

**THE GOVERNING BODY FOR ALMA PRIMARY**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON**  
**WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2015**

**In attendance:**

David Steadman (Joint Chair)  
Natalie Grazin (Joint Chair)  
Noa Bladon  
Martin Blain  
Emma Davies  
Adam Goldin  
Michelle Jacobs  
Laura Sherling  
Andrew Sutcliffe  
Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

**Apologies:**

Deborah Brooks  
Matt Plen  
Rebecca Doctors, School Business Manager

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Debbie Fine, Clerk

**PART I**

**16/1 WELCOME AND LEARNING**

David Steadman took the chair and welcomed everyone to the spring term meeting. Noa led the learning session focusing on the ethical lessons to be learnt from the numerical value of the "aleph bet" (Hebrew alphabet).

Chair introduced notion of putting in place schedule of future learning contributors for governors meetings until Summer 2016. All governors agreed with plan and proposed schedule setting out which governor would lead learning session subject to one set of governors switching dates.

**16/2 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Deborah Brooks. Matt Plen and Rebecca Doctors School Business Manager.

### **16/3 DECLARATION OF ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST**

After enquiry, the following people declared a direct or indirect personal interest (including but not limited to personal financial interest), in the undertakings of the meeting:

- a) Marc Shoffren and Rebecca Doctors: paid employees of the School.

### **16/4 PART 1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2014**

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2014 were **CONFIRMED**, initialled and signed by the chairs.

### **16/5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### **Discussion of completion of listed actions from meeting held on 11 December 2014**

- ✓ **P11D dispensation raised in draft accounts (15/1/a) – Governor sitting on finance committee confirmed that this has been ROLLED FORWARD to the next meeting.**
- ✓ **Response on behalf of Trustees to draft accounts (15/1/c)- Governor confirmed this has been COMPLETED**
- ✓ **Headteacher to circulate Reception curriculum (15/6/a) – Headteacher informed Governors that he is preparing a formal Curriculum Review document to share with the Learning Committee which will then come to full GB**
- ✓ **Overview of Risk Register (15/6/e) – Chairs confirmed this has been ROLLED FORWARD for next Chairs meeting**
- ✓ **Headteacher to prepare assessment of Year 1 Data (15/7/d) – Completed and shared with all Governors**
- ✓ **Headteacher to circulate a copy of the Barnet External Advisor’s Report to all governors (15/7/f) – Completed and included in the papers for this meeting**
- ✓ **Joint Chairs to discuss succession planning with each governor separately (15/8/i) Joint Chairs explained that this will be ROLLED FORWARD to a future informal governors meeting**
- ✓ **Headteacher to add clustering update to agenda for Spring 2015 GM (15/8/i)- COMPLETED- Headteacher confirmed this is on agenda for tonight’s meeting**
- ✓ **Governors Training Report (15/8/v) – Debbie Fine (Clerk) confirmed that training report was COMPLETED and submitted**
- ✓ **Schedule for Governors to visit School (15/8/vi) – Governor confirmed this has been COMPLETED**

- ✓ **Headteacher to circulate Performance Related Pay policy (15/9/c) – Headteacher confirmed this has been COMPLETED Ratification of School Development Plan (15/9/d) – Headteacher confirmed this has been COMPLETED**
- ✓ **Living Wage on agenda for staffing meeting (15/10/b) – Governor confirmed this has been ROLLED FORWARD until next staffing meeting**
- ✓ **Risk Register circulated (15/11) – Headteacher confirmed this has been COMPLETED.**

## **16/6 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

The Headteacher's report, copies of which had been previously circulated, were noted.

Arising from the report:

### **a) 2015 Recruitment**

Discussion of application numbers- Headteacher explained very encouraging levels of applications and governors agreed. A Governor asked for an amendment to be made to headteachers draft report which stated 8 families attended the prospective families sessions. Actual figure was 80.

The Headteacher took the governors through numbers of proximity applications and faith applications and explained that there were 14 sibling places already allocated. The Headteacher confirmed that there were a higher number of proximity only applications than in 2014, indicating a higher number of families applying who are not Jewish. This news was warmly welcomed by the GB and it suggests that the work done to encourage non-Jewish families to apply was successful.

### **b) Extended School Activities**

Discussion of upkeep of breakfast club and after school care as numbers on certain days very low. Headteacher explained that maintaining both is an ongoing commitment but the cost is high and so uptake must be monitored to determine long term viability.

A Governor said that although the programmes are highly subsidised, they are also highly valued by parents and potentially parents would rather pay more rather than lose the schemes altogether. It was agreed to keep the issue under review

### **c) Attendance**

The Headteacher discussed the figures provided in the headteacher's report with the governors. He reiterated that the overall figures for attendance are high and

that there is not a great deal of difference between 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 so far.

The Headteacher told the governors that he has been receiving an increase in requests for term time holidays of longer periods. He repeated that the school's policy is that such requests cannot be accepted, although he explained that he does consider on a case by case basis where necessary.

A governor asserted that the school should stick to a blanket no term time absences rule. Another governor disagreed and there was a discussion as to whether the rules should be applied more pragmatically, on a case by case basis.

The Headteacher explained that this has been discussed in the Children's Committee. The decision taken was that the school should not take too hardline an approach since the parents tend to be honest and up front about the reason for term time absences. The governors agreed to continue to play by ear. It was agreed not to change the policy at the moment but to keep the position closely under review and prioritise communication with parents about why absences harm children's learning.

#### **d) Reception attainment**

The Headteacher took the governors through the figures and confirmed that the figures for Alma pupils in reception are above Barnet and national average for all areas- communication, literacy, maths. The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions. They did not.

#### **e) Year 1 attainment**

The Headteacher took the governors through the figures. He discussed the 2 areas of development – progress of pupils since the start of the school year and the level that they had attained.

In relation to the Progress data, there was a discussion amongst the governors of the learning analogy of slow/jog/run. The Headteacher reported that all pupils had made expected levels of progress in writing and reading from September to date. In maths, a few pupils were not attaining expected levels of progress. Staff were aware of this and were making steps to improve these pupils' progress levels.

A Governor asked what the time frame would be before it could be ascertained that these pupils had caught up with their respective expected levels of development. The The Headteacher explained that it was not good to over assess the pupils but monitoring was taking place. The Governor asked when the monitoring had begin and the Headteacher explained it had begun at the end of the Autumn term. The Headteacher went on to set out that the school expects to see 6 rungs of progress across the school year. These pupils were making progress- it was just taking longer to consolidate. A Governor asked if the school expected the pupils to catch up before the end of the year. The Headteacher

explained that as long as the pupils made individual and reasonable levels of progress, there is no need for excessive concern; not all of the pupils should be expected to make the same progress at the same time.

The Headteacher discussed the Year 1 attainment figures. He explained that these figures set out where the school would expect pupils to be by this stage in the school year. The levels are emerging, expecting, and exceeding. The Headteacher said that the figures for the girls are disproportionately high for writing (most were at expected level or above). For Maths, the girls and the boys were spread equally across the 3 levels.

The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions. They did not. One governor asked the Headteacher to change the terminology from "slow" to "walk".

#### **f) Curriculum**

The Headteacher expressed the school's desire for the pupils to have greater exposure to the arts, as set out in the report.

***ACTION: Headteacher to report to the Learning Committee on this point.***

#### **g) Assessment without levels**

The Headteacher told the governors that the work to develop the new assessment framework continues to develop on an ongoing basis. The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions. They did not.

#### **h) Staffing**

The Headteacher briefly took the Governors through CPD courses that staff had attended. Congratulations were issued to Rebecca Doctors for receiving Outstanding on recent exam results.

The Headteacher discussed open staffing positions with the governors. There are currently 2 vacancies- 1 x Year 1 teacher and 1 Key Stage 1 teacher. The Headteacher explained that there is an open and fair application process and all applications are being considered.

#### **i) Pikuach Inspection**

The Headteacher told the governors there had been very positive feedback following the Pikuach inspection, although the formal result and report was not yet available. The Governors asked about the plan to act on any areas where Pikuach suggest that improvements could be made. The HT said that he was already working on an action plan along with the Joint Chairs of Governors and with particular input from the Chair of the Learning Committee.

#### **j) School Development Plan**

The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions based on the Headteacher's report. They did not.

#### **j) Performance Management**

The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions based on the Headteacher's report. They did not.

#### **k) Network and clusters**

The Headteacher told the Governors that as discussed in the previous meeting there had been a push for neighbouring schools to support each other. He told the governors there are 2 fronts opening up. Firstly, Barnet had set up clusters that included free schools within the Borough. Alma has been matched with St Mary's, St Johns. Sacred Heart, and St Andrews. The Headteacher met with all of the heads and the potential scope for collaborative projects will be explored in the summer term.

Secondly, Alma is already part of another group of free schools alongside Etz Chaim, Rimon, St Lukes and Abacus. The Headteacher explained that the schools have agreed to do a moderation between the 3 other Jewish schools in this cluster using an agreed sample of work.

The Headteacher told the governors he has also been looking into developing a relationship with a local Muslim school. Both schools are very keen to work together. An arrangement has been made for a Muslim teacher to visit Alma in the Summer term. There is a discussion taking place for Year 2s to do a joint project together and learn about each others' folk stories and literature.

The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions based on the Headteacher's report. They did not.

#### **l) Stakeholder Engagement**

The Headteacher took the governors through the results of the parents' questionnaire. The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions based on the Headteacher's report. They did not.

### **16/7 FINANCE REPORT (R DOCTORS)**

The Finance Report was outlined. There was a general agreement that the overall position is very good and a Governor praised the finance team for the clear format and presentation of figures. Another governor asked if the fact that the school had underspent its allocation meant that there was a risk that there would be a reduced allocation of funds for the following year. The Headteacher confirmed that there was no such risk.

The Headteacher asked that if any of the governors read the report and had any further questions, please submit to him or to Rebecca Doctors.

### **16/8 REPORT OF JOINT CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS INCLUDING REPORTS FROM MONITORING VISITS**

The Chair took the Governors through the report and each area was discussed.

#### **a) Governing Body membership and development**

The Chair asked the governors if there were any questions around the postponement of recruitment to the Board until Autumn term. There were no questions. He explained that although there would be no governor recruitment, the committees could continue to recruit members.

He explained the expansion of terms of reference for the Staff Committee to become a People Committee, to cover volunteering in the school. He took the governors through the different genres of school volunteering and explained the application process.

The Chair explained that the Fundraising committee would also have its terms of reference expanded.

A Governor suggested that the school should use the website to recruit volunteers onto the various committees. The Governors agreed.

### **16/9 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

#### **a) K'safim - Finance Committee:**

The Committee Chairs' termly report on the meeting held on 2 February 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, was received and noted.

**b) Yeladim - Children's Committee:** The Committee Chair's termly report on the meetings held on 21 January 2015 and 18 March 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, were received and noted.

A Governor sitting on the Committee explained that the SEN Policy had been updated to reflect the change in the Code of Practice around child protection and safeguarding. The Committee agreed a safeguarding assessment procedure which is now available on the school's website.

The Headteacher handed out copies of the new policies to those governors who requested them. The Headteacher explained the steps that the school had taken to comply with the legal requirements around safeguarding.

The amended policies were approved by the Governors.

**c) Limmudim - Learning Committee:** The Committee Chair's termly report on the meeting held on 14 January 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, was received and noted. A Governor sitting on the committee explained that the assessment strategy had been examined very closely at the Committee Meeting, with committee members asking the Headteacher a lot of questions about the strategy.

**d) Tafkidim - Staffing Committee:** The Committee Chair's termly report on the meetings held on 11 February 2015 and 11 March 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, were received and noted. A Governor sitting on the Committee reported to the governors that the results were outstanding from the Staff well being survey.

***ACTION APPLICABLE TO ALL COMMITTEES - All Committee chairs to liaise with Joint Chairs and Deborah Brooks about recruitment support***

#### **16/10 REVIEW OF GB RISK REGISTER**

The Chair took the Governors through the risk register and asked if there were any areas that the Governors believed risks needed to be added in or removed. The Chair took the Governors through the list and asked for comments.

- **Jewish involvement-**

A Governor asked what the school does to make sure that there is an inclusive position in relation to all parts of the Jewish Community. The Headteacher responded that this is very difficult to monitor as the school does not want to ask excessive questions about families' involvement in the Jewish community. He explained by comparison to other schools asking for proof of synagogue membership. A Governor explained that the school could ask more questions but currently only asks families to tell the school if they are members of Jewish organisations.

***ACTION- the Chair suggested this is looked at in the next Children's' committee meeting.***

**16/11 DATE OF FUTURE GB MEETING: SUMMER TERM MEETING  
WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2014 AT 730PM**



**16/12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

The date and time for the formal autumn term Governing Body meeting was **CONFIRMED** as Wednesday 24 June 2015 at 7.30 pm (clerked).