

GOVERNING BODY OF ALMA PRIMARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON
WEDNESDAY 02 NOVEMBER 2022

Present:

Ilan Jacobs (Chair and chairing this meeting)
James Burns
Stuart Diamond
Jonathan Levy
Louise Lewis
Francesca Shaw
Adam Zellick

Katie Abrams
Yvonne Baron
Emma Davies
David Grunwald
Ed Lewin
Vicky Shafran
Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

Also in attendance:

John Twomey – Sessional Clerk

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all attendees, especially the new governor candidates, Yvonne Baron and Francesca Shaw, who were attending the meeting in anticipation of formal appointment.

2. ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

3. SIGNING NEW REGISTER OF GB INTERESTS & 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 practice at meetings is to declare changes only. No changes were declared by any Governor.

Governors were reminded to complete the annual Declaration of Interests and Declaration of Fit and Proper Person forms which had been sent with the meeting papers. Hard copies were made available so that all forms could be completed this evening.

4. MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2022

The minutes of the meeting were APPROVED.

5. GOVERNANCE APPOINTMENTS – RE- APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR, CONFIRMATION OF NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GOV RESIGNATION & APPOINTMENT OF NEW GOVS

The following appointments were made:

- Ilan Jacobs was re-elected as Chair.
- JB and VS were appointed as Co-Chairs of the Finance, Operations and People (FOP) committee. The Chair thanked the outgoing FOP Chairs, DG and EL, for their excellent service over many years.
- ED, KA and LL were appointed as Co-Chairs of the Learning & Children (L&C) committee.
- New governors: Francesca Shaw and Yvonne Baron were appointed as Co-opted Governors, to serve 4 year terms.
- Emma Davies was reappointed as a Co-opted Governor, to serve until the end of the calendar year.

Governors noted that David Farbey had resigned as a member-appointed Governor.

6. SUBJECTS DEEP DIVE – PE AND ENGLISH

Governors were given presentations from subject leaders, Yasmin Ahmed and Tal Gellman, on the teaching of PE and English respectively.

Presentation by Yasmin Ahmed, PE Subject Leader

- The school has a dynamic PE programme which aims to teach a range of physical skills, foster teamwork and encourage healthy competition.
- Each class has at least two PE lessons a week. In addition, the school runs many clubs and activities.
- Teaching is shared between an external partner, Elm Coaches, and school staff. As well as liaising regularly with Elm Coaches, Yasmin conducts lesson observations and team-teaches with other teachers.
- The PE programme includes swimming. The National Curriculum requires children to be able to swim 25 metres. Every child in Year 6 attained this standard last year.
- The school has had notable success in sports competitions e.g. Years 5 & 6 won a borough-wide football competition last year. Some children are designated as Sports Leaders. This is a role of responsibility which includes the care of equipment, engaging with younger children and, it is hoped, the leading of assemblies.
- Future plans for the PE programme include a pupil voice process, obtaining parental feedback, developing the roles of Sports Leaders and ongoing CPD for teachers.

A Governor questioned if there was a good uptake of elective sports activities. The Head

advised that they are well subscribed. Children can join clubs from Year 2 onwards.

Presentation by Tal Gellman, English Subject Leader

- The school's English curriculum seeks to nurture a love of reading, writing and spoken language. It aims to enable the children to be eloquent and articulate speakers and writers.
- All staff have been briefed on the key National Curriculum concepts and have been provided with appropriate supporting documentation. A guided reading structure is in place across the school.
- Key teaching priorities include:
 - Vocabulary
 - Handwriting
 - Core reading skills
 - Encouraging children to read at home
 - Spelling
 - Consistency in the teaching of writing
- Children have the opportunity of doing their own book reviews. Working walls are a feature in classrooms. Certificates are used to raise the profile of writing. Important days are recognised e.g. National Poetry Day and World Book Day.
- There are regular staff inset sessions. Staff undertake assessments and scheduled book looks and internal moderation exercises.
- Attainment and progress are regularly reviewed and internally moderated during the school year. The data shows clear progress in reading and writing as the children progress through the school. This is reflected in the latest SATs results.

Governors thanked Yasmin and Tal for their informative presentations and commended them on their valuable work.

A Governor suggested that it would be helpful if subject leaders could provide a summary of their input in advance of the meeting for Governors to read. This would create more time for discussion at the meeting.

ACTION: HT to advise future subject leaders to provide summaries in advance of presenting to GB and to prepare for the session to be more of a discussion than a presentation.

7. REPORTS – HEADS, CHAIRS, AND QUESTIONS

A comprehensive set of reports, amalgamated into a single document, which dealt with all leadership and management issues, had been sent to Governors with the meeting papers. It was not therefore necessary to revisit them item by item. However, the Head highlighted a number of points and responded to Governor questions, as follows:

- The school has had to set a deficit budget this year, but within its Reserves Policy. All schools are facing budgetary pressures.

- The school has 10 vacancies on its roll. As these remained unfilled on census day, £35k will be clawed back from the school's budget next year. Reception and Year 1 are fully subscribed.

A Governor challenged what steps the school had taken to understand the reasons for the departures and to market the places when the vacancies arose. The Head advised that the school had liaised with each family prior to their decision. Most of the vacancies arose at the end of the summer term so there were limited opportunities to market the spaces. Exit interviews are offered to parents but are not always taken up.

Governors felt it would be useful if they could be involved in that dialogue with parents. It was agreed as an action point that the process on exit interviews should be evaluated.

ACTION: Learning and Children's Committee to add to Exit Interviews for families to be added to their Committee Agenda.

A Governor questioned if there were waiting lists for Reception and Year 1? The Head advised that there were.

A Governor challenged on how the school encourages applications and does it do enough. The Head advised this was done in a number of ways, including, open sessions for parents, the website and the recently launched Instagram account.

- The nosings (edgings) on the stairs have been upgraded and are fully compliant with health and safety guidelines.
- The academic results for 21/22, including SATs, are set out on pages 28 and 29 of the Report.
- The school would welcome more input from Link Governors. The Chair has prepared a suggested scheme for Link Governor roles which he will send around.

ACTION: Chair to re-compile list of Link Governor roles and seek to fill them. YB volunteered to be the EYFS Governor.

- As well as the school's excellent Pikuach inspection result, the high quality of the school's Learning Days and Festival Celebrations were also to be commended.
- Safeguarding: this remains a high priority at the school. LL, as Safeguarding Governor, has been visiting the school regularly. Her visit reports were included in the meeting papers. She has been shown the CPOMS system. She has inspected the SCR (Single central record). It is a live document that needs regular updating as new staff arrive or existing staff need to have their credentials renewed.

- CPOMS: the CPOMS online reporting system is now in use at the school. This should make a positive difference in the management of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

A Governor challenged in regard to the reference to 56 referrals by staff. This seemed a large figure. Was it unusual? The Head responded that the figure refers to CPOMS entries and not separate safeguarding issues. CPOMS is expected to generate more entries than the previous system.

- Governors were reminded of the need to undertake safeguarding training. It is thought that all governor training is presently up to date. Governors were also reminded to read through Part 2 of the KCSIE guidance which has recently been updated.
- A Governor challenged in regard to the reference to increased criticism from parents in Part 1 of the report. The Head advised that in the post-Covid period, the school has noticed a certain tendency among parents to be more critical and to express themselves more stridently. Nonetheless there had only been two formal complaints.
- A Governor challenged on if there was any data on why there is parent criticism. The Head responded that there wasn't, it was just an observation. The parents' survey was carried out at the end of the summer term. The results are still being processed.
- A Governor observed that there appeared to be two separate issues – why there is more parent criticism and how it is being communicated by parents. When parents are unreasonable in the manner or tone of their criticism, this is unacceptable and should be addressed as it is unfair to staff.
- Academic results: The results for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 were included in the report. The school's first Key Stage 2 cohort was tested last year. The results contained many positives. In many categories, the school outperformed the local authority and national averages. The school feels that it can be proud of the results in the light of its wish to provide a broad-based curriculum and range of experiences. It has made a good start in completing its first full SATs cycle. Nonetheless there are lessons to learn and the results will enable it to improve its focus in the years ahead.

8. UPDATE ON PIKUACH, SATS & OFSTED PREP

The Chair offered congratulations to the Head and the school's staff on a very successful Pikuach inspection. It had been a very positive experience. He asked that the Head pass on the Governing Body's thanks to staff. The Chair also thanked the Governors who had represented the Governing Body during the inspection itself.

Ofsted preparation – **ACTION** The Chair is arranging an evening training session which YB has kindly agreed to lead. The Head reminded Governors that the Leadership Reports provided for Governing Body meetings give Governors a wealth of information relevant to Ofsted inspections.

[AZ joined the meeting at 20:49]

9. SAFEGUARDING – REMINDER OF KCSIE & TRAINING

See item 7 above.

10. COMMITTEE CHAIRS – FORWARD CALENDAR & TERMS OF REFERENCE APPROVAL

Governors approved the terms of reference for the Operations & People (FOP) and Learning and Children Committees.

Governors also noted the forward calendars for both Committees which had been sent with the meeting papers.

11. CALENDARS: PRESENT (A) ALMA PRIMARY COMPOSITE 2022-23 CALENDAR AND (B) ACCEPTANCE OF 2023-24 CALENDAR DATES

11A. Governors noted the composite 2022-23 Calendar which sets out all the key dates and events in the school year ahead. It's a valuable reference guide for Governors.

11B. Governors considered and APPROVED the 2023-2024 calendar dates. A detailed proposed calendar had been sent with the meeting papers. In line with previous years, there will be 187 teaching days and 6 INSET days.

[Chair's Note: Since the GB approved the draft 2023-24 Calendar at this meeting, the HT identified an improvement to the calendar that would result in 188 school days over the year. The Governing Body approved this revised calendar of 188 days over email, after they were informed on 17 November 2022]

12. SDP OVERVIEW PRESENTATION

Governors noted and approved the detailed school development plan (SDP) for the school year ahead which had been sent with the meeting papers. The Plan set out the actions the school will take to meet its objectives, who will carry them out, how progress will be monitored and how success will be measured.

A Governor challenged that the Plan might include the fundraising issues faced by the school. This will be considered by the SLT.

ACTION: HT to review options to include fundraising in the SDP and report back to GB.

13. REVIEW OF POLICY SCHEDULE & POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

The following policies were APPROVED by Governors:

- Financial practices
- Scheme of financial delegation
- Publications Scheme

Admissions Policy: this is still in the course of being finalised in order to incorporate some minor changes and a new statutory appeals procedure. Governors agreed that it could be ratified in due course by email.

Personal Electronic Devices Policy: Governors noted the policy which had been recently updated.

A Governor challenged that some of the policies were behind in their review dates and asked if steps needed to be taken to remedy this. Governors agreed that keeping the review cycle of the statutory policies up to date is a key priority. The Chair asked that Committee Chairs check the policy schedule for the policies within their terms of reference with a view to ensuring their timely review. The Head was asked to prepare a plan for the updating of the remaining policies.

A Governor suggested that where necessary, reviews could be ratified by email and Governors agreed.

ACTION: HT to revise the policy schedule and prepare a plan for the updating of policies, prioritizing the statutory ones.

ACTION: Committee Chairs to review the policy schedule and ensure timely review of those within their terms of reference.

14. REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 2022 ACCOUNTS

Governors noted the summary accounts for the period to Sept. 2022 which had been sent with the meeting papers. These set out the income and expenditure against the agreed budget and identified variances. Thus far this year, the school has received 100% of its expected income but expenditure has been running at less than 100%.

The Head reminded Governors that it had been necessary to set a deficit budget for this year. Reserves of £35k have had to be used. Moreover, this assumes that £55k will be fundraised.

Governors were satisfied with the accounts.

15. ST JOHN'S HALL UPDATE

Confidential item. See Part II Minutes.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Governor suggested that the governing body sponsor an event for staff for Chanukah.

The meeting ended at 9:55 pm.

ACTIONS LIST

ITEM NO.	ACTION	ASSIGNED TO
6	Subject leaders to provide summaries in advance of presenting to GB and to prepare for the session to be more of a discussion than a presentation.	HT
7	Review the process for Exit Interviews for families	L&C
7	Re-compile list of Link Governor roles and seek to fill them.	Chair
8	Arrange an evening training session on Ofsted interviews for Governors.	Chair
8	Pass on the Governing Body's thanks to staff in regard to the successful Pikuach inspection.	HT
12	Review options to include fundraising in the SDP and report back to GB.	HT
13	Check the policy list for the policies within their terms of reference with a view to ensuring their timely review.	Committee Chairs
13	Revise the policy schedule and prepare a plan for the updating of policies, prioritizing the statutory ones.	HT