

THE GOVERNING BODY FOR ALMA PRIMARY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON

Wednesday 31 October 2018

MEMBERS

*Ilan Jacobs (Co-Chair & Chair for this meeting)	*Deborah Brooks
*Andrew Sutcliffe (Co-Chair)	*Jean Linksy
*Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)	*Edward Lewin
*David Grunwald	*Katie Abrams
*Richard Cornelius	*Sophie Fenton
*Alistair Falk	*Rina Wolfson
*Samantha Rosehill (Assistant Headteacher)	*Natalie Grazin
*David Steadman	

*denotes member present

IN ATTENDANCE

*Miss Pakeezah Rahman - Associate Clerk

PART I

1. Welcome & Learning: KATIE A

The Chair welcomed Governors to the full Governing Body meeting and Governors introduced themselves.

Katie Abrams started the meeting with a learning based on an article by Tom Sherrington which explored different behaviour strategies to control and enforce expectations in the classroom.

The Governors challenged whether the Headteacher (HT) and Assistant Headteacher (AHT) had recognised the types of behaviours discussed amongst their teachers. They answered that they had but were unlikely to observe the extremes in their school.

2. Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence but one for being late was received from David Steadman.

3. Declaration of any Direct or Indirect Personal Interest (Including but not limited to any personal financial interest); Confirmation of Any Changes to Register of Business Interests and Related Parties

None.

The annual forms were distributed during the meeting to be filled by Governors to declare interests, if any.

4. GB Leadership 2018/2019

- *Institute role of Vice Chair*

Andrew expressed his regret at taking the decision to step down as Co-Chair in March 2019 due to changing family circumstances. Andrew would remain on the Governing Body for the time being and would continue as Safeguarding Governor. Ilan thanked Andrew for all his hard work on behalf of the full Governing Body.

The Chair proposed that instead of a Co-Chair model, Alma would move to having a single Chair and a Vice Chair in the future, with two Co-Chairs and a Vice Chair for the interim period till March 2019.

The Governors questioned the role of Vice Chair and the possibility of support from another Governor if the Vice Chair was unavailable. The Chair confirmed that once appointed, a conversation would be held between the Chair and Vice Chair in further detail as to the division of responsibilities of their roles.

The Chair proposed the institution of the role of Vice Chair of Governors, which **Governors approved**.

Action: Ilan and Vice Chair to set out in writing the division of responsibilities between their roles and report back to the GB. A formal discussion of roles would be added as an item on the agenda for the next meeting.

- *Election of Vice Chair and Co-Chairs for 2018/19*

The Chair then invited nominations for Vice Chair. Deborah Brooks was nominated and seconded. **Governors approved** her appointment as Vice Chair unanimously.

Ilan and Andrew were re-proposed as Co-Chairs – Ilan for a 12 month term and Andrew until March 2019. **Governors approved** their re-appointment as Co-Chairs.

5. Proposal of New Governors

A new interim chair will be needed for the Children's Committee, to replace Katie as interim chair, when she goes on maternity leave, and until the permanent committee chair, Emma Goldstone, returns from her maternity leave.

The Governing Body questioned whether there would be new, fresh talent interested in joining the full Governing Body. The Chair confirmed that there was interest and a skills based approach would be used to ensure a good balance on the GB.

It was encouraged that if there are currently volunteers on Committees who would make good Governor candidates, Committee Chairs should encourage them to step up for the role. The Chair welcomed all suggestions of people with interest. A possible timetable could be for a new Governor to start in July 2019, taking on full Governor responsibilities but shadowing Committees before joining one permanently.

Emma Davis was proposed as a new Governor and potential interim Chair of the Children's Committee. She is a former parent elected governor, the parent of two children at Alma Primary and a Teacher by profession. Emma has continued to lead on

Health & Safety, E-Safety and providing support with Governor visits, since stepping down as a Governor. Emma displayed an incredible commitment to public service.

Resolved: The Governing Body unanimously approved that Emma be appointed as a co-opted Governor, for a term of four years, effective immediately.

6. Appointment of new Committee Chairs for 2018/19

Approved: Governors agreed that David Grunwald be reappointed as Chair for the Finance and Operations Committee, Katie Abrams be reappointed as interim Chair of the Children's Committee, Ed Lewin be reappointed as Chair of the People Committee Deborah Brooks as Chair of the Learning Committee.

A permanent appointment to replace Deborah as Learning Committee Chair will be urgently sought.

7. Part I Minutes of The Meeting Held on May 2018

Governors raised a correction to the Minutes of the May 2018 Meeting:

Page 1 3D- Jean Linsky's niece is a supply teacher at the school and Jean herself is Treasurer of Whetstone Masorti, who hire Alma's school hall. **Action:** the Chair will amend the minutes of the May 2018 GB meeting.

Approved: Part I Minutes of the meeting held on May 2018 were **Confirmed** by Governors to be held as an accurate record of the meeting.

8. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chair went through actions and confirmed that most of them were completed as stated in the Chair's report.

9. Report from the Headteacher and Committee Chair: TIFUL – Operations & Finance

Congratulations and thanks were extended to David Grunwald for continuing as Chair of the Committee on behalf of the Governing Body.

Apologies were conveyed for late minutes.

There remains a £7000 claw back from the Department for Education (DFE) for a pupil vacancy at the time of the 2017/18 pupil census, due to the school awaiting a decision from a local authority which was yet to be resolved.

The school has purchased new accounting software which was enhancing the quality of financial reporting and supporting Governor's work.

The work on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has fallen behind but staff are in the process of recruiting a new service to act as Alma's Data Protection Officer. An action plan was in place and the school felt that they were ahead on the subject compared to other schools in the Borough.

There was significant concern particularly with the shortfall in Quality Contributions received in 2017/18. This would need to be improved in 2018/19 to ensure that the school's finances remain on a stable footing. For 2018/19 the school will keep track of the level of Quality Contributions earlier in the year and will advertise the use of direct debit.

The Governors expressed their concern that the shortfall in expected donations could be due to parents not being aware of the reasons for contributions or parents not in the position to make any contributions. It was confirmed that about eight sessions were held with parents during the year to explain the importance of Quality Contributions and to ensure that parents understood the reason for contributions and that they were entirely voluntary and they should let the school know if they were unable to contribute.

A Governor challenged what the mechanism was for families who could not pay. It was said that Rebecca was very experienced in dealing with those situations. Letters to parents stated that if they had trouble, they should get in touch with the school.

A Governor challenged the figures provided for Gift Aid. It was confirmed that a previous claim had been over-estimated but the school was still due to put in a major claim for last year. (Notes of variance was listed on page 3 of the Committee report)

A Governor challenged the school on the importance of using accurate language to describe these donations.

A Governor challenged the school on an email received by parents regarding Quality Contributions. The school confirmed that it used better wording now.

The ongoing battle with HSBC over their Direct Debit mistake had been won thanks to Rebecca Doctors, the School Business Manager, which resulted in the school receiving approximately £6000 in compensation. The Governors thanked Rebecca for all her persistence and hard work in getting back the amount owed.

10. Report from the Headteacher and Committee Chair: LIMMUDIM – Learning

Sessions have been conducted for staff on the forthcoming Ofsted inspection.

An action from the last GB was to talk about Ivrit and Jewish Learning but Governors agreed to defer the topic as next steps have been discussed at the separate Jewish Learning and Ivrit sub-committee. Alastair Falk has now initiated a review of Jewish Learning at Alma and having discussed the parameters with the Head, he will report back in the new year.

The Committee looked at behaviour & the school's policy for exclusions. It was noted that Alma may need to ensure that the process within the policy works effectively and has appropriate personnel.

The Curriculum Policy was also reviewed by the Committee which led to a discussion of the school's ethos and the four pillars that were the basis upon which Alma was established as a school. Governors discussed the merits of updating the language used in the four pillars and ethos statement and agreed it would need to be a full Governing

Body decision, after careful deliberation and consultation. One suggestion was to assign a dedicated development session to review the ethos, which should include staff.

Governors discussed data having been presented with a data summary document. It described internal data and external data sent to Barnet and the Department for Education (DFE). A more detailed narrative for data had been provided by the Headteacher. The Learning Committee had already looked over the data in great depth. A 5-year trend will be produced next. A Governor challenged that for Ofsted purposes it was important that the teaching staff knew who the small number of children who were performing below expectations were.

Governors discussed the challenge of maintaining a broad but exciting curriculum. A Governor challenged the Headteacher on the cost of interventions and it was pointed out and that it would be useful to be included in the Headteacher's report.

11. Report from the Headteacher and Committee Chair: YELADIM – Children

Governors discussed the recent safeguarding incident took place whereby 2 children had left the school grounds unaccompanied. Governors praised the school team for the way in which it handled the situation.

Governors were told about the new appointment of an Inclusion Leader, (SENDCo) who has hit the ground running and of a very successful INSET session for staff helping Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and EHCPs.

Feedback from both the parent survey and staff questionnaire was briefly discussed, which were hugely positive.

Coffee mornings for parents were set up at the beginning of term and were heavily attended by Reception families. Parents from different year groups had the opportunity to integrate and introduce themselves.

Children Committee looked at behavior, as it was an area raised by staff in the staff survey, particularly consistency of implementation of strategies for 'out of class' behavior such as talking loudly in the halls. Teachers made sure that children were walking sensibly and safely in the right direction on stair case. Noise levels could disturb other children especially with the different break times. Governors challenged whether issues with behavior were observed more in certain areas or just in general.

A correlation between uniform and behavior was discussed. A Governor suggested that if rules were not fully enforced in areas like uniform, children pushed the boundaries with those rules. Pupils were also encouraged as to how to resolve conflict, which Alma considers an important life skill.

12. Report from Headteacher and Committee Chair: ANASHIM - People

New members of staff have been recruited including two Part Time staff, a new Reception SLA, a Y5 maternity cover and an Ivrit teacher. A total of eight new members

of staff had joined the school since September and staff inductions have been taking place over the last few weeks.

New staff brought a huge range of skills was brought from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Staff wellbeing is a clear focus for the school. Illness had increased over the last three years but a lower number of absenteeism was noted this summer compared to last summer.

The Committee Chair made a plea for volunteers with key HR skills, particularly an employment lawyer, since the committee's current employment lawyer has stood down from the committee.

13. Report from the Headteacher and Joint Chair's Report

The staff survey was discussed, which has a response rate of over 80%, up from a 60% response rate last year from staff. Monitoring and feedback to staff was viewed as very good. Comments showed a sense of team from those who joined the end of year development session. There was a great network of staff and support with high levels of job satisfaction. Staff wellbeing was noted to be high.

A Governor challenged that it was important for staff morale and well-being to be across the board and not only with teachers but other members of staff like TAs and SLAs.

An issue of staff getting lots of emails from parents was discussed. Teachers could only address emails at the end of the day.

Staff voices being listened to was considered very important and more helpful. The Committee was happy with the results received.

Vered Rose Simons has been appointed as Assistant Headteacher on a permanent basis since September following an interview of three candidates. Unsuccessful candidates received a letter and were appreciative of the feedback. Work on the website was to be finalised in the next few weeks. The playground was coming along well and would be completed over the Summer. Feedback received from children was fantastic. Stage 2 of the playground still yet to be done after possible contributions.

The Chair expressed Mazel tov to Emma on the birth of her twins on behalf of the Governing Body.

The possibility of the working group looking at MATs being held before Christmas was being considered.

The Serious Safeguarding Incident was discussed by Governors. The Safeguarding Governor conducted a review and spent time speaking to all staff involved. The Headteacher also received feedback and suggestions from local area Headteachers helped with.

A discussion of the incident and review would be held in Children Committee. Handover procedures, security and how staff managed end of day procedures were to be discussed in more detail at the next Committee.

14. Acceptance of SDP & Self Evaluation Report including Risk Register

Governors challenged the Headteacher on the process for the production of the School Development Plan (SDP). **Action:** Headteacher and Chairs to review the process and consultation of Governors in the production of the SDP.

A brief discussion was held on the content of the SDP, with each Committee urged to follow up on their relevant sections.

The Self Evaluation Report (SER) was also reviewed but had not been updated since July. Governors challenged the Headteacher that some data was out of date and requested refreshed data for the next GB. **Action:** Headteacher to update the SER with fresh data and remove all surveys or information from 2015/2016.

15. Proposal on 2019/20 School Calendar

The draft 2019/20 School Calendar was distributed at the meeting. The school proposed 186 teaching days and 7 inset days, less than the standard 190 days for teaching. The school would also be a polling station on 7th May 2020.

The fewer teaching days was challenged by Governors. Training needs and learning was said to be maintained at a high standard and therefore the additional inset day was required.

The Governing Body challenged whether the school took into account working parents when selecting the INSET days. The Headteacher explained the challenge was the need to hold training on days that maximized the number of staff working, which was a Monday or Tuesday. The school has little capacity to get staff to come in on other days and the school could not afford to pay them to do so.

Approved: the 2019/20 School Calendar was approved by Governors.

Staggered entry was briefly discussed and the Headteacher explained that it was done according to the needs of children and it was a very specific process settling into a new environment. A Governor challenged that some Ofsted research highlighted that there was very little need for staggered entry and it had been stopped by many schools. The discussion was deferred to Children's Committee.

Action: Children's Committee to discuss staggered entry on 7th November meeting.

16. Dates of Future GB Meeting: 2018-19 Meeting Schedule

Action: Dates of the next Full Governing Body meeting would be recirculated.

17. Any other Business

None.