

THE GOVERNING BODY FOR ALMA PRIMARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON
WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2015

Present:

David Steadman (Joint Chair)
Natalie Grazin (Joint Chair, chairing this evening)
Noa Bladon
Martin Blain
Emma Davies
Michelle Jacobs
Laura Sherling
Deborah Brooks
Matt Plen

Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

In attendance:

Debbie Fine, Clerk
Rebecca Doctors, School Business Manager

Apologies:

Adam Goldin
Andrew Sutcliffe

PART I

17/1 WELCOME AND LEARNING

Natalie Grazin took the chair and welcomed everyone to the spring term meeting. Deborah Brooks led the learning session focusing on the school's commitment to the wellbeing of pupils during their time at the school.

17/2 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Adam Goldin and Andrew Sutcliffe.

17/3 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.

17/4 PART 1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2015

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2015 were **CONFIRMED**, initialled and signed by the chairs.

17/5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Discussion of completion of listed actions from meeting held on 24 March 2015, some of which had been rolled forward from December 2014 meeting.

- ✓ P11D dispensation raised in draft accounts (15/1/a) – Noa Bladon confirmed that this has been ROLLED FORWARD to the next finance committee meeting.
- ✓ Headteacher to circulate reception curriculum (15/6/a) – it was confirmed that this was circulated at learning committee COMPLETED
- ✓ Overview of Risk Register (15/6/e) – chairs confirmed this will be discussed in tonight's meeting
- ✓ Joint Chairs to discuss succession planning with each governor separately (15/8/i) Joint Chairs explained that this has been COMPLETED
- ✓ Living Wage on agenda for staffing meeting (15/10/b) – Governor confirmed this will be ROLLED FORWARD on the agenda for an upcoming meeting
- ✓ All committee chairs to provide a report on recruitment- the committee chairs confirmed this has been COMPLETED

The Headteacher requested that the Clerk compiles a list of actions following each meeting and circulate to governor's as soon as possible post meeting.

17/6 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

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

Arising from the report:

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2015 Recruitment

Discussion of allocation of places: the Headteacher confirmed that, as things stood there will be a reception class of 31 in 2015/2016, including 3 sets of twins.

Pupil Premium

The Headteacher confirmed the school's ongoing commitment to deal with any such requests.

Extended School Activities

Discussion of upkeep of breakfast club and after school care as numbers have continued to fall. 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.

Attendance and Lateness

The Headteacher told the governors that Ofsted were happy with the attendance figures. He explained to the governors that for the first time the school may have to impose a fixed penalty to a family for taking a child out of the school during term time.

The governors discussed the figures for punctuality. One governor pointed out that there is a high figure for lateness. The Headteacher confirmed that this has been identified and raised with the families in question.

LEARNING

Reception attainment

The Headteacher took the governors through the figures for the reception class. He confirmed that in general there are a higher number of Alma pupils exceeding the national average for all areas - communication, literacy, and maths.

A Governor asked what the difference was in practical terms between a child that was 'emerging' versus a child that was 'exceeding'. The Headteacher used an example: a pupil that was emerging would be able to form letters and words, whereas a pupil that was exceeding would be able to compose a narrative out of words.

The Headteacher told the governors that the level of writing has improved year on year, but that there are fewer pupils exceeding compared to last year. However he expressed caution about placing too much emphasis on a survey of only 30 pupils. He told the Governors that the school has flagged the issue of raising levels of writing – there will be an inset day for all staff in September 2015. There will be a focus on children's posture and fine motor skills and these may assist with improving writing skills.

To summarise, the Headteacher said that the school expects this reception cohort to be significantly above the national average.

ACTION: *Headteacher to report on writing skills at the next Governor's meeting.*

The chair asked if any of the governors had any further questions. They did not.

National Test Papers- Phonics Check

The Headteacher explained to the governors that Year 1 children had taken part in a national phonics check to assess their progression in phonics. The Headteacher told the governors that 90% of the class had met the expected level of development, above the school's own target set at the start of the year.

Curriculum

The Headteacher updated the governors on the ways in which the school is developing the curriculum.

Data Sharing

The Headteacher took the governors through the tables set out in the Headteacher's Report, explaining which of the data he proposed to share in more detail with the respective committees, and what such data will reveal. There followed a discussion into the use of data by committees.

ACTION: *Children's committee to look into accumulating data focusing on well-being of the students. Discuss what data would need to be seen to assess the students' wellbeing.*

ACTION: *Children's committee to look into what data could be analysed to provide a report on applications to the school e.g. post codes of applicant families.*

He asked the governors if they had any further questions. They did not.

STAFFING

CPD Courses

The Headteacher briefly took the Governors through CPD courses that staff had attended and planned for the future. He also updated the Governors on conferences he has spoken at.

Recruitment

The Headteacher explained to the governors that it has been a very busy few months from a recruitment perspective and a number of appointments have been made:

- Carly Fine has been appointed as Year 1 teacher.
- Claire Green has been appointed as the art specialist and cover teacher
- Raya Ben David has been appointed as Head of Jewish Studies and SMSC

The Headteacher said that there are still open positions for a Hebrew teacher and an LSA for Year 2. There have been a number of applications but none have led to successful appointments. The recruitment process continues.

A Governor asked if the appointment of Claire Green as cover teacher will give the existing Year 1 teacher some time to train the incumbent teacher. The Headteacher confirmed it would.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

OFSTED Inspection

The Headteacher provided a recap that the School had received its first OFSTED inspection immediately after spring half term. He told the governors that the school had received a very positive report, and that the actual results are imminent. The governors and the Headteacher discussed the near-impossibility of receiving an outstanding ranking when the school is not full. There was a full discussion on how to communicate the report and results to parents.

Networking and Clustering

The Headteacher updated the governors that he had recently attended a moderating session with the cluster consisting of Alma, Etz Chaim, Rimon and Eden. The Headteacher stressed that it was just a coincidence that the partner schools were also Jewish schools and that other faith schools had been invited to participate too.

The chair asked if any of the governors had any questions based on the Headteacher's report. They did not. The Chair expressed thanks to the Headteacher on behalf of all governors for his extreme hard work and noted that the staff wished to express their gratitude too. She concluded by sharing the observation of the Ofsted inspector that the Headteacher's approach was inspiring.

17/7 REPORT OF JOINT CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS INCLUDING REPORTS FROM MONITORING VISITS AND CONFIRMATION OF GB APPOINTMENTS

GOVERNING BODY AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Chair confirmed that Matt Plen was standing down as a governor, and recorded the thanks of the governing body for all his work since the earliest days of the school's creation.

The Chair explained that there had been several meetings of a Succession Group to focus on the maintenance/development of the governing body and the finessing of the sub-committees. She explained that the Succession Group had begun work with each sub-committee chair to examine gaps in the committees.

The Chair explained that the first gap that had been identified by the SGP was the vacancy for chair of the People Committee. The Chair brought a motion to appoint Hiten Jethwa to the Governing Body. She told the Governors that Hiten was an active member of the people committee and directed the governors to his brief professional biography in the circulated documents.

The Chair asked for a vote to be held to approve Hiten's appointment. The Governors APPROVED THE APPOINTMENT OF HITEN JETHWA TO THE GOVERNING BODY and Chair of the People Committee.

The Chair explained that the second gap identified by the SGP was on the Learning committee as a result of Matt Plen's resignation. The Chair told the governors that a prospective replacement was Maureen Kendler. She directed the governors to Maureen's biography in the circulated papers. She asked for a vote to be held to approve Maureen's appointment on the Learning Committee. The Governors APPROVED THE APPOINTMENT OF MAUREEN KENDLER to the Learning Committee.

The Chair and Governors discussed the general expansion of the Governing Body to include 1 x staff member and 1 (minimum) x parent governor. The Governors discussed how many parent governor positions ought to be made. The Headteacher explained that diversity of the board was needed but care had to be taken to make sure the board does not contain disproportionate numbers of parent governors.

STRENGTHENING THE MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Chair took the Governors through each sub-committee's identified gaps. The Chair asked the sub-committee chairs if the summary was accurate. They each confirmed that the summary was accurate.

GOVERNING BODY DEVELOPMENT

The Chair took the Governors through the table set out in the report.

The Chair informed the Governors that 2 amongst them had completed training since the last meeting. Matt Plen had attended a UJIA session on research in Jewish education. Emma Davies had attended a training session on safety.

A Governor asked if it was possible for Barnet Council to come to the school to provide training sessions. The Head asked if governors hadn't attended training because the sessions weren't at convenient times or because the training sessions were not relevant. One governor explained that the training he had attended had not been of particularly good quality; another governor said that there had been no relevant training sessions offered; a further governor wondered if a broader view should be taken of what constituted training.

ACTION: *Staffing Committee to examine definition of training; could governor's cascade learning from sessions they had attended to fellow governors; carry out survey of governors into what sort of training they find useful/not useful; look into what other schools/governing bodies consider to constitute training.*

GOVERNANCE AND HOLDING THE HEADTEACHER TO ACCOUNT

The Chair explained the process of the Headteacher's performance review. She explained the Headteacher's three high level objectives. She asked if the governors had any questions regarding their role of holding the Headteacher to account. They did not.

A Governor asked the Chair who was responsible for the monitoring visits of governors. It was agreed by the Chair that there was no clear process for organising monitoring visits.

ACTION: At next committee chairs meeting, there shall be a discussion around formalising monitoring visits- what visits will be needed for 2015/2016.

17/8 FINANCE REPORT (R DOCTORS)

Rebecca Doctors took the governors through the Finance Report and explained the table set out therein. She explained the differences between budget and actual expenditure. The Headteacher told the governors that OFSTED had given positive feedback on the safeguarding processes and the single central register.

Rebecca Doctors explained that the budget had been re-forecast for the final part of the school year, but that the budget was not ready to submit for approval at this meeting.

The Chair asked if the governors were happy to delegate the decision on approval of the 2015-16 budget to Noa Bladon and David Steadman on their behalf, and noted that the budget would return to a future GB meeting for information. She asked if any additional governors wished to attend the budget setting meeting. No governors expressed a wish to attend.

ACTION: Finance Committee to discuss budgetary plans for 2015/2016 at next meeting and sign off the budget on behalf of GB

The Headteacher updated the governors that following discussions in previous governors meetings, the school had assessed whether the employed staff were paid at the London Living Wage standard. He confirmed that all employed staff were but that contracted staff (namely the school cleaner, security guard, sports teacher and lunch club assistants) were not. However, it would be difficult to renegotiate their respective contracts at this stage. He assured the Governors that there will be a re-tender process in 2016 for contractors and the living wage question will be raised then. A governor asked the Headteacher if the school could try to re-negotiate the contracts sooner. The Headteacher suggested that this be discussed in the next staffing committee meeting.

ACTION: Staffing Committee to discuss re-negotiating contracted workers' contracts to raise pay to London Living Wage.

The Headteacher told the governors that some of the school's reserves would have to be used in 2015/2016 because it was financially very tight year staffing wise. A Governor asked why there could be an issue carrying forward funds and having reserves. The Headteacher told the governors that the school needs to be very prudent to maintain healthy reserves to protect itself in case of disaster e.g. roof falling off.

17/9 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

a) Yeladim - Children's Committee: The Committee Chair's termly report on the meetings held on 13 May 2015 and 3 June 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, were received and noted.

A Governor sitting on the Committee explained that the safe-guarding policy had been updated to include items about FGM and other safe-guarding matters, and had been circulated to governors to approve. The Chair asked the governors if they approved the updated policy. The Governors confirmed they did. The Chair asked if anyone had any questions - a governor asked that at the next meeting, the Children's Committee discuss the new power in the admissions code to offer admissions priority to a certain number of Pupils who qualify for premium, and whether we should take up this power from 2017.

ACTION: Headteacher to update the safe-guarding policy on the school website

ACTION: Children's committee to discuss giving priority to pupils with a Pupil Premium

b) K'safim - Finance Committee:

The Committee Chairs' termly report on the meeting held on 5 May 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, was received and noted.

A governor sitting on the Committee explained that the committee had discussed the possibility that HMRC would allow people to claim gift aid on voluntary contributions. The position is unclear and HMRC are in dispute with some Jewish schools. The Chair asked the finance governor what the financial impact on the school would be. The governor explained that this had not been budgeted for but if we were able to claim gift aid, then there would be a benefit of around £25k.

c) Limmudim - Learning Committee: The Committee has not met this term- no report to discuss.

d) Tafkidim - Staffing Committee: The Committee has not met this term - no report to discuss.

ACTION APPLICABLE TO ALL COMMITTEES: All Committee chairs to speak to Governors about increasing membership of Committees and to liaise with Joint Chairs about recruitment support

ACTION: Agenda to be revised for next Governors meeting so that committee reports are discussed straight after head/chairs reports. Committee reports to be given more time in agenda.

17/10 REVIEW OF GB RISK REGISTER

Noa Bladon explained that she had consolidated the risk register so that it is more streamlined. The Risk Register had been circulated prior to the meeting. Noa explained she is waiting for feedback and responses on certain areas and then will update the register further.

ACTION: All governors to send comments on the revised Risk Register to Noa Bladon.

17/11 DATES FOR 2015/2016

The Headteacher circulated the meeting dates for 2015/2016 which are subject to governor approval. A Governor suggested that committee meetings could take place at people's homes rather than the new school site due to logistical problems of getting to the site by 7:30pm. Another governor suggested moving meeting times from 7:30pm to 8pm. The Headteacher confirmed it would be best to hold the meetings in the Archer site because of the availability of printers etc, but the time could be considered.

ACTION: Timing of meetings to be raised in Governor self-evaluation.

17/12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

The date and time for the formal autumn term Governing Body meeting was **CONFIRMED** as Wednesday 14 December 2015 at 7.30 pm (clerked).

17/13 MOTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
GOVERNING BODY FOR ALMA PRIMARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL
ON WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2015
Part II

17/14 PART II MINUTES

The Part II minutes of the Governing Body meeting on 25 March 2015 were **CONFIRMED**, initialled and signed by the Chair subject to minor amendment below.

17/15 SITE LOGISTICS UPDATE

The Chair updated the Governors about the plans for the mini bus. The cost of operating the mini bus is approximately twice the original budget: the actual cost will be around £90k. The Headteacher told the governors that the EFA will be subsidising the cost to a certain level, with the school subsidising it further; the actual cost to parents is hoped to be small. A Governor asked how much the cost will be per journey. The Head suggested that it will be £3 per journey. This led to a discussion between the governors as to whether this was a palatable amount. Some governors felt it was acceptable, others did not. The headteacher confirmed that no decisions could be taken tonight and he would make the decision based on budget availability and operational feasibility.

There being no further business, the meeting closed.