

THE GOVERNING BODY OF ALMA PRIMARY
MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD BY ZOOM ON
WEDNESDAY 13th DECEMBER 2021

Present:

Ilan Jacobs (Chair and chairing this meeting)	David Grunwald
Emma Davies	James Burns
Ed Lewin	David Farbey
Adam Zellick	Vicky Shafran
	Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

Also in attendance:

Alma Members: Martin Blain, Andrew Sutcliffe, Natalie Grazin

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all attendees, especially the Alma Members, to this joint Governor and Member meeting.

2. ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Apologies were accepted from the following governors - Katie Abrams (on maternity leave), Louise Lewis and Jonathan Levy (on paternity leave)
- Apologies were accepted from the following members – David Boyd, Matt Plen, David Steadman and Deborah Brooks.

3. DECLARATIONS 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

The Chair asked Governors to declare changes only to the register of interests, since the last Governing Body Meeting. No changes were declared by any Governor.

Natalie Grazin, a Member, declared an interest as Trustee of Limmud who are exploring renting space from the school.

4. MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2022

The minutes of the previous Governing Body meeting were approved. One of the actions was to update Governors on the number of children on roll, which the Head did: 207, as of the meeting date.

5. APPROVAL OF GOVERNANCE ITEMS:

- Vicky Shafran's appointment as SEND Governor – **APPROVED**
- Head Teacher's Performance Appraisal Panel – the Chair, Vicky Shafran, David Farbey, Louise Lewis were appointed to the Panel and the GB delegated its powers to hold the Head's appraisal to them for 2021/2. **APPROVED**
- Link Governor Roles- the Chair talked through the paper tabled outlining the Link Governor roles and asked for Governors to let him nominate themselves. **ACTION:** Governors to let Chair know which Link Governor role they are interested in taking on.

6. APPROVAL OF ALMA PRIMARY STATUTORY ACCOUNTS AND TRUSTEES REPORT, 2019/20

- The Head talked through the accounts and highlighted the excellent feedback Alma has received from our new auditors, Landau Baker.
- A governor commended the fact that very few issues were raised by the auditors but challenged that the school must provide reassurance that the way management accounts are presented to Governors will be improved. The Head said that they are working to address that reporting issue. **ACTION:** Head to report back to FOP Committee and GB on meeting the improvements required in the presentation of financial information.
- A member challenged on the differences from last year to next in terms of the improved financial situation and the Head explained the Gift Aid claim, low forecasting of clubs' revenue, the successful work of the Fundraising Lead and the COVID financial claim the school had made.
- Governors **APPROVED** the 2019/20 annual report and accounts.

7. ALMA PRIMARY APPROACH TO JEWISH EDUCATION

- The Head talked through the paper he had presented and the approach.
- Governors and Members had a chance to review and comment on Jewish Learning and Ivrit (JL&I) document before the meeting.
- During the discussion, the Chair and Governors remembered the late Rina Wolfson, of blessed memory, a former Alma Governor who was passionate about Jewish

Learning and Ivrit and would have had something wonderful to say about the document.

- The discussion topic was to explore if Governors and Members agree that the document sets out an accurate approach to the practical application of Alma's ethos in the JL&I subject: *Has the school interpreted the ethos and vision appropriately?*
- The Head summarised as this school takes Judaism seriously but is inclusive – it does not want to water Judaism down.
- A Governor challenged regarding the children from outside the community and the Head responded about the need to be inclusive and seek a balanced way forward
- A Governor challenged on the proportion of school time that gets spent on JL&I. Another Governor challenged about Alma's benchmarking against other schools in terms of time spent teaching JL&I. A member asked that if 18% of class time is spent on JL&I, what does that mean in terms of class teachers time, as delivery of JL&I is divided between specialist staff and class teachers?
- The Head explained that decisions about how much time we spend and money were taken at the very beginning of the establishment of the school. The question for Governors was what balance was right for the community we were seeking to attract? The Head did not think the balance is absolutely right every single day but it was right over the year.
- The Head highlighted that Intention, implementation, impact – governance and benchmarking needs to be measured against those 3 headings and if the Governors want benchmarking done, then they should table it at JL&I Committee and the school team will come with proposals.
- **ACTION:** JL&I committee to consider benchmarking questions.
- A Governor asked about data. The Head explained that Data is very significant here and the school has a range. Some covers children's progress on learning (eg Shoah) but the Head would like to capture more qualitative data.
- A Governor challenged on do we have data on this area of school life?
- A Governor challenged regarding the outcome of categories without data and a further Governor felt it would have been useful to have the data in this document.
- **ACTION:** JL&I /L&C committee to share data with GB.
- A Governor asked about affiliation with a synagogue body whether that was a disadvantage.
- There was a discussion of the difference between normative Jewish practice and school practice and a question about Kippot. The Head explained that many children stopped wearing them since COVID but the school was trying to win children over.
- A Governor also observed that the school surveyed parents on the effect of the JL syllabus and that gave the school some valuable metrics: there was quite a positive response received from parents and children

- **ACTION:** The Head to share the parents survey on JL with the JL&I committee. JL&I committee to consider running the survey again in the future, perhaps before Pikuach inspect?
- A member expressed support for the way the document demonstrates how the school has worked on the school's values and turned them into a universal moral code. It shows how inclusivity is demonstrated
- A Member thought this was a pretty demanding amount of JL and highlighted the need to be able to read Hebrew. The Member challenged if there was enough links made between JL and Hebrew reading.
- A Member asked for the school to correct the Hebrew in the document's appendix from 'Moaz Tzur' to 'Maoz Tzur'.
- Governors APPROVED the paper.

8. REVIEW OF ALMA PRIMARY GB SKILLS AUDIT 2021

- The Chair presented a paper giving the results of the recent GB Skills Audit which highlighted very few gaps in the skills required among the Governing Body.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

Closed Part 1 of the meeting

ACTIONS LIST

ITEM NO.	ACTION	ASSIGNED TO
5	Governors to let Chair know which Link Governor role they are interested in taking on.	GB
6	HT to report back to FOP Committee and GB on meeting the improvements required in the presentation of financial information.	HT
7	JL&I committee to consider benchmarking questions regarding JL&I.	JL&I Com
7	JL&I /L&C committee to share JL&I data with GB.	L&C Com
7	HT to share the parents survey on JL with the JL&I committee. JL&I committee to consider running the survey again in the future.	HT