



LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES
Orleans Primary School
Hartington Road, Twickenham, TW1 3EN
PREVIOUSLY CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
Draft minutes of Full Governing Board meeting on
Thursday 24th April at 6.30pm (virtually)

Constitution, Membership and Attendance

LA - 1	PARENTS - 2	CO-OPTED - 8	STAFF – Headteacher
Vacancy	Marta Grane- MG	Kay Thomas – KT (Chair)	Phoebe Du Parcq - PD (Headteacher)
	Julia Shute - JS	Rosalind Orchard - RO (Vice Chair)	Loretta Lau (LL)
		Rob Long – RL	
		Dinaz Zaq – DZ	
		Philip Moshi - PM	
		Zenab Barry - ZB	
		Siobhan Moynihan (SM)	
		Ian Patterson (IP)	

Apologies accepted: Ian Patterson, Kay Thomas, Loretta Lau
 Also attending: Caroline Green (CG) (Associate Member), Helen Tonge (HT) (Associate Member), Daniel Bishop (DB) (Headteacher, Chase Bridge Primary), Mike Dormer (MD) (current governor at Chase Bridge Primary to be nominated for Local Authority (LA) vacancy), Julie Duffy (Clerk)

Papers issued for review:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential agenda 24 April 2025 • Confidential briefing paper 24 April 2025 • Letter from AfC to HTs 22 April 2025
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Item no.	Discussion	Action
OPENING ITEMS		
1.	Apologies: Ian Patterson, Kay Thomas, Loretta Lau Note the absence of Loretta Lau, staff governor, due to the confidential nature of the staffing updates on the agenda.	
2.	Declaration of interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD is a governor at Chase Bridge Primary School 	
3.	Membership and constitution: MD has put himself forward to join the Orleans governing board and potentially take on the chair role. MD introduced himself to the board and	

	<p>told governors he has just finished a term as chair of governors at Chase Bridge Primary School.</p> <p>Based on the skills required and recommendations of the board at Orleans Primary School, Achieving for Children Governor Support, working on behalf of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Authority, formally nominates Mike Dormer to the position of LA governor. The term of office is for four years from 24th April 2025 ending on 23rd April 2029.</p> <p>The board formally ratified Mike Dormer to the position of LA governor. (This took place at the end of the meeting).</p>	
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STRATEGIC ITEMS

<p>4.</p>	<p>Staffing and financial updates:</p> <p>The following SLT members have submitted their resignation, both with a final day of 31 August 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phoebe Du Parcq (Headteacher) has accepted an external opportunity • Alex Jones (Deputy Head and SENCo) will take some time out of education and school life to care for her family <p>Governors thanked PD thank you for all that she has done for the school over the past few years. They commended her for her focus on the children and noted that she navigated the school through an Ofsted inspection and under her leadership the schools has become stronger and is in a much better financial position.</p> <p>Governors thanked ‘wonder woman’ AJ who has been part of the school for almost 17 years. Her loss is going to leave a hole in the school, but governors accept this is a positive move for her and are grateful for all she has done for the school.</p> <p>End of year financial position and budgets: We were expecting to have an £80,000 deficit by the end of the financial year but it is looking more positive now and there is likely to be a deficit of around £20,000. We need to achieve a positive financial balance by June 2026, as per the latest deficit recovery plan for the school, (current draft budget submitted still shows a projection of a negative balance of circa £11.4K in year two).</p> <p>We have been given an extension by the LA to submit our final budget and the new deficit recovery plan on 8th May (previously 1st May). All schools with a deficit have to set their budgets in May so we need to act fast and think about how to move forward.</p> <p>Within the borough the majority of schools are in deficit. There are falling roles within the Richmond borough and this context has been shared to emphasize the need for the governors to think about collaborative opportunities and how the context of schools has changed. Schools need to think collaboratively to solve the problems they are all facing together.</p> <p>Q: What has moved in the budget to cause this financial change?</p>	
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A: Since January the school have limited all orders apart from essentials. In addition, the year doesn't develop uniformly each month so the projected outgoings don't always happen and often we see the budget goes back into a more positive position by year end. There will still be some reconciliation so the true end of year figure is yet to be confirmed.

Q: How do our reception numbers compare with the bigger picture?

A: The schools immediately surrounding us (St. Mary's, St. Stephen's and Richmond Deer Park) are all full. St Stephen's has a wait list and St. Mary's has wait list of 1 but last year St. Mary's had 8 spaces. Falling roles impact different areas each year. This year 98% of parents got their first choice. Many local schools have already reduced their form entry. Vineyard has reduced from three form to two form and they are now full this year.

Q: Do we know if the 13 spaces will have been taken by September?

A: There is no real way to project accurately if the spaces will decrease or increase but we don't expect a huge amount of movement since 98% of parents got their first choice. There is always some movement over the summer as families arrive from overseas or from other counties.

Q: How do those places get filled? Is it by catchment area?

A: Normally parental preference is prioritised for in-year admissions.

Q: In relation to the reception situation and numbers, has it been factored in that we have less spaces and so less funding?

A: In the current draft budget, no, but the final budget we submit to the LA will take this in to account. The reception places deadline will close next Wednesday so we will not have an accurate number until then.

Q: How did you come up with these options and did you weigh the impact this would have on the children's mental health & behaviour?

A: We had not previously done any detailed consideration of the Executive Headteacher (EHT) model but when we received Phoebe's resignation it triggered us to consider what structure we need moving forward. We wanted what is best for the school to give it a sense of stability in the short and long term. The working group took advice from the local authority (Achieving for Children (AfC)) and although we couldn't include everyone in the working group we had to get enough people to think strategically about what the next steps could be. Emma Smith the School Improvement Partner (SIP) has been involved throughout and encouraged us to think differently using a different model. It is important for a school to have the experience of strong leadership and the EHT model brings that. It also allows us to progress in a way we have not been able to until now.

The HT role is pulled in so many different ways. This is a good opportunity to think about what is the right leadership capacity in the school and we started looking at a number of different ways and tried to hone it down to what we thought would be viable. The one we think is most viable is the EHT model.

Having got to know Daniel and Chase Bridge it seems we are really lucky to be in a place where we have such a strong candidate to consider.

	<p>There is not an endless number of permutations because certain things are not moveable. Budget constraints are an issue. If we do attempt to hire a new HT then we will still need a temporary HT for one term – this is not moveable. This and all the other considerations helped us to narrow it down to where we are now.</p> <p>Bear in mind that there is huge uncertainty about the quality of HT we can recruit at this stage.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Senior leadership structure discussion:</p> <p>DB joined the call at 6.50pm.</p> <p>Daniel Bishop joined the call and gave an overview of his career to date. He has done three headteacher roles, 1 in Hillingdon (3 form entry) and 1 in Ealing (1 form entry with 26 place SLD unit) and the current role at Chase Bridge. He has 13 years' experience across those roles. DB told governors that he had been in touch with PD before and said she has done a great job in the time she has been there during very challenging circumstances.</p> <p>Q: Can you describe how the role would look? Would you work two days at one school and three days at the other?</p> <p>A: First of all, this would need to be approved by both governing bodies and we would need to create a cross-governors group to monitor what I am doing. I have taken initial advice from a consultant, David Groves, who oversees this sort of relationship within schools. The EHT will be needs based rather than day by day. I foresee that in the autumn term I will spend more time at Orleans Primary, because Chase Bridge is already working well. I am not currently on the gate at Chase Bridge five days a week because I spend a lot of time outside of school working with other schools or with UCL.</p> <p>We would need to establish the head of school role, what sort of pay structure and the division of labour between the Head of School and the EHT. The common structure is that the EHT deals with HR, finances, premises and the personnel side of things. The teaching and learning and the day to day running of the school falls to the Head of School role. One of the real benefits of a system like this is that I enjoy the business side of this and this drives everything we do. We have to finance teaching and learning, and our policies and procedures are all geared toward this. School leaders need to be empowered and supported to do their job. I spoke to an EHT who said that she leads both schools in her remit in different ways but the processes, policies and procedures are there in both.</p> <p>Q: What is the rationale of initially doing this on an interim basis?</p> <p>A: The idea is to give two bits of flexibility over five terms. Initially this will bring immediate stability to the school and the leadership team. And it will also bring economy of scale.</p> <p>School funding is unlikely to improve in the next 3-5 years. Schools can gain expertise from partnerships working with neighbouring schools but unless there is a formalisation of this it doesn't always happen. Bear in mind that Chase Bridge have an experienced school business manager</p>	

(SBM) who could help support Orleans' SBM who is just starting out.

The interim basis means that we can turn this around in the next three weeks. In contrast, if we were to look to replace and recruit a permanent HT then we would need to do a full interview process including advertising, lay out and a commitment to financial means beyond three years and a restructuring of SLT which could take up to 12 weeks. The interim approach allows us to move at speed and contractual issues can be dealt with quickly. I have a contract with Chase Bridge and Orleans Primary will pay for my time. Both parties can have a chance to try this. Schools in Ealing now use this as their default structure so that when a HT leaves governors are presented with this option which brings economy of scale to their schools.

Q: Because the candidate is interim parents may think this is a reactionary move. How should we manage that?

A: We have to be clear in how we position it to parents. This option gives us choices and time. In a soft federation each school has its own governing board. From a governance perspective you may share resources or share joint committees but there will be two separate governing boards. Or you may go to a hard federation with one governing board for both schools using governors from the two schools. But it is an arrangement that is looking at what is best for both schools overall. Both schools are treated separately, but the governing board monitors the quality of education across those 2 schools.

There are a number of options over the long term. The model we currently have, the EHT model and the federation model (soft or hard). This Interim approach allows all parties to explore this. We can explore and solve the other issues we are talking about without committing 100%.

Q: There are so many schools in the borough. Why Orleans?

A: I never set out with the intention to do this. Initially I got in touch with the school to see if there is anything I could offer. I have had roles mentoring other HTs, and as PD was new to the borough, and the schools sharing same SIP, it made sense to reach out. Chase Bridge will not be taking over a school. I believe this is a reality for schools to consider in the coming years. We have been dealing with falling roles in the last 10 years. I lecture for NPQH and I am studying for my Executive Head qualifications, and I like to share what knowledge I have. My philosophy is that there is no point in any one school doing well if every other school around it is doing badly. We need to work to the betterment of everyone within our community.

Q: If we go with scenario one, how time critical is the recruitment of the head of school?

A: It is time critical but we need to make a decision. We would advertise for an interim HT for five terms with the option of secondment. Emma will put the feelers out in her SIP network to see who might be interested in a secondment. To work under an EHT is an attractive development opportunity for someone.

Q: What were the two key changes you brought to Chase Bridge when you joined that were key for the success of the school?

	<p>A: The key thing is I don't profess or ever state that I have the answer to everything. I think it is important to understand the science of teaching, so during the first term we drilled down on that. We worked on constructing the expertise of the teachers to try and develop what we think every teaching and learning interaction needs to look like including TAs and SLT: everyone who engages with the children. You cannot develop the How and What until you understand the Why. We need systems that everyone understands with clarity so that the people involved in the delivery need to be involved in the design. I am not full time in the classroom so I rely on the teachers. The SMSAs are the people to ask if we want to improve lunchtimes.</p> <p>Mental Health, wellbeing and support are crucial in schools. That sense of belonging is important as is Maslow's Hierarchy of Need. If you don't feel like you belong and are valued you can't be the best person you can be or have the best outcomes, so I focussed on that. When we got awarded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted all the parents understood why. Every parent stopped every member of staff to praise them and they all said that nobody was surprised at the 'Outstanding' ranking.</p> <p>Q: You are doing so many things around leadership training, mentoring and being involved in many schools. Will it be too much?</p> <p>A: Being an EHT is about empowering others. I currently have a governor looks after my wellbeing and we will do this across both schools. I won't continue with all of the extra-curricular stuff but there are some things I'd like to carry on. Realistically there is a lot of work to do the autumn term and the first two terms so I will not be able to do everything but I will still look to do the leadership stuff, such as the NPQH as I gain so much from it. I can't do everything in the first few terms and I accept that point. It takes some of my time but gives me so much more. I would not be the HT I am without these opportunities.</p> <p>Q: Phoebe, as current HT what are your thoughts on an EHT model?</p> <p>A: I think it is a sound model and I am in favour of it. When I started over two years ago the school had an overspend of £165,000 so I had to act quickly and I knew there was going to have to be a succession of restructures to get closer to where we need to be. We always have to have an open mind and respond to what we have available to us. There is a danger that Orleans Primary is left on its own little island surrounded by academy and faith schools. This model will bring strength to the school and the sharing of best practise. Schools are stronger together. There are huge opportunities for pupils and for staff for leadership.</p> <p>Q: To what extent will you be there to help with the transition?</p> <p>A: I will be here for the remainder of this term and I can do a significant and robust handover with DB. I am always going to be in touch with him on a professional capacity. I am available to answer questions but I cannot foresee that Daniel will need to ask. A summer term is enough to transition and this is normal practice.</p> <p>DB, PD and MD left the meeting at 7.45pm.</p>	
6.	<p>Communications approach to SLT changes</p> <p>Governors commended the working party on the vast amount of prep they had gone to to present the board with the well-researched briefing paper.</p>	

	<p>Governors discussed the EHT model and compared it with the more traditional option of replacing the HT and restructuring the SLT.</p> <p>Helen shared with governors that she works in an Ealing school and this model works effectively throughout that borough. Her HT is often offsite three days a week and they have a similar set up to what is being proposed here and it works well for her school. Helen's HT knows DB well and speaks very highly of him.</p> <p>Governors were concerned that the last HT change was around 2 years ago and worried that children need stability and continuity and that this would bring another big change. Some governors recalled that this was a big concern for the governors last time. However, governors soon realised these concerns were overblown because ultimately the HT figure, whilst important to us as a governing board, is less important for the children as they are less involved with the HT on day-to-day basis. The children are more involved with their class teachers. The children were excited and accepting of the new HT and there was no negativity from the children's perspective in any way as they had continuity from the teaching staff. However, governors also noted the risk around staff stability and that this hasn't been strong in some places recently.</p> <p>Governors noted that we are particularly pressed for time because both the HT and deputy HT have resigned. As a board we have to be in front of that. Governors felt they would be lucky to fill both roles at this short notice. It is a significant risk to go down the traditional path. The EHT option will buy some stability as there will be a five-term commitment. There is a level of risk in every route but the EHT route has lower risk and would also allow for a proper handover.</p> <p>Governors mooted the different ways to communicate the decision to parents. They agreed that if it went ahead then the governing body would be responsible for tracking DBs wellbeing and that the new model was working.</p> <p>Governors discussed the individuality of the school and agreed that they wouldn't want a carbon copy of Chase Bridge. They were reassured by what DB had said about keeping an open mind and being ready to be influenced by the staff who are there running the school day-to-day. There was a risk that teachers would be unsettled by this change but governors were reassured by what DB could offer. He is someone who will empower them, trust them, upskill them and invest in them.</p> <p>The chair asked governors to vote and the EHT option had a majority vote. Zenab abstained because she felt she was not given enough time and information to make a sound decision.</p> <p>Governors would now work with DB to ensure we have the right assumptions about the cost of the structure underneath that model. They would then plan to start to bring DB into the school as to meet the parent body and build relationships there. Governors felt it would be good to have a parent forum once he is confirmed.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 8.20pm.</p>	
7.	AOB	

