

THE GOVERNING BODY FOR ALMA PRIMARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON
MONDAY 11 JULY 2016

Present:

Natalie Grazin (Joint Chair)	Deborah Brooks
David Steadman (Joint Chair and chairing this meeting)	Martin Blain
David Grunwald	Michelle Jacobs
Andrew Sutcliffe	Hiten Jethwa
Laura Sherling	Noa Bladon
Edward Lewin	Emma Davies
Tabitha Sumberg	Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

In attendance:

Rebecca Doctors School Business Manager
Debbie Fine, Clerk

PART I

20/1 WELCOME AND LEARNING

David Steadman took the chair and welcomed everyone to the learning session, led by Michelle Jacobs. David Steadman circulated a learning session sheet to all governors to allocated future learning sessions.

ACTION – Tabitha to lead the December GB learning session and other Governors to note their dates

20/2 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ilan Jacobs, Niki Jackson, Adam Goldin and Richard Cornelius

20/3 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: Emma Davies, Michelle Jacobs, Martin Blain, Deborah Brooks, Tabitha Sumberg, Natalie Grazin, Ed Lewin, David Grunwald, Laura SherlingDavid Steadman
- c) David Grunwald's wife is an member of staff at the school.
- d) Emma Davies noted that she runs first aid courses for the school, but that this is done on a pro bono basis with the money saved to be used as a donation to the school building fund.

Before taking the Governors through the agenda, the Chair apologised for the relatively short agenda and late arrival of papers, and explained that the reason was the very substantial workload of the construction project completion and site move. The Chair suggested that to catch up with the matters that were unable to be covered in this meeting, the Autumn 2016 informal meeting should be made formal, in order to cover the

Self Evaluation, School Development Plan and Risk Register. All governors agreed they were happy with this arrangement.

ACTION - November informal GB session to be re-designated as a formal GB.

20/4 PART 1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 APRIL 2016

It was agreed that there were no inaccuracies in the minutes.

20/5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Actions Log was presented in its new format and Governors approved the new format. The following points were agreed:

a) that Children's committee holds responsibility for assuring the quality and safety of breakfast club and after school club and Operations committee is responsible for ensuring that it is financially viable. The Chairs of these committees need to work closely together on this issue.

b) that Safeguarding training would be arranged for all governors within the first half of 2016-17

ACTION – CHAIR OF CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE TO ARRANGE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR ALL GOVERNORS

A Governor asked if the actions required of Committee Chairs could be extracted and sent separately to ensure completion. Chairs agreed to do so.

ACTION – JOINT CHAIRS TO CIRCULATE ACTIONS TO RESPECTIVE COMMITTEES FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF ACTIONS LIST FROM CLERK

All other actions were noted either to be completed or in hand.

20/6 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON LIMMUDIM/LEARNING

Report from Headteacher

The Head took the Governors through the Limmudim/Learning section of his report. He took the Governors through the progress and attainment data, including the recent test results.

He said that whilst the progress levels were good overall, in both year 1 and year 2 there was reason for concern over the attainment levels in writing. The Senior Leadership Team has identified this as a top priority for 2016-17 and planned interventions.

Key Stage 1 Assessment Results

The Head explained to the governors that the school had participated in its first national assessments beyond the Year 1 phonics test. During May, Year 2 pupils were assessed for reading, writing, maths, and science. Headlines:

- 86% met the expected level for reading
- 66% met the expected level for writing
- 73% met the expected level for maths

- 90% met the expected level for science

The Head explained to Governors that the lower scores in writing were connected not only to the previously-discussed issue of writing across the school, but also to the very specific requirement of the assessment criteria used in the new KS1 assessments. The Head said there was no comparable data for other schools available yet.

The Head told the Governors that a key take away from the KS1 assessments was that work to address writing would be a priority for the coming term.

Report from Committee

Deborah Brooks, Joint Chair for the Limmudim Committee reported on the progress of the committee's work. Items discussed this term included:

- sex and relationship education policy - in draft form
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education policy – in draft form
- Gifted and Talented policy – in draft form

All these will receive further discussion and be finalised in 2016/2017.

An additional meeting to focus on scrutiny of Jewish learning and Ivrit is planned for Autumn term 2016.

The Chair finished by updating the Board that her committee realised it requires more than 2 meetings a year due to the volume of work to be covered, and were planning more frequent meetings with the Head.

Questions and Discussion

A Governor asked if “writing” covers just handwriting or spelling, grammar too. The Head confirmed that handwriting is one of the “expectations” in the KS1 assessments, along with the content of children’s writing.

The Committee chair explained that the way that the school collected and presented the evidence required may have affected the scores, so the committee is going to look at evidence gathering methods in order that the school can better demonstrate children’s levels of skill and ability next year..

Another Governor asked if the KS1 assessments data is released to parents. The Head explained that Key Stage 1 data is not released to parents, and said this was in line with other schools. Each parent is able to receive their own child’s results if they would like to see it. However, the Head said that he would present the comparative data showing how Alma’s results compare with Barnet and National data to the next Governing Body meeting in December.

ACTION: Headteacher to provide comparative KS1 Assessment data at next Governing Body meeting

20/7 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON YELADIM-CHILDREN

Report from Headteacher

The Head took the Governors through the Yeladim/Children section of his report.

a) Recruitment for Reception Class of 16

The Head told the Board that the new Reception Class for 2016/2017 will consist of 13 girls and 17 boys. One appeal was made, but on the day of the planned appeal, the family withdrew their application.

b) Pupil Premium

The Head confirmed that Pupil Premium figures remain low.

c) Special Educational Needs

The Head told the Governors that he had updated Andrew Sutcliffe, the SEN governor, on the progress of each of the children with Special Educational Needs . Individual Education Plans would be completed before the end of term.

A Governor asked about the procedure for handing over between outgoing and incoming teachers in terms of those students with SEN requirements. The Head explained the teachers participated in detailed handover sessions before the end of term.

Another Governor asked what plans had been put in place for those students who may have difficulty processing the site move. The Head explained that a very small number of such children had been identified. They would be invited to the site before the start of the term so that they could familiarise themselves with the new surroundings.

d) Safeguarding and Security

The Head explained that the staff had attended Prevent Training as part of the Government's strategy to prevent radicalisation.

The Head reported that work had continued with CST at the new school site to make sure the premises are fit for purpose from a security point of view.

e) Extended School Activities

The Head told the Governors that the School now has an extensive range of activities ready for the Autumn Term, including- new activities such as Spanish, dancing, coding, maths and games.

The Head reported that the Breakfast Club figures continue to be low, but initial uptake for the Autumn Term has been better.

f) Attendance

The Head reported that attendance levels compared favourably with the previous year's (which were also very good).

The Head advised that there had been couple of unauthorised absences from the Reception class, but that the school had worked to resolve these with the families involved.

Report from Committee

Michelle Jacobs reported that the Committee had had a policy-heavy term. They had reviewed and agreed the following policies:

- Attendance,
- Positive handling,
- Safeguarding
- SEN.

She advised the GB that the driver on the school bus has changed following earlier reports of bad behaviour on the bus, and there are plans to put a teacher on the bus soon to check the behaviour levels again.

She said that the committee would discuss the new requirement for schools to allow parents to delay/defer admission for one year in Autumn term 2016, in order to determine Alma's approach to this new issue

There was one safeguarding incident reported, relating to alleged inappropriate language on the school bus. Michelle told the Governors that the Head had acted immediately to resolve the issue properly. No police action was taken.

Michelle said that the Committee had also discussed a draft "Contract for Learning" document, a proposed agreement between the school and parents about how the pupils are expected to behave and what learning leads to the best outcomes. Further work is needed on this in order to consider how this work relates to the wider expectations Alma has of parents, e.g. around attendance, supporting homework, volunteering, following policies, Quality Contribution, etc.

Michelle ended by saying the priorities for next term are: managing admission appeals, changes to admission policy and analysis of admissions data to ascertain how diverse our pupil intake is.

ACTIONS

- **Children's Committee to continue work on the Contract for Learning and bring in key Governors from other committees as necessary to progress the idea of a Parents' Contract**
- **Children's Committee to discuss what data can be collected to assess the diversity of the school and to encourage greater diversity of applications.**

Questions and Discussion

A Governor asked if there were financial implications for the school if a family defers a pupil's place for a year. The Committee Chair said the school is still working out what the implications would be, including financial consequences, and all these factors will be taken into account.

20/8 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON ANASHIM-PEOPLE

Report from Headteacher

The Head took the Governors through the Anashim/People section of his report.

a) Staffing and Volunteer update

The Head took the Governors through the staff movements set out in his report and explained in detail the various departures and new arrivals.

b) Continuing Professional Development

The Head took the Governors through the range of internal and external courses that had been undertaken by the staff.

Report from Committee

Hiten Jethwa reported that the People Committee had met once during the term, focusing on:

- Developments in staffing, recruitment and retention
- the Community Use policy
- People-related risks on the the risk register

Hiten reported that there has been a successful implementation of London Living Wage payment for all directly employed of the staff.

The priorities for Autumn term for the People Committee are:

- examination of the 2016 staff survey
- creation of pay brackets

Questions and Discussion

A Governor asked if there will be exit interviews for departing staff. The Head confirmed that there would be and accepted an offer of assistance from Governors with experience in doing this.

Another Governor asked for an update on the election of the staff governor. The Joint Chairs confirm that this will happen in the Autumn term.

ACTION – Joint Chairs to progress election of Staff Governor in September 2016

20/9 REPORT FROM SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR ON K'SAFIM-FINANCE

Report from School Business Manager

Rebecca Doctors presented the current financial position and reported that two factors have affected the position, namely the high cost of the school mini bus and a significant dip in quality contributions.

Rebecca also confirmed that the external and internal audit were both sound.

Report from Committee

Noa Bladon reported on the Committee's 2 meetings this term, during which they had considered:

- the Risk Register
- the community use policy
- Quality Contributions

The GB discussed the reasons why there had been a drop in Quality Contributions. Noa reported that the current plan is to put a group together to come up with a communication plan for parents. The task force will be charged with investigating why people don't want to pay and how the school can be more transparent about the use of the money. It was reported that some parents have mistaken the school's reserves of 1-2 months' operating costs, which we are obliged to hold as an independent charity, for use in the event of unexpected need, with "holding onto a large sinking fund" and it was agreed that this confusion needs to be directly addressed. A Governor suggested that the task force should have new voices, particularly non parents on it, to inject new perspective.

ACTION – The Operations Committee will focus on bringing in QCs a priority in August Term 2016. It will also consider the best way to follow up requests for the Quality Contributions, while ensuring it remains clear that they are voluntary donations .

Budget for 2016-17

The Head updated the GB on the draft budget for 2016/17, showing that the current draft includes an overspend for 2016/2017. There are 2 potential areas for reducing expenditure:

- a) new site-related costs e.g. energy, cleaning costs etc. These have been budgeted at the highest cost possible and hopefully will be lower
- b) paying all staff London Living Wage salary.

The GB discussed the issue of minimum wages. The current status is that the cleaners and security guards are paid national minimum wage but not London Living Wage, although the school's aspiration is that all staff should be on London Living Wage.

ACTION: After discussion, it was agreed that the issue would be brought back to the December meeting, once the financial position was clearer; and there would be delay in implementing LLW for security guards and cleaners until then.

Fundraising

Tabitha Sumberg update the GB, reporting that there would be £115,000 in the fund by the end of the year. She explained that a letter had been sent to all parent non-donors inviting them to donate. There had been 6 responses to the letter so far, and a follow up phone call to non-respondents was planned. The Chair congratulated the fundraising committee for their excellent work.

20/10 REPORT FROM HEADTEACHER ON LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE AND JOINT CHAIRS' REPORT

Report from Headteacher

a) *School Development and Self Evaluation*

The Head reported that the work on the new site and changes to the staff team have impacted on workload significantly over the past year and inevitably limited the capacity to develop other aspects of the school. However, “business as usual” would return in September. A full Self Evaluation will be undertaken in the Autumn term in order to take stock of the school’s performance and identify priorities for development.

The Head reported that he had been working on developing the School Leadership Team in order to create a strong framework to support teaching and learning in the Autumn term. The Head also reported that he has begun work with a new school improvement partner, a retired Head teacher, who has visited the school 3 times this term.

b) *Network and Clusters*

The Head explained that he has been working with two ‘clusters’ of schools. He told the Governors that the work with the Jewish Schools cluster was active, and the work with the local Barnet schools network is going similarly well.

The Head said that the challenges for the new term are ensuring that all teaching and learning is at the high quality standard Alma expects; and managing the transition into the new site; the growth to 4 years and 5 new members of staff.

Report from Joint Chairs

Natalie reported on the Chairs’ review of the size and operation of the Governing body. She confirmed that the Chairs have met with nearly all of the governors individually, and that the meetings have been helpful, with consistent themes e.g. the timing of meetings, the size of the governing body. She said that there were a few more discussions to be held, and that once these were complete the chairs would discuss with the head teacher and committee chairs how to address the issues raised and report to a future GB.

ACTION: CHAIRS TO PROGRESS ISSUES RAISED WITH HEAD TEACHER AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS, AND REPORT TO A FUTURE GB.

Natalie then introduced the revised terms of reference of the committees, which have taken 9 months to complete and reflect the increased maturity of the school’s governance. The GB approved the revised Terms unanimously.

20/11 Governing Body Committee membership

The Chair tabled a list of the members of each committee of the GB, and asked governors to check them for accuracy as they were about to be published on the school website. He handed round the list to the Governors and asked for them to check the list for accuracy.

20/12 Dates of Future GB Meetings

Autumn term Informal – now formal: 2 November, 7:45pm

Autumn term formal meeting, 12 December, 7:30pm

20/13 Any other Business

There was no other business.

20/14 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.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.40pm