



**Alma
Primary**
עולם חסד יבנה
A world built on kindness

THE GOVERNING BODY OF ALMA PRIMARY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON MONDAY 9 JULY 2017

Present:

Natalie Grazin (Joint Chair and chairing this meeting)	Laura Sherling
Andrew Sutcliffe (Joint Chair)	Noa Bladon
David Steadman	Emma Davies
Edward Lewin	Michelle Jacobs
Tabitha Sumberg	Sammy Rosehill
	Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

In attendance:

Colin Grazin - Clerk to the Governors

PART I

23/1 WELCOME AND LEARNING

Laura led a learning session on the book "Legacy" by James Kerr, detailing the philosophy of the New Zealand All Blacks and suggested a number of lessons for the Alma community.

23/2 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Deborah Brooks, David Grunwald and Richard Cornelius.

23/3 DECLARATION OF ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST (INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY PERSONAL FINANCIAL INTEREST)

No new declarations of interest were declared above and beyond those true at the previous meeting.

23/4 APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS

The Governors approved the appointment of Colin Grazin as Clerk to the Governors on a permanent basis and thanked him for his work to date.

23/5 APPOINTMENT OF NEW GOVERNORS

Natalie and Andrew presented a paper entitled "Governor Re-appointment and New Appointments for Alma Primary July 2017".

Governor Re-appointments

A number of member-appointed Governors had completed their 4 year term of office. Accordingly, a member's meeting had been held to re-appoint those governors appointed in 2013 who wished to stand again, namely:

- David Steadman
- Natalie Grazin

- Andrew Sutcliffe
- Deborah Brooks

All of these 4 had been reappointed as Member-appointed Governors at the Alma Members' meeting held earlier in the month.

New Governor Appointments

Secondly, the paper outlined the need for the appointment of 5 new Governors to take up the roles vacated by retiring Governors. It described the recruitment search and selection process that had occurred over the past 6 months, led by David Steadman.

To this end, Jean Linsky and Katie Abrams had been appointed as Member-Appointed Governors by the Alma Members at the Members' meeting held earlier this month. Governors reviewed their biographies as set out in the paper and welcomed the significant experience and expertise that they would bring.

IT WAS NOTED that Jean Linsky and Katie Abrams had been appointed as Member-Appointed Governors

Thirdly, the paper proposed three candidates for co-option as Governor by those persons eligible to co-opt, namely all Governors save those who were themselves co-opted. After discussion, particularly as to the criteria and roles of the potential new Governors, it was unanimously agreed, on separate votes, that each of the following be co-opted as Governors, namely:

- Alastair Falk
- Emma Viner
- Jude Williams

IT WAS AGREED therefore that all these 3 become Governors and that the Co-Chairs would communicate this to them and commence relevant processes (*Joint Chairs, July 2017*)

IT WAS AGREED that The Joint Chairs will organise and lead induction events in September. In addition, they will ask some former and current Governors to take on a Buddying role. (*Joint Chairs, July 2017*)

Natalie thanked David Steadman for leading the Governor recruitment process.

Committee Membership

Natalie reported there had been some changes in non-Governor membership of committees, with new Committee Members coming on board.

IT WAS AGREED that an update on Committee membership should be on the agenda at the November GB Formal meeting (*Joint Chairs, July 2017*)

As a consequence of Hiten leaving the Governing Body, it had been agreed that Emma Viner would now take up the role of Chair of the Children's committee, with support from David Steadman in the first few months.

IT WAS NOTED that Emma Viner would hold the Committee Chair role on an Acting basis from the start of term.

23/6 ELECTION OF CO-CHAIR DESIGNATE

Andrew reported on the consultation that had occurred with all Governors about how to proceed after Natalie stands down as Joint Chair in December 2017. The outcome was that

Ilan was felt by many to be a strong candidate, and he had agreed to take up the role if the GB wanted him to.

Ilan left the meeting whilst his election was discussed. All Governors agreed that Ilan would be a very good candidate for the position and that he would work well with Andrew, bringing different and complementary skills and expertise.

Governors considered the pros and cons of having two Joint Chairs who are both non-parents of the school. Overall it was felt that this will support stronger holding to account of the Headteacher and strengthens our governance.

Some concern was raised that this would mean a completely male team of Headteacher and Joint Chairs. To counter this, it was noted that 4 of the 5 new Governors are female and 2 of 4 Committee Chairs are female.

IT WAS AGREED that this should not impact on Ilan's appointment, but that the Head and Joint Chairs should consider what could be done to limit negative impact. (*Joint Chairs and Headteacher, November 2017*)

Following these discussions, the GB unanimously approved the election of Ilan as Co-Chair Designate. Ilan returned to the meeting, was congratulated and responded that he was excited by the opportunity.

IT WAS AGREED that Ilan Jacobs would take up Co-Chair Designate responsibilities from hereon, with recognition that the annual election of Co-Chairs will occur in November. (*Joint Chairs, July 2017*)

23/7 GOVERNORS STANDING DOWN

IT WAS NOTED that Hiten Jethwa, Michelle Jacobs, Noa Bladon and Tabitha Allum were all stepping down as Governors.

Natalie reported that Hiten had resigned as a result of moving to live in the USA. He had been thanked at his last Committee meeting.

In addition, Noa Bladon and Michelle Jacobs had both just completed their 4 year terms of office and had chosen to step down rather than be re-elected for a further 4 years; and Tabitha Allum had also decided to step down after two years, now that the major capital fundraising project was complete.

Noa, Michelle and Tabitha were each thanked for their service over some years and each was presented with a poster summarising their respective work on behalf of the school. Tabitha will continue in her fundraising role on the Ops Committee and Michelle will continue to sit on the Children's committee while handover of the Admissions portfolio occurs.

23/8 PART 1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2017

IT WAS AGREED that the following amendments needed to be made (Marc, July 2017):

- In the Declaration of Interests item, it should be noted that Michelle Jacobs has a child attending the school
- Tabitha's name should be correctly spelt
- The reference to Ilana Swimer having already been approved by the GB as a new member of the People Committee should be deleted.

IT WAS AGREED that subject to these amendments, the minutes were formally approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

IT WAS AGREED that the Headteacher would have the minutes uploaded to the school website (*Marc, July 2017*)

23/9 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PART 1 MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes

23/10 REPORT FROM SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON TIFUL - OPERATIONS AND FINANCE

Marc highlighted a number of issues in the Ops and Finance section of his report:

- More work was required to comply with EFA financial reporting requirements, but new finance software would assist with this
- There had been a safeguarding audit.
- A small security group had been set up, creating a more robust to ensure that security arrangements are up to date and proportionate.
- There were a number of small site issues still to be resolved

Ilan reported on behalf of the Ops and Finance Committee, highlighting the following issues:

- Catering: new but temporary caterers had been found and appointed following the liquidation of the last supplier.
- Quality Contributions: QCs value received had shown some improvement this year relative to previous years, because parents had been reminded earlier in the year and more regularly. The direct debit option would be of considerable assistance
- Budget: the Ops committee had approved the draft budget for 2017-18, which now needed to be approved by the GB. The figures in the budget were encouraging: last year's budget had been prepared on a deficit basis. The budget for 2017/18 is intended to balance.
- Communal Use policy: this policy, which creates the framework for using Alma for venue hire, had been agreed after the last meeting but there was concern that some further legal tidying up was needed to ensure clarity around the terms and conditions in the policy and that they are the same as those provided to hirers.

IT WAS AGREED that the Clerk to the Governors, Ilan and Marc are to look at the Communal Use Policy and associated terms and conditions and redraft as necessary, pursuant to delegated authority. (*Colin, Ilan and Marc, September 2017*)

IT WAS AGREED that subject to the changes recommended by the Clerk to the Governors being made, the Communal Use Policy be formally approved.

A Governor questioned whether the school had adequate cyber security in the light of recent events. Ilan reported that the committee had not formally looked at this issue, but he had discussed it with Marc, by email. Marc reported that the school had an arrangement in place with an appropriate company, who had looked at the system and the school had followed their advice. Regular backups of data were made daily and weekly as appropriate. It was felt overall that there needed to be greater assurance provided to Governors around this issue.

IT WAS AGREED that the Ops Committee would look at this issue during the autumn term, as part of its security responsibilities. (*Ilan, December 2017*)

In answer to a query about why the school would be introducing direct debits as a possible way of making Quality Contributions, Ilan explained the benefits of moving to direct debits and that his committee would instruct the professionals to take an appropriately cautious approach in communicating with parents.

In answer to a query about the status of fundraising, Tabitha confirmed that all of the work in the building had been paid for and any surplus funds would be used for work to the playground, including the provision of a mural.

23/11 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON LIMMUDIM/LEARNING

Marc highlighted a number of issues in the Learning section of his report:

- Across the school, there has been a focus on improving standards of writing throughout this year, and the outcomes at year end in every school year show that this has paid off.
- There were a number of rigorous moderation activities throughout the term by Barnet to ensure that Alma's assessments are in line with other schools.
- Assessment at the end of Reception showed 80% children at GLD (Good Level of Development), which is the same as last year, but with a higher number of children reaching the exceeding level in Writing.
- Year 2s undertook end of KS1 assessments this term. The school had learnt lessons from the first experience of KS1 assessment process that occurred in 2016, primarily around evidence-gathering. We are expecting that the results more accurately reflect the ability of the children and are a much better assessment of progress and attainment in Year 2 than the results from 2016. The GB will review the results at our November meeting and in the meantime, the Learning Committee will scrutinise it closely in the autumn.

In answer to a query, Marc reported that in the Year 1 phonics tests, children had achieved a 97% pass rate, which is exceptionally high. Tabitha enquired if the phonics test is adjusted for age. Marc said these were not age-standardised scores, they were based upon the expectation of what the children could achieve at the end of Year 1 regardless of age.

Two Governors asked how the school could be sure that it had paused to ensure that all the learning about SATS was fully understood and could be replicated year on year, and also translated into the Year 6 end of KS2 assessments in 2 years' time. Marc responded that this is an important area of work for the next year and that Alma would learn not only from its own experience around KS1 assessments, it would also learn from other schools.

IT WAS AGREED that the school leadership team would carry out a review of what the school has learned from the KS1 process over the last two years and that this report would come to the Learning Committee in the Spring term of 2017. *(Marc, Laura, by March 2018)*

Laura reported on behalf of the Learning Committee, highlighting the following issues:

- It had been decided to establish a separate sub-committee to focus on Jewish Learning and Ivrit and this had met once during the term.
- This term, her committee had reviewed the planning for the Year 4 curriculum; policy for off site visits; SMSC; assessment of Ivrit and JS; staffing issues.
- SDP items that are Green: i) quality of learning: the progress and attainment data continued to be scrutinised and mostly looks good ii) quality of teaching: observations had shown all lessons were good or better

- SDP items that are Amber: i) development of internal framework for assessment: work is still ongoing to refine this framework ii) development of assessment framework for JS and Ivrit: progress on this was slower than had been hoped for
- In 2015, Ofsted assessed Alma's SMSC provision as Outstanding and there is a need to critically assess our provision to ensure that this is still true and to focus on SMSC being cutting edge again this year. This must include teaching of other religions, as the annual staff survey had shown that they believed other religions were not being taught as effectively as they might be.
- Challenges in undertaking assessment in Ivrit continue due to challenges in Ivrit staffing.

In answer to a query about a passage in the report suggesting there might be shorter Ivrit lessons, Marc responded that the school needs to ensure that it is using staff time as well as possible and Ivrit teacher time is a precious resource; in addition, there have to be changes in timetabling next year because the school will be five classes. No decision yet but Ivrit lessons may be trimmed to 30/35 minutes.

IT WAS AGREED that the Learning Committee would analyse this issue during the autumn term and consider the various challenges in more depth, ensuring that Ivrit provision is not weakened but that human and curriculum resources are used to maximum efficiency. *(Laura, December 2017)*

A Governor asked if the data excluded SEN children, as Headteacher reports had done in the past. Marc said they were not excluded and Andrew asked that there is a termly meeting between the SENCo and SEN Governor to review the specific progress and attainment of the SEN children, so that the GB could be assured of their development separate from the data.

IT WAS AGREED that Emma as SEN Governor would review the progress and attainment of SEN children prior to the next GB and provide her view to Governors on the quality of the provision for them as had been Alma's practice in the years that Andrew was SEN Governor *(Emma V, by Nov GB meeting)*

IT WAS AGREED that the data for SEN children will be excluded from the overall data at the next GB meeting *(Marc, at Nov GB meeting)*

23/12 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON YELADIM-CHILDREN

Marc highlighted a number of issues in the Children section of his report:

- Admissions: there is a long waiting list for admission to the Reception class, with one place caught up in complex processes around an EHCP. There had been two admissions appeals this year, which were being dealt with by Michelle.
- SEN: Sammy will take over the role of SENCo from September; during this term, there had been a range of positive developments in SEN provision and systems
- Safeguarding: actions had been taken in order to ensure that all issues identified in the external Safeguarding Audit were fully addressed. The conclusions of the report were as follows:
 - *Lots of good practice to build on as school expands.*
 - *Safeguarding is a strong feature of the leadership team.*

- *Good systems are in place with regular communication between the leadership team and the GB.*
 - *Updating policies and continuing to develop opportunities to teach children about safeguarding as the current cohort approaches transition will further strengthen practice.*
- Attendance: attendance is still not perfect. There are some children whose level of attendance was below 90% this term, primarily because some parents did not regard school attendance as important. The school's approach is to work with those families.

In his absence, Hiten's report as the Chair of the Children's Committee was received and David Steadman agreed to speak to it. It was noted that:

- SDP items that are Green: Inclusion and EAL, School Council, Online Safety, Safeguarding
- SDP items that are Amber: Prevent training for all staff
- The committee this term had discussed: Mental health and emotional well-being, Safeguarding, Term time holiday fines, Catering.

IT WAS AGREED that all Governors would complete the online Safeguarding training prior to the next GB meeting (with the exception of those with existing Safeguarding training).
(All Governors, November)

In answer to a question as to the relative numbers of Jewish/non-Jewish children for next year, David Steadman said that data was not yet available. Andrew said that increasing the number of families within Alma with no connection to the Jewish community is important but it may take time and be seen as a long-term goal. Marc said it was difficult to provide accurate data as to the split between Jewish/non-Jewish applicants to the school because the school does not ask invasive questions at admission stage or know this from application forms. It was however known that at least one child whose family have no connection to the Jewish community will be joining the school next year and there may be more.

23/13 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON ANASHIM-PEOPLE

Marc highlighted a number of issues in the People section of his report:

- Recent focus had been on recruitment: Two new class teachers had been appointed – Nicole Friedman as Reception teacher and a new head of Jewish studies, Jeanie Horowitz.
- Interviews were ongoing for new LSAs and a new Ivrit teacher.
- INSET this term had focused on deepening skills around the teaching of the core curriculum, plus building skills in use of technology and SEN support.
- There had been ongoing work to implement the actions resulting from the Staff Survey undertaken in the Spring term.

Ed reported on behalf of the People Committee, highlighting the following issues:

- The Committee had reviewed three policies: Working from Home, Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave; and Staff Attendance.

- The committee had discussed 4 other items: Staff Survey action plan, staffing structure for 2017-18, Exit interview protocol and Staffing issues.
- The two SDP items related to this committee are both Green: i) Pay: a school-wide clear framework has been established. ii) monitoring of teaching: an appropriate level has been found during this year

A number of Governors asked for more information about the exit interview protocol and there was discussion about how far this should follow what some Governors regarded as normal practice. Marc said that he had spoken with other Heads about practice in schools, which is for an Assistant Head or Headteacher to undertake Exit Interviews. There was a significant discussion about best practice and in particular whether a teacher would be candid with the Assistant Head or Headteacher if he/she required a reference on leaving the school. Overall, Governors were not confident that the school's protocol would mean the school learnt sufficiently from exit interviews in order to maximise improvement.

IT WAS AGREED that the People Committee would look again at this issue in the light of the views expressed by the GB

A Governor asked about the school's policy on maternity/paternity leave. Ed reported that the committee had decided that it was right to pay 100% of salary during the first six weeks of leave; that is the only variance from previous policy or general practice.

23/14 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER ON LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE AND JOINT CHAIRS' REPORT

Marc highlighted a number of issues in the Leadership and Governance section of his report:

- A great deal of work has gone into creating a more meaningful and detailed Self Evaluation Report, which integrates the former Self Evaluation Framework and the Risk Register. Each Committee will be familiarised with this new format during next term. The format and content will be refined in response to feedback over the coming year. It is intended to provide a very robust and evidence-based approach for school improvement and leadership.
- The School Leadership Team has continued to focus on its development as a team and has a retreat planned before the end of term. The School Improvement Partner assessed its teamwork positively in her recent analysis.
- Work continues with the other schools in the Whetstone Improvement Partnership and funding has been received to work together on writing, which is the greatest shared challenge across all schools in the partnership.

Andrew reported on behalf of the Co-Chairs, highlighting the following issues:

- As covered earlier in the meeting, a big focus had been on Governor recruitment.
- The mid-year review had taken place for the Headteacher, with input from the School Improvement Partner.
- The results of the GB Annual Self-Evaluation were considered and the resulting proposed actions were noted. In particular, Safeguarding training for Governors is a priority. Governors are less confident about Governing in Depth roles, the school's financial stability and its engagement with the community than about all other aspects of school governance.
- Natalie and David Grunwald had attended a Pajes event about MATS and had submitted a detailed report sharing their learning that was included in the Chairs' report.

IT WAS AGREED that Natalie would resend the link to the GB for the online Safeguarding training. All Governors must in addition respond to an email as to whether safeguarding training had been undertaken, so that the school had a proper record (*Natalie, all, September*).

IT WAS AGREED that Colin as Clerk to the Governors will set up and maintain a training register and will ask each of the Governors to list the training they have previously undertaken.

The GB briefly discussed the strategic question of MATS, as set out in the report.

IT WAS AGREED that the informal session of the GB in the Autumn term 2017 would focus on MATS; at least one of the new Governors has valuable experience on this matter

23/15 Review of GB Annual Self-evaluation and update on Governor Training

It was agreed that these had already been discussed within item 23/14

23/16 Review of SDP and Self Evaluation Report Including Risk Register

Marc briefly summarised the document. Each Committee would be looking at it properly in the Autumn term. The purpose of the document is to enable the GB to hold staff and the Headteacher to account and to support school improvement.

Marc said all of the committees should look at this document at every meeting. Natalie emphasised that this is a live document, with the metrics showing the up-to-date status of key aspects of the school on a termly basis.

IT WAS AGREED that the Strategy Group will consider this document in more detail at its next meeting in September, so that Committee Chairs feel confident to embed the new report in their meeting agendas (*Strategy Group, September*).

23/17 Proposal on School Calendar for 2018/19

IT WAS AGREED that this item should be delegated to the Strategy Group meeting in September (*Strategy Group, September*).

23/18 Dates of next GB meetings

- Governors were reminded that formal GB meetings will now take place just after half term, rather than at the end of term.
- The GB was reminded of the event on 24th July to discuss the School Development Plan for 2017-18, together with staff.

23/19 Any Other Business

None

23/20 Motion of Confidentiality

It was resolved that, because of its nature, the further business to be transacted be treated as confidential and not for publication.