

THE GOVERNING BODY OF ALMA PRIMARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT ALMA PRIMARY ON
MONDAY 13th JUNE 2022

Present:

Ilan Jacobs (Chair and chairing this meeting)

Adam Zellick

Stuart Diamond

Vicky Shafran

David Grunwald

Jonathan Levy

James Burns (on zoom)

Louise Lewis

Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

Also in attendance:

Sam Sussman - Administration Assistant

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Governors and opened the meeting.

2. ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were accepted from Katie Abrams (Maternity Leave), David Farbey, Emma Davies and Ed Lewin

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 reminded Governors that the practice at meetings was to declare changes only. No changes were declared by any Governor.

4. MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the meeting were approved and the following actions reviewed.

ACTIONS LIST

ACTION	ASSIGNED TO	STAUS
Send a note of thanks and appreciation to all staff for their exceptional service and arrange an event such as a staff breakfast to demonstrate the GB's support.	The Chair	COMPLETED
Update parents on the agreement achieved with the developer of the St John's Hall site in regard to mitigatory works and payments.	The Head	COMPLETED
Include the following items on the agenda for the summer term meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding report• Five year budget plan• Assessment at Alma• St John's Hall update	The Chair	COMPLETED
Prepare a report for the Governor's consideration on year-on-year data on application numbers and patterns to identify any discernible downward trends.	The Head & SLT	CARRIED OVER
Prepare a note for the Governor's consideration in regard to meeting future pupil support needs	The Head & SLT	COMPLETED Level of SEN support increased by Alma to a full time role

Governors agreed to contribute towards costs of an end of term staff party as an additional demonstration of appreciation of staff efforts. (ACTION)

HT/Chair to arrange a Start of Term (September 2022) event for Governors to mingle with both staff. (ACTION)

5. HEAD'S REPORT + COMMITTEE CHAIRS' + CHAIR'S REPORTS

Governors considered a comprehensive set of reports on all leadership and management issues at the school. These had been amalgamated into a single Leadership Report document that was sent to Governors prior to the meeting. The reports were authored by the Head, the Chair and the respective Chairs of the FOP (Finance, Operations & People) and L & C (Learning and Children) Committees.

The Head spoke to highlight a number of issues and respond to questions as follows:

SATS:

Alma completed its first ever Y6 SATs this term and also received a moderation visit from Barnet on 10 June 2022, which was very positive. The Y6 teaching team were supported by Alma bringing in extra resources, however this was the first time the team had conducted Y6 SATs before and the Y6 have faced a number of challenges, including missed schooling due to COVID, a relatively high proportion of children with ECHPs and children new to the school and the English school system. The HT will contact colleagues in other schools to discuss the results but public comparison results will be published in the Autumn.

A Governor challenged as to whether MJS would have done anything differently re SATs thinking back. The HT responded by saying that he had tried very hard to keep a healthy balance between focusing on the SATs and maintaining a normal school experience. The Y6 team worked very hard and Alma has learned a lot that will go into a stringent plan for next year, including starting boosters earlier and enhancing and bringing forward communication with parents.

The Chair asked Governors how they would like to receive the results and it was agreed that Governors will be told the results at the next GB meeting on 13 July 2022.

Inspections:

The HT noted that Alma is still waiting for a Pikuach inspection which is due imminently and Alma is also overdue an OFSTED Section 5 inspection. Governors challenged on the state of preparation for the OFSTED inspection and the Chair and HT committed to looking at the state of the GB OFSTED folder and reporting back (ACTION).

Staffing:

The HT reported on a number of staff changes: Ruby Cole, Ella Janner Klausner and Rachel Clark are leaving at the end of this academic year. The HT was positive about the current process of recruiting replacements. Two Hebrew teachers that started at the beginning of the year on a one year contract have been confirmed as permanent

Data:

The HT talked through some of the data included in his report. A governor challenged on how Alma does assessment moderation. The HT explained that he meets each term, with each teacher to discuss needs of children and how to best meet those needs. The HT talked through the school's approach to Termly

assessments and the need to find the balance between over assessment and under assessment. Alma currently uses Progress in Reading Assessments (PIRA). A Governor challenged on whether Alma need to use more formal standardised tests as preparation for SATs in future. The HT considered that more formal tests for Ys 4,5,6 ahead of SATS may be something to explore.

Inclusion:

Alma will be holding LGBTQ workshops taking place this month. The HT flagged that Alma needs to update equality policy to include LGBTQ+ this term and consider the school's approach to inclusive toilets and spaces. VS offered to assist. (ACTION)

Safeguarding:

HT reported that a child who was on role up to the summer term but was partially excluded has moved on, with our help, to a more appropriate education setting. HT also flagged that Alma has moved to CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System, a software solution for monitoring safeguarding) to report safeguarding concerns. A Governor challenged on the number of staff referrals to the safeguarding team but not to MASH (The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub). The HT explained that this month's figures were not unusual as the culture at Alma is to encourage staff to refer things they are worried about, however slight, but most of these do not lead to any further action or referral.

Attendance:

HT reported an improvement in attendance figures to the Autumn term but that he was still aiming to get levels back to above 96%, as they were pre-COVID. The Chair highlighted how these figures still compare very well nationally. A Governor challenged about the level of lateness at the school, as opposed to attendance. The Learning and Children's Committee will be asked to look at lateness figures. (ACTION)

6: Approval of Alma Primary Budget 2022-26

The Chair initiated a discussion on the rolling 5-year budget, highlighting that this year has been a very difficult process as despite having had a healthy surplus up to last year, 2021/22 we are going to finish the year by taking a chunk out of Alma's reserves.

The HT outlined the financial challenges Alma faces in the future and the significant fundraising challenge for the school. The HT said that predictions of staffing changes, high recruitment costs, and a rise in future energy costs and other non-staffing costs were driving the increase in expenditure.

A governor challenged as to whether Alma has sufficiently managed to fix our energy prices before the increases this past October. The HT committed to asking the SBM to clarify the situation with Alma's energy costs, when the school fixed, what rate they were paying, when it expired were paying and when the new rate expires. (ACTION)

Governors agreed that the school needs to actively fundraise to fill the gap in the annual budget for the next five years. It was suggested to conduct a survey to better determine how to direct fundraising efforts. Governors noted that a Fundraising meeting is planned for the next few weeks.

The current target is for £55,000 pa which will not be easy to meet and recommendations of a professional fundraiser should be sought and the development of a clear strategy of how to meet the target.

A Governor challenged that he could only support this Five year budget proposal with annual deficits included with a commitment to aggressive fundraising, of perhaps at least £200,000 so that the school is in a more stable and safe financial position.

Based on assurances from the Governing Body that vigorous fundraising efforts would be made, the Five Year Budget was APPROVED.

7. Safeguarding Report

The Safeguarding Governor gave her report and declared that she was satisfied that safeguarding is high priority in the school and is managed well.

Safeguarding Governor to circulate her written report after consultation with the school. (ACTION)

8. Policies for Approval

The following policies were APPROVED by Governors.

- Safeguarding,
- Staff attendance & Absence,
- Redundancy

The following policies were noted by Governors for info.

- Crisis Management
- Looked After Children

HT to add the approved policies to the Alma Website, as appropriate. (ACTION)

A Governor challenged that Alma needs a Financial Procedures Policy in place as it is a requirement under the Governor's Handbook.

HT committed to producing a financial procedures policy for FOP to review.
(ACTION)

9. Report out - Governor In Depth Day

The Governors that participated in the recent Governor in Depth Day (25 May 2022) feedback to the GB on what a positive experience it was. Observations included:

- behaviour of Y6 was excellent – children were articulate and respectful.
- Alma ethos came through strongly in Y6 children.
- a very friendly welcome in every class and Governor was hugely impressed by the quality of teaching.
- Tefillah was very moving.
- Children were respectful and well-behaved.

Governors asked HT to pass on their appreciation and thanks to the staff for such a warm welcome and all their hard work. (ACTION)

Governors who were not part of the GiD day were asked to make a time with the HT to visit the school, which is part of their Governor responsibilities. (ACTION)

11. Schools Bill

The Chair briefed the Governors on the Schools Bill, highlighting the Government's policy goal for all schools to belong to Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) by 2030.

A Governor pointed out the advantages of joining a MAT for a Single Academy Trust, but also that the actual process is difficult and the challenge is choosing the right MAT to join

The HT agreed, commenting that a single-form entry school presents many challenges for teachers.

The Chair asked for approval to explore the different options with regard to MATs and their suitability for Alma, and to convene a small group of Governors as necessary. (APPROVED & ACTION)

12. St Johns Hall Update

A Governor gave a brief update on the implementation of Alma’s legal agreement with the developers of St Johns Hall, next door to the school. It was noted that the first payment had been received, that the Security Governor and HT were assessing the necessary changes to the security arrangements of the school that flowed from the development of the site and that the outdoor classroom cabin should be built in the Summer.

13. Water Update

The HT gave a briefing to Governors on the fact that Alma has not been properly invoiced for water usage and while Governors expressed concern that there could be a significant bill due, the HT reassured Governors that it should not be more than £2000.

14. Risk Register

Due to insufficient time, the item on the Risk Register was carried over and the HT will circulate the latest version. (ACTION)

The Meeting closed at 21:30, Monday 13 June 2022

ACTIONS LIST

ITEM NO.	ACTION	ASSIGNED TO
4	<i>Carried over item:</i> Prepare a report for the Governor’s consideration on year-on-year data on application numbers and patterns to identify any discernible downward trends.	The Head & SLT
4	Governors to contribute towards costs of an end of term staff party as an additional demonstration of appreciation of staff efforts.	The Head & The Chair
4	HT/Chair to arrange a Start of Term (September 2022) event for Governors to mingle with both staff.	The Head & The Chair
4	<i>Carried over items:</i> Include the following items on the agenda for the July GB meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment at Alma • Review of Risk Register 	The Chair

5	Chair and HT to report back on state of GB OFSTED folder.	The Head & The Chair
5	Update equality policy to include LGBTQ+ this term and consider the school's approach to inclusive toilets and spaces.	The Head & SLT
5	The Learning and Children's Committee to look at lateness figures.	L&C
5	SBM to clarify the situation with Alma's energy costs, when the school fixed, what rate they were paying and when it expired & when the new rate expires.	SBM
7	Safeguarding Governor to circulate her written report after consultation with the school.	The Head & Safeguarding Governor
8	Approved policies to be added to the Alma Website, as appropriate.	The Head & SLT
8	Draft financial procedures policy to be produced for FOP to review.	The Head & SLT
9	Governors who were not part of the GiD day to make a time with the HT to visit the school.	DG, EL, JL
11	Explore options with regard to MATs and their suitability for Alma, and convene a small group of governors as necessary.	The Chair
14	HT to circulate the latest version of the Risk Register	The Head