budget outturn for 23/24 was approved and the budget for 24/25 was approved. The FGB had previously delegated this to the resource committee.
- An update was provided on premises health and safety.
- The utilities contracts have been confirmed. This provides stability for the school.
- The fences around the school need replacing.
- A leak in the staff room is being investigated.
- The road barriers outside BP need replacement fobs.
- There were a good number of applications for the teacher vacancies for September.
- Thought and planning had gone into how to manage supporting 5 new teachers starting at once as well as how they would be supported.

### 4.2 Curriculum Committee

Susy Gilvin gave an update from the Curriculum Committee.

- Laura Tomkins gave a presentation on assessment. Everything is going well.
- Soft play room is up and running and will be known as the Physical Development room.

### Main business and standing items.

## **5. Headteacher's Report**



The Headteacher's Report, the School Improvements Priorities and the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) were shared with the governors prior to the meeting.

95 children have been confirmed to join the school in September 2024. There are 5 awaiting confirmation, of which 2 can be offered a place and 3 would go on the waiting list. The school will need to have a full class before opening up another half class.

### Quality of Education

- Teaching and learning at SHS was of a high quality. Based on information such as lesson observations, pupil progress and work which is being done, the HT is confident that OFSTED will award the school an Outstanding grade.
- There is one class which is taught by an agency teacher. This class is slightly unstable compared to other classes. However this is to be expected and is not of particular concern. A governor asked if this teacher was only here for this term to which the HT responded affirmatively.
- Formal and informal lesson observations have been carried out. This term, class teachers were offered the opportunity to join senior leaders on observation. Teachers valued the opportunity to see how other teachers work. The aim is that teachers reflect on their own practise and what they can use in their class. The teachers appreciated this and senior leaders plan to continue doing this.
- A governor queried if an e.g English lead would observe an English teacher. The HT replied that this is not currently the case but could be something they do in future.
- The introduction of the SpringBoard curriculum at St Jude's Road has had a very positive impact on teaching. Staff were able to observe greater pupil engagement and lots more laughter. Teachers have seen significant improvement in the pupil's physical development.
- 24.2% of the teaching at SHS is of the highest standard 'leading'. This means that the teaching is so good that the school is happy to have anyone come in and learn from that teacher.
- 27.3% of the teaching is 'innovating'. Teachers are trying new things and are developing their practise to stretch themselves. They may be focussing on a particular area. The school would be happy to have people come in learn from that teacher but only in certain aspects.
- 33.3% are 'strong', solid, great teaching.
- 9.1% are still 'emerging' but this is not of concern.
- 6.1% is the one class mentioned previously. The school understands that this requires development.
- Assuming competency – when a pupil is trying something, if staff assume competency even if the ability is not there yet, the pupil is more likely to attempt it again. This was having a positive impact on the pupils.
- Twinkl has been introduced as the phonics scheme to replace a bespoke Stephen Hawking scheme. The new scheme is OFSTED approved and is very similar to the previous scheme. The majority of pupils are at the pre formal stage of phonics and the school are looking at how they can support this group of pupils effectively. Some teachers have reported that they have seen great



progress with pupils that they did not expect to engage in the phonic teaching. To improve on this, there is a need to develop more early level phonic activities which are fun and engaging for pupils at the very first stages of development. Since the HT's report, the school has carried out a piece of work in order to share experiences.

### Assessment

- Laura Tomkins spoke to the Curriculum Committee and explained how EarWig is used for recording pupil progress. A target is set for each individual child, looking at the child as a whole. If the child hasn't met the target, they will look at what other support can be provided by the school e.g. medical need, equipment, teaching strategy etc.

### Continual Professional Development

- Rachel Baxter has completed a high volume of phonic sessions with staff to ensure they understand the school's expectations on the teaching of phonics.
- Joanna Grace provided a day's training on sensory stories which linked to the focus this year which was "All about me". Feedback from staff mentioned that the face to face session was more beneficial than the online session.
- The 'Stephen Hawking Curriculum' is now known as Branching Out. Thanks to Laura for the name.

### Behaviour and attitudes

- Pupil behaviour is outstanding. Children are engaged and motivated. Staff make them the centre of everything.
- A couple of pupils have individual behaviour plans (IBPs) to ensure that people are being consistent. A governor asked if an earlier peer on peer incident involved a pupil with an IBP. The HT confirmed it had.
- The physical development room was now ready and the playground at SJR had been developed. The HT thanked Lisa and team for making it happen and mentioned that she hadn't come across a school which made things happen so quickly.

### Personal development of child

- This is a new area looking at the whole development of the child.
- Year 6 had the opportunity to go on a residential. Highly effective risk assessments were carried out ahead of the trip and careful planning was undertaken by a number of individuals who should be credited for their work. Staff volunteer to attend the trip without any reward because they know how much the children enjoy the experience which they may not have the opportunity to access outside of school.
- The HT asked the governors if the staff involved could be awarded £100 as a small gesture of appreciation for the invaluable work they did. The board agreed unanimously.



- The Governing Body AGREED to award £100 to each staff who attended the residential trip.
- SG asked GR if she felt parents were more happy to let the children go on residential. GR stated that parents were more worried for the staff. Many parents are interested but also hesitant due to the fact that they had never been separated from their child. SG asked if there was a way to make parents to feel more comfortable with this trip. GR suggested organising a day trip to the centre so parents can experience the centre first hand. A governor highlighted that many experiences pupils experience at the school are a first eg crossing the road and that parents are happy, having never imagined their child doing this. TB said she will suggest the day trip idea next week.

#### Areas for improvement

- Assistive Technology: The school have trialled two companies who supply eye gaze technology. Two have been donated from different providers. When it is decided which one the Speech and Language Therapy team prefer, two more will be purchased as the budget for this has been approved.
- The Speech and Language team have a lead person who will look at ways in which Switches is accessible for anybody who needed it.
- SG asked the HT if there could be a continuity in the use of technology as there seems to be a start and stop approach to this. The HT replied that this is why pupils do not have their own devices yet as people do not know how to use the technology. More practise is needed and cause and effect looked at before this can happen.
- Access to stay and play was easier for families. The school are looking into how this information is shared and how the school can support families.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management

- School leadership: The leadership team has been very effective. Senior leaders meet weekly as a group to discuss strategic matters and the School Middle Leaders meet to work on more organisational matters. The next year will see fewer SL in the two schools.
- Progress on SDP has been very good. Senior leaders are currently drafting next year's plan and this will be shared with governors in the Autumn term.
- The school budget is healthy. There is enough money to do what is needed in the next year.
- There is a new policy in which staff can ask for flexible working.. The school is trying to be more consistent in its approach to those needing to request it, taking into account the fact that recruitment is an issue nationally and the need to keep a hold of people the school wants to keep. Each case is taken on a first come, first served basis and looked at on an individual level as well as how and if the school can manage it.
- LP reported that she attended a conference by the National Network of School Business Managers. The DfE are encouraging schools to look at this. The school is looking at looking at how they can advertise vacancies as attractively as



possible taking into consideration that they are in competition with other industries offering WFH options. A governor gave an example of how she felt valued as a staff member when returning to work flexible. GR raised the issue that not having a teacher in the class has a big impact on the class and support staff and therefore thought needs to be given when thinking about this approach. The HT said that this is why they review each case on an individual basis.

- A staff wellbeing event was organised by some staff members. Prizes were included for a quiz and the HT realised that these prizes had been paid for by staff members. She proposed to the governors that something could be put into the budget to support staff wellbeing events. This will need to be checked with the LA as the budget is public funding. Private funding could also be explored for this.

### Parental Engagement

- Many parents have been coming into school.
- The HT would like to introduce Class DoJo, a platform to allow parents to engage with staff. 3 classes are trialling it. A concern was raised by a governor regarding moderation. The HT explained the features which provided this and another governor who has experience of the platform stated it is safer than a WhatsApp group.

### Health and Safety

- Fire drills and lockdown drills have been carried out on both sites.

There are 11 staff leaving this year. There will be a party for the staff on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

## **6. Safeguarding Update**

Since the HT's Report went out, a possibly significant safeguarding incident is currently under investigation at the moment.

Sue Jeffrey is designated safeguarding lead with Sasha Sullivan, Gail Weir, Rachel Baxter and Kirsty Tucker as deputies.

An audit has been carried out and came back with a very few minor items which the school can deal with very quickly. The school is green according to Tower Hamlets.

### Attendance

- SJ attended LBTH training on an overview of the "Working together to improve school attendance" document. This document will be updated on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 clarify the expectations of pupil attendance in school. Everything is still under the discretion of the HT but there is a greater emphasis on the use of fixed penalty notices for persistent absences and holidays taken during term time.



- SJ met with the Attendance Welfare Advisor(AWA). He said that the school's attendance rate is below the national level but this was always the case with special schools. SG highlighted that the school's attendance rate has got better.
- SJ stated that OFSTED will ask questions about attendance and the key point at Stephen Hawking is knowing the pupils' stories and knowing why they are absent. Is the school doing everything they possibly can to engage the pupils? Individual cases need to be followed up and agencies employed if necessary.
- SJ reported that the AWA is confident the school would not be judged unfairly on their attendance record but emphasised the need for accurate record keeping including attendance meetings and demonstrating the work carried out with other agencies.
- The HT highlighted the connection between safeguarding and attendance. To this end, regular contact with the family is essential and checking if there is anything the school can do to support the pupil and family.
- The HT mentioned that governors need to consider the introduction of fines for absences. SJ said that the governors would support the HT if she approached the LA in this matter but would never tell the HT that she must pursue this.
- Several governors stated the need to look at each case individually as some families had circumstances (ie lack of support, need for carer respite) which required them to be away from home for a period of time. GR pointed out that a pupil's absence also impacted the class and teacher upon their return. The HT stated the need to emphasise the impact of missing school to families.
- The HT also emphasised the safeguarding concern. Are the family travelling somewhere where the health needs of the child are not being met? Health care professionals need to be alerted to liaise with the family in order to ensure that this is happening.
- A governor asked if the current process required the family to notify the school of any long term absence. The response was that there is a form to fill in so the school know the expected return date and where the family will be staying. Heads of schools will have a chat with the parents to find out where, why and what help the school can provide.
- SG noted that it is positive that dialogue between the families and schools are happening now in contrast to previously when some families would leave without notice.
- The HT said that as part of fortnightly safeguarding meetings, pupils who are away are discussed to find out what it happening with the absence and who has been in touch with the family.

## 7. Governors' Reports and Development

The following governor activities were reported:

- TB joined the school for the Daily Mile at Mile End.
- SG went to an initial meeting with other chair of school governors. She will continue to attend and see how these develop.
- TA has attended training and events on: Health and Safety; Governance; Exclusion Panel Session; Director's meeting with governors; THEP OfSTED;



Taking the Chair; Inclusive Recruitment Workshop. He found them all very useful albeit time consuming.

- LP has sent around an online safeguarding training to all governors which will need to be reviewed in September.
- A skills audit needs to be carried out again in September. ACTION

### AOB

- Rachel Baxter delivered a short presentation on the SpringBoard curriculum.
- The curriculum began after February half-term. The new curriculum is more play-based and based around the child.
- The timetable will be much the same. There are 3 key elements of the day: Carousel Play, Physical Development and Directed Teaching. The same sequence will be followed everyday to ensure predictability for pupils.
- Developed theme for 4 years.
- Carousel play is based around themes and topics and is child led. Rooms are divided into different areas and children are free to go to whichever activity they like. This remains the same the entire week. There has been more engagement from the children and more progress has been noticed. Carousel feeds into the playground.
- Physical development has lots of equipment that every child has access to e.g. climbing, sitting bench, stairs. Each child has an individual programme with their own targets. Every child goes swimming at least once a fortnight. Royal Academy of Dance comes in weekly which the children enjoy.
- Directed teaching can include sensory story, cooking, community access. There is also bucket time which works on developing children's shared attention. This has had a good impact on the children.
- Level 1 phonics is being taught once a day as a separate session but as staff are gaining a better understanding, it is being built back into other sessions.
- Community access is part of directed teaching. The school now has several links with these including Young V&A, Nature Reserve. They have also been taking the children to the accessible park at Weaver's Field.
- The next steps for springboard:
  - o Organising resources
  - o Rotating topic cycles for KS1
  - o Planning time for more PPA
  - o Phonics
  - o Developing challenge – building in more high level reading and maths skills and phonics into carousel activities.
- A governor asked how this is being shared with families and how they follow it up. RB said that this is being worked on but families have been coming in for parent sessions and the last stay and play session was in a carousel room. However elements such as phonics and reading are in planning for next year. The HT added that as new families join, it is part of the conversation but recognised that the need to look at families who are already part of the school.





SG felt this was a positive way of learning and important that parents can take away something which they can do at home.

**8. Policies**

The HT will circulate some policies by email. Governors to read and sign by email.

**9. Chair's Urgent Action**

There were no urgent actions taken by the Chair.

**10. Any Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

**11. Date of next meeting**

The dates for the next meeting were shared. Meetings will continue in hybrid format. It was proposed that resource meetings be held with FGM. This will be discussed at the next resource meeting so that Ade King can be included in decision.

*The meeting ended at 18:30*

Action Point: Skills audit to be carried out in September

Action: HT to circulate any policies which need to be approved.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

