

THE GOVERNING BODY FOR ALMA PRIMARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON
MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2015

In attendance:

David Steadman (Joint Chair – chairing this meeting)

Natalie Grazin (Joint Chair)

David Grunwald

Andrew Sutcliffe

Laura Sherling

Edward Lewin

Ilan Jacobs

Tabitha Sumberg

Deborah Brooks

Martin Blain

Adam Goldin

Michelle Jacobs

Hiten Jethwa

Noa Bladon

Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

Rebecca Doctors (School Business Manager)

Apologies: Emma Davies (arrived at 20:13), Richard Cornelius, Niki Jackson

IN ATTENDANCE

Debbie Fine, Clerk

PART I

18/1 QUESTIONS TO OUR AUDITOR ON OUR ACCOUNTS (BRENDAN SHARKEY MHA)

Brendan Sharkey (“BS”) of MHA Macintyre Hudson was introduced and took governors through Alma Primary’s draft accounts and management letter for 2015. He confirmed that the school had been given a clean bill of health from a financial and regulatory perspective.

The Chair apologised to the governors for not circulating the accounts out prior to the meeting. He proposed that he would circulate the minutes in hard and soft copy

following the meeting, and that any comments should be submitted by midday on Wednesday 16 December.

ACTION: Chair to circulate draft accounts and management letter for 2015 to all governors following meeting. Any comments to be submitted by Wednesday 16 December.

18/2 WELCOME AND LEARNING

David Steadman took the chair and welcomed everyone to the spring term meeting. Natalie Grazin led the learning session focusing on the parasha for the week- the story of Joseph and the idea of compassion.

18/3 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Emma Davies, Richard Cornelius and Niki Jackson.

18/4 DECLARATION OF ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST (INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY PERSONAL FINANCIAL 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) Paid employees of the School: Marc Shoffren and Rebecca Doctors;
- b) Governors with children attending the school: Michelle Jacobs, Martin Blain, Deborah Brooks, Tabitha Sumberg, Natalie Grazin, Ed Lewin, Laura Sherling, David Grunwald, Andrew Sutcliffe, David Steadman, Emma Davies
- c) Governor whose wife volunteers for the school: David Grunwald

18/5 ELECTION OF JOINT CHAIRS/CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR DECEMBER 2015- DECEMBER 2016

The Chair passed the chairmanship of the meeting to the Headteacher for this part of the meeting. The two chairs stepped down and the Headteacher asked if anyone else would like to stand for chairman or nominate anyone to stand. One Governor nominated David Steadman and Natalie Grazin again. Another Governor seconded these nominations. The Head asked if all Governors present accepted the

nomination. The Governors voted unanimously in favour of re-electing David Steadman and Natalie Grazin as Governors.

The Head handed back the Chair to David Steadman.

18/6 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR DECEMBER 2015-DECEMBER 2016

The Chair explained to the Governors that the next stage of the meeting was to elect/re-elect Committee Chairs for 2016. He took the governors through the existing positions in turn and asked for each committee if the Governors wanted to re-elect the existing Chair or nominate a new one:

Learning Committee- Debra Brooks and Laura Sherling
Finance Committee- Noa Bladon and Tabitha Sumberg
People Committee- Hiten Jethwa
Children Committee- Michelle Jacobs

The Governors voted unanimously for each committee to re-elect the existing chair/s. All of the Committee Chairs were duly re-appointed.

18/7 CO-OPTION OF NOMINATED NEW GOVERNORS

The Chair introduced the new governors to the Board and reminded the Board that there were profiles of each Governor in the back of the meeting pack. He asked the Governors if they agreed to co-opt the new governors who are:

Ilan Jacobs
David Grunwald
Richard Cornelius
Tabitha Sumberg
Nicki Jackson
Edward Lewin

It was resolved that the above were co-opted as governors from this date.

ACTION – MARC SHOFFREN TO MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS AT COMPANIES HOUSE AND UPDATE THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

18/8 PART 1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2015

The Chair proposed deferring the review of the Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015 until the end of the meeting. They are at 18/17 below.

18/9 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Writing Skills: Marc confirmed that he had reported on writing skills to the learning committee.

All other actions were noted as completed or in train via subcommittee agendas.

18/10 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON LIMMUDIM/LEARNING

Report from Headteacher

The Head took the Governors through his report on Limmudim/Learning that had been circulated to all of the Governors prior to the meeting.

a) Attainment and Progress

He explained that the Learning committee had been shown detailed data and that the data in the report was headline data. He said that the general summary is that the children are making good or better progress across the board. Almost of the pupils are in jogging/running levels. The pupils at Alma are performing substantially better than the national average AND the Barnet average.

b) GLD and Phonics

The Year 1 pupils took a Phonics check and 90% were deemed to be at the expected level for reading- this is better than the Barnet and National averages.

A Governor asked if the Board would be able to see the detailed breakdown of data that the Limmudim committee had been shown. The Head confirmed that this would be possible.

c) Reception Baseline 2015

The Head explained that there are no pupils at an emerging level. For Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development all of the reception children are at expected/exceeding levels. In English and Maths all of the pupils are at expected levels.

d) End of KS1 Assessments (SATs)

The Head told the Governors that the school is preparing for the new Key Stage Assessments.

e) Curriculum

The Head said that the Curriculum is being developed as explained in the report.

f) Update on Incident and Exclusions

The Head confirmed that there had been no incidents to report.

Report from Committee

Debra Brooks, the Chair for the Limmudim Committee took the Governors through the Committee work. She expressed thanks to the Head for providing the Committee with more data and said it had been a very useful resource. She suggested that as the school grows, and more data becomes available for governors to see, it would be useful for the Board to undertake some Data Training to understand how to process data. The Governors agreed this would be useful.

ACTION- HEAD TO LOOK INTO DATA TRAINING FOR THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND CIRCULATE POTENTIAL DATES

Debra informed the Governors that the Limmudim Committee was hoping for a new member of the school staff to join the Committee.

She explained that she had visited a maths class and was going to write up her findings.

Debra asked if there were any questions. A Governor asked about progress of the pupils. She wondered if the pupils that were already exceeding expectations were being stretched enough- such pupils may have started from a high level and now be cruising. Are children that need to be challenged being challenged enough? The Head suggested that this should be discussed in more detail at the next Children's Committee meeting- a similar point had been raised during the Ofsted inspection.

ACTION- CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS ATTAINMENT LEVELS AND THE "STRETCHING" OF HIGH ACHIEVING PUPILS

18/11 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON YELADIM-CHILDREN

Report from Headteacher

The Head took the Governors through his report on Yeladim/Children that had been circulated to all of the Governors prior to the meeting.

a) 2015 recruitment

The Head updated the Board on the slight movements in class size.

b) Pupil Premium

The Head took the Governors through the Pupil Premium figures which showed low numbers of children on pupil premium. A governor asked whether we look at spend in this area. It was confirmed that Andrew Sutcliffe looks at this as part of his work on the Children's Committee.

c) Special Educational Needs

The Head told the Governors some more information about a new recruit to the school Jackie Engelberg, the SEN Lead. He explained that she has made a positive impact on the School already and that her hours were being increased.

d) Safeguarding and Security

The Head reported on the minor security concerns that had arisen as a result of the move to temporary site. He filled the Governors in on the steps that had been taken when a concern arose.

e) Extended School Activities

The Head told the Governors that the School has significantly expanded the activities on offer and these had generally been very well received by the parents.

The Head reported that the Breakfast Club figures continue to be very low, and the school is likely to make a loss of approximately £2,000 for the year. The After School provision is not suffering from the same issues.

f) Attendance

The Head reported that attendance levels are very high.

Report from Committee

Michelle Jacobs, the Chair for the Yeladim Committee took the Governors through the Committee's work. She explained that working on the School's Admissions Policy is the main focus of the committee this term. She said there has been a discussion around whether to give priority to a pupil premium place and that there needs to be a fuller discussion on the matter involving all of the Board.

ACTION- SET A DATE FOR A DISCUSSION ON PUPIL PREMIUM PLACE – PROPOSED DATE IS INFORMAL MEETING BEFORE THE END OF THE SUMMER TERM.

Michelle told the Governors that there had been a safeguarding exercise of the new school site- the health and safety team had carried out an audit and some improvements had been made. There has been more use of the site from external parties than had been anticipated- including usage by Archer pupils. The Head had dealt with this via communication with the Archer headteacher.

Michelle updated the Governors about the issues that arose with the Staggered Entry process. She explained that the process had caused some parents some distress because of the Jewish holidays falling around the same time as the school commencement date. The process went on for a long time, and communication could have been better. She explained however that despite agreeing that communication could have been better, the committee are fully supportive of the Staggered Entry process.

The Chair asked if the Board had any questions. One Governor asked if the new Governors need to carry out DBS checks and Safeguarding training. The Chair confirmed that they do need to.

ACTION- CHAIRS OF ALL COMMITTEES TO SECURE DATES IN THE SPRING TERM FOR SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR NEW GOVERNORS

Another Governor commended the head on the excellent attendance figures.

A further Governor asked the Head to give further information about the impact of the SEN recruit, Jackie Engelberg. The Head explained that prior to Jackie joining the school, it was difficult to find an SEN focus. Jackie has an excellent contacts in the SEN field and extensive experience. Where pupils have required referrals, she has managed to move the process on quickly and already seen successes. She has carried out observations and already put in new processes including a "cause for

concern" system shared by the teaching staff. She has set SMART targets and is using them effectively.

18/12 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON ANASHIM-PEOPLE

Report from Headteacher

The Head took the Governors through his report on Anashim/People that had been circulated to all of the Governors prior to the meeting.

a) Staffing and Volunteer update

The Head took the Governors through the staff movements set out in his report.

b) Appraisal and Capability

The Head explained that there needs to be a more robust timetable in place for 2016-2017. The appraisals had been running late due to the site move and Jewish festivals.

c) Continuing Professional Development

The Head told the Governors that although CPD courses continue to be provided to staff, there has been less participation than previously. He explained that this was because of the Jewish festivals, the move, and also because of the school no longer being brand new.

Report from Committee

Hiten Jethwa, the Chair for the Anashim Committee took the Governors through the Committee's work. As a new governor in this position, he took time to introduce himself and explain his findings to date. He told the governors that from his experience in the complex landscape of staffing, the risk is that people get lost. However he said that from his early findings this is not the case at Alma and this is testament to the Head.

He told the governors he has had 2 meetings so far this term- one formal and one informal and then took the Board through the findings.

Hiten explained that the committee had been looking into volunteering opportunities at the school, and participation of parents. He said that it hadn't been determined which committee should co-ordinate this, or whether volunteering and parental engagement fall into different committee's remits. The question will be discussed again at the committee's spring term meeting.

In response for a question about in service training, the Head explained that he meets with the teaching team and the LSAs for a weekly in-service discussion. The Anashim Committee had briefly looked at the timetable of in service training for the autumn term.

Hiten asked if there were any questions.

A Governor asked the Head to explain the addition to the risk register of the budget going over by £25k. The Head explained that this risk has been diminished because another member of staff is also going on maternity leave. He said that the school is seeking to mitigate the risk of going over budget in future due to maternity leaves. The school is working with free school associates to share staff in case one school is over-staffed.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions. A Governor also on the Anashim Committee noted that the Committee had discussed briefly how to mitigate the impact on the staff of the move to the new site. The process had proven to be very stressful. The Committee had discussed whether it would be financially viable to engage a project management support service. The Chair said that this was not a decision that could be made at this Board meeting but that the Head should look into it.

ACTION- HEAD TO INVESTIGATE ENGAGING PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICE FOR THE MOVE TO THE NEW SITE.

A Governor asked if there is training for LSAs. The Head responded that the LSAs are obliged to attend 5 inset days and they are invited to attend after school training but do not have to. The Governor asked if they are offered any external training. The Head said that they do- for example last year the LSAs went to a training session on fine and gross motor skills. He explained that he and his deputy regularly assess the training courses available to LSAs to see if there is anything relevant.

18/13 REPORT FROM SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON K'SAFIM-FINANCE INCLUDING UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

Report from Rebecca Doctors

a) Finance Update

Rebecca Doctors told the Governors that overall the financial situation is good. He took the Board through the figures and explained the reserves.

b) Site Health and Safety

Rebecca told the Board that there is a new member of the H&S Committee, Oliver Brooks replacing Dan Montlake.

Report from Committee

Noa Bladon, the Chair for the K'safim Committee took the Governors through the Committee's work.

She started by explaining the status of the Risk Register. To update new governors, she said that historically there had been a very long version of the register. At the end of last term, a brainstorming exercise had taken place to consolidate the risks but the result was a risk register that was too high level!

The Committee are now proposing as a middle ground to put together a risk register template and send to each committee. Then, each committee can list the risks relevant to their area, score them, and send them back to the K'safim committee to compile.

Noa went on to set out the Committee's discussions around voluntary contributions. She said there had been a lot of questions from parents around this; mainly querying what the money goes toward and how the system operates. The Committee agreed that one of its members will put together a FAQ for chairs so that when asked by a parent, the Governor can direct the person to the right respondent AND to make sure that there is consistency in response from the Board.

Noa then invited Tabitha Sumberg to update the Board on the School's fundraising. Tabitha told the Board what is in the bank and what has been pledged. She said there is £40k in the bank from donations. There is a further £100k that has been pledged over 9 years by the Rosen Foundation.

Further, there have been donations of up to £10,000 pledged from grandparents; some parents give monthly donations and other have made one off pledges.

Tabitha told the Board that the Fundraising Committee are looking into finding an individual to under write the programme so that the school has the cash flow to fund the projects. One set of parents have agreed to underwrite £25,000 for the first project and the school will pay back over 9 years.

Tabitha said that the Fundraising Committee has been developed and the next step is to appoint sub-committee members; each one will have an area of responsibility. She said that the targets are ambitious but attainable.

She said that the Board need to decide how to recognise donations eg naming play area after donor family? She said the problem is that the school needs to avoid being divisive. The Chair proposed that a smaller group of Governors meet to discuss this. 5 Governors agreed to form this committee.

ACTION- THESE GOVERNORS TO FIND A DATE TO DISCUSS THE RECOGNITION OF DONATIONS AND CIRCULATE THE FINDINGS FOLLOWING THE MEETING

The Chair asked if the Governors had any questions on School Business, Financial matters or Fundraising.

One Governor asked a question about the way that donations and pledges were recorded in the accounts. Rebecca Doctors explained.

Another Governor asked a question about the figures allocated to cost for the garden wing and the hall. He asked if the figures had been benchmarked as they seemed high. The Head responded and said the figures had been benchmarked against Etz Chaim's costs for similar areas.

18/14 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER ON LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE AND JOINT CHAIRS' REPORT

Report from Headteacher

a) School Development and Self Evaluation

The Head explained that last year had been a big year for the School with Pikuach inspection and Ofsted. The School Development Plan has now been circulated. He

said that the communication with parents needs work. He told the Board that two Governors Ilan Jacobs and Edward Lewin are going to work on a new strategy to improve this. He said it is likely that the school's website will be revamped as a result.

b) Network and Clusters

The Head updated the Board on the work with networks. The School is a member of soft networks. One of which is a network of religious schools, not all of which are Jewish. It is also a member of another network of solely Jewish schools.

He told the Board that there is a move instigated by PAJES to improve Jewish education across Jewish Schools in the UK. There are pushing very strongly towards the establishment of a Jewish Schools Network. The Head told the Board he has expressed an interest in this but made no commitment. There may be some financial benefits too. The Head made it clear to the Board that any decision about the school's participation would be made by the Board and would require a detailed discussion.

c) Challenges

The Head took the Board through the list of challenges in his Report and said that the rapid staffing changes will be a challenge for the School. He said he wants to work on developing middle leaders, and make sure all staff have a deep understanding of the ethos of the school.

Report from Joint Chairs

a) Governing Body Membership and Committee Members

The Chair took the Governors through the list of Committee appointments that had been circulated. The new Governors confirmed they agreed with their allocations. The one exception was Oliver Brookes, whose name was against the finance committee but he had not actually been asked yet.

ACTION- ALL GOVERNORS NAMED IN CHAIR'S REPORT SAVE OLIVER BROOKES APPOINTED TO COMMITTEES:

David Grunwald to join children

Ilan Jacobs, Claudia Shenkin to formally join finance committee

Niki Jackson, Maureen Kendler, Charlene Lewin and Emma Sevitt to join Learning

Ed Lewin to join people

**David Grunwald, David Orman, Jonny Goldstone, Steve Greenberg and Robin Lester to join Fundraising
Ed Lewin and Ilan Jacobs to constitute a new Comms task and finish group**

b) Other changes to committee structure

The Chair told the Governors he and his co chair will be discussing the operation of the committees, together with the operation of the actual governing body, with each governor to make sure everything is going smoothly.

c) Decision Site Investment

The Chair confirmed to the Board that the Site Investment decision made via email on December 5th had been noted.

d) Governing Body self-evaluation and Improvement

The Chair confirmed that the findings of the Governor's self assessment evaluation forms will be discussed with the chairs of the Committees and the Chairs will report back.

ACTION- CHAIRS TO MEET WITH CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES TO DISCUSS FINDINGS OF SELF EVALUATION FORMS AND REPORT BACK TO BOARD.

e) Governance and holding the Head teacher to account

The Chair took the Board briefly through the report and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

f) Governors and Committee Members Monitoring Visits

The Chair took the Board briefly through the report.

18/15 ACCEPTANCE OF THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Head took the Governors through the School Development Plan document. He pointed out the key elements of the Plan.

- a) to create a culture of academic excellence. He explained that three of the targets work on comments made in the Ofsted report. The Head said the aim is for all staff being able to answer all questions from all pupils on all areas.

- b) Reshaping Curriculum – the key objective is for teachers to re-shape lessons to provide greater challenge where appropriate
- c) Subject confidence – all staff team (Teaching staff and LSAs) will be spending a day at the British Museum to look at historical knowledge and objects. The Head invited all Governors to attend too.
- d) Ivrit and Jewish Learning – the School is developing a series of monitoring visits for kids progress.
- e) SMSE- the school is continuing to invest time to ensure that the pupils are exposed to a full range of beliefs and cultures
- f) Independent learning days- there is a plan for the pupils to run the school for their own morning- Make your Own day!
- g) Tech and Online safety
- h) Library Tender- the school has tendered for a book partnership for the new site. There are 3 finalists coming to the school and Year 2 pupils will be conducting the interviews!
- i) The school is re-tendering on some providers eg food, security
- j) There will be work done to develop middle leaders in the teaching staff
- k) There are plans in place to have a proper school council in place by the end of the academic year.

The Head asked if there were any questions. One governor asked that the SEN Lead is kept abreast of the day so that she can make sure the pupils she works with can process the day, as it may be harder for them to do so. Head agreed to discuss with SEN lead.

ACTION- HEAD TO DISCUSS INDEPENDENT LEARNING DAY WITH SEN LEAD TO ENSURE SEN PUPILS ARE PROPERLY EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH DAY

Another Governor asked the Head if the School Council will be a meaningful decision making body and have a budget. The Head said that a plan is being put together about the body but that the plan is for it to be meaningful and not just namesake. The Governor suggested that the Council should then have budget to use. The Head agreed and said that it would be good for the Council to have governor liaison in the long run. The Head agreed to add School Council fund allocation into the budget for 2016-2017.

ACTION- BUDGET FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL TO BE ADDED INTO BUDGET FOR 2016-2017

The Chair thanked the Head and confirmed that there are a large set of objectives. He asked that the Governors take the Plan away and email any questions they have.

A governor asked how progress is reported on the various points. The Head explained that he has instigated a communication tool for governor discussions and he will put the SDP and progress reports on the tool.

18/16 DATE OF FUTURE GB MEETING:

Spring Term Informal: 22 February 745pm

Main Governing Body Meeting: 11 April at 730pm

Dates agreed by all.

18/17 Part 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015.

Following deferral earlier in the meeting, the Chair asked the Governors if there were any questions or changes regarding the minutes of the previous meeting.

18/18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

18/19 MOTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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