

Allfarthing Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Board 7 July 2021, 17:30

Minutes – Part A

Present:

Lorraine Wait	LW	Local Authority Governor and Co-Chair (Meeting Chair)
James Francis	JF	Co-opted Governor and Co-Chair
Tom Holmes	TH	Headteacher
Matt Newman	MN	Parent Governor
Hannah Snashall	HS	Parent Governor
David Forbes (from 18.03)	DF	Parent Governor
Tom Walton-Gould	TWG	Staff Governor
Jon-Paul Brett	JB	Co-opted Governor
Anna Mulcahy	AM	Co-opted Governor
James Heale	JH	Co-opted Governor

In attendance:

Debbie Tyson Gooden	DTG	School Business Manager (SBM)
Helen Watts	HW	Local Authority Clerk to Full Governing Board meetings

The meeting opened at 17:45

1. Apologies for absence and Welcome

Apologies were presented and received from Robert Cachia (RC) and Rachel Amankwa (RA). **The meeting is quorate.** The Chair welcomed the two newly elected parent governors: Sasha Ralph and James Corry as Observers.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 March 2021 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 were **approved** as a true and accurate record of the meeting. JF agreed to sign the minutes and return a signed copy to the School Business Manager (SBM) for filing at the school.

Matters arising:

Item 3 – Governors to continue to train and research into the new Ofsted Framework – HS and LW attended a very useful course on the new Ofsted Framework for Governors on 6 July. HS offered to post the handouts from the training on DropBox. The HT suggested that a core group of governors can attend the termly meetings with the School Improvement Partner as silent Observers. Governors to continue to train and research into the new Ofsted Framework.

Item 3 – Three to four governors to attend the inset day on Tuesday 31 August from 9am to 11am so that governors can contribute and help set the school's strategy, vision and school improvement priorities. Further to the meeting LW has emailed governors to check attendance.

Item 3 – Governors to complete the Key's 20 Questions as part of a Governors Self-Evaluation. LW and JF to think about how to move forward with the 20 Questions and how to be more efficient and effective as a Board.

Q - A governor suggested perhaps governors should meet and organise a brain storming exercise. This would be a good opportunity for experienced and new governors to share ideas. Another governor

added that thinking about the strategic direction of the school would be a good way to start the academic year. Staff and governors can share and contribute to a common understanding of the school vision and school improvement priorities.

A - The HT added that the working group on school improvement priorities worked well in the past. Perhaps governors can think about a similar working group.

Item 3 – A short discussion ensued amongst governors about the best way to deal with the school website. HS is working with JB on the content and format and HS continues to reach out to the community for website designers. HS mentioned the importance of having an up to date website for Ofsted, following her recent training.

Q – Is there a budget?

A – The HT answered the school could allocate some money to the website from the marketing budget. He added the website is compliant and parents/carers can easily find information on the website. The work involved to improve the website is not significant.

A governor commented that documents and policies can get out of date. It might also be worth making the website more user friendly. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) might be able to help with funds and HS offered to talk to the Chair. Governors agreed the website is a good marketing tool and a long term investment for an important aspect of school life. JB added that improving the structure of the website is what is needed.

Item 3 – HS reported that she has sent a draft Governance Impact Statement and the document is a work in progress.

Item 3 – DF confirmed that he has finalised the Governors Scheme of Delegation. The document is on DropBox in its own folder with the associated documents. Governors **agreed** the Governors Scheme or Delegation. HS reminded governors that committee chairs and governing board chairs are responsible for posting the most up to date policy on Dropbox and sending the SBM a copy for the school website.

Item 3 – HT and staff to raise the profile of the work being done around bullying to the pupil voice via the school council – The HT commented that considerable progress is being made in this area. HS to organise a meeting between the School Council and Children, Families and Community.

Item 3 - Chair/Clerk to add Equality Objective 2020-23 update to the summer term FGB agenda – JH told governors that he is working on the Equality Objectives with Deepti Grover and they should be ready by the end of the summer term.

Item 8 – LW to review how to take the Risk Register forward.

The Chair thanked HS, DF and JB for all their hard work with the various documentation and school website.

Action: JF to return a signed copy of the 2021 spring term minutes to the school for filing.

Action: Governors to continue to train and research into the new Ofsted Framework. HS to post the documents from the Local Authority (LA) training on Dropbox. A core group of governors to attend the SIP meetings termly as silent observers.

Action: LW and JF to think about how to move the Key's 20 Questions forward and how to be more efficient and effective as a Board by September. Governors to think about organising a brain storming session or setting up a working group to review strategy, vision and the school improvement priorities.

Action: HS to liaise with JB about the school website, approach a parent at the school who is a web designer and contact the Chair of the PTA about any funding.

Action: Committee Chairs and Governing Board Chairs are responsible for uploading the most up to date policy on DropBox and sending a copy to the SBM for the school website, if it needs to be posted on the website.

Action: HS to organise a meeting between the School Council and Children, Families and Community to discuss and hear about the work being done around bullying.

Action: Chair/Clerk to add Equality Objectives 2020-23 update to the 2021 autumn term FGB agenda.

Action: LW to review how to take the Risk Register forward.

4. Headteacher's (HT) Report to Governors

The Headteacher's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and reviewed by Governors. The HT also sent out the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) data, Recovery Curriculum Presentation and School Improvement Partners most recent Record of Visit which are referenced in the HT report.

The HT highlighted the following issues for governors from his report and invited questions on the content.

School Roll

The number on roll is currently 351 (354 at the spring term FGB meeting). The school has 32 leavers and 24 children joining to date. However, the HT explained that another 8 or so children might leave and others might start before September. The school census is taking place on 6 October 2021 and the number of children on roll by that date will be important.

Q – A governor commented that it is reassuring for the school if families are leaving the private sector to join the school.

A – The HT told governors that children are also joining from other state schools.

He added Reception should have 60 children starting in September. Nursery numbers are also strong which is not the case for all nurseries in the borough.

Numbers of Free School Children, Pupil Premium, Special Educational Needs and Disability Children and English as an Additional Language

There are 93 children with English as an Additional Language and there is a great deal of information behind the data. Some children join with very good English and others join with no English at all. Two girls joined the school in Y6 (one from Hungary and one from France) with no English at all.

Q – Does the school ask families to self-identify in relation to EAL?

A - The HT confirmed that families are asked in Reception or when they join the school.

The numbers of children on free school meals and pupil premium have gone up slightly since the previous HT Report as the school is better at identifying who is on free school meals or pupil premium and supporting them with their applications.

Exclusions, Disability Harassment, Racist/Homophobia Incidents and Bullying

The child who had previously been excluded has been found a placement in an alternative provision and is doing well.

Q -A governor asked the school prior to the meeting about any sexual harassment cases due to the high profile in the press about the subject?

A – The HT answered that the new Relationship and Sex Education Guidance covers this topic with age related material. The school does not have any concerns in this area to date and any cases tend to come to primary schools through safeguarding. The school also does some preventative work. For example, the school is aware that some children in Y6 start to get their own mobile phones and so the HT, DHT and AHT talk to them about the dangers and repercussions of using their phones incorrectly.

Q – How does the school manage online safety?

A – The HT reported that the school does a considerable amount of preventative work. Class teachers talk to the children and this is sometimes followed up by the HT. It is difficult when anything serious happens out of school. If children come to school and discuss inappropriate online behavior the school can intervene. JH added that pre-Covid, the school would invite external speakers to talk to the children and families about safe and appropriate online safety. Online safety is also covered in an age appropriate way in the new Relationship and Sex Education Guidance.

Human Resources

The HT report covers leavers and starters for the next academic year. The HT also pointed out to governors that the school is recruiting two early career teachers. Early Career Teachers are replacing newly qualified teachers (NQT) from September 2021 and their induction programme runs for two years from Sept instead of one. However one of the new recruits has nearly finished her training, and therefore will not be required to do the full additional year.

Safeguarding

JH reported that the main headlines around safeguarding have been reported in the most recent School Improvement Partner report. Place2Be continues to play an important role in supporting individual pupils. Involvement in the Wandsworth well-being trailblazer project has also allowed some families to access a well-being practitioner. The HT and DHT have a good relationship and communicate well with families. Therefore, they address issues early and organise and access the necessary help. Both the HT and DHT and other staff will continue to check in with families in September. The school has one child protection case and four children in need cases. AM as the Safeguarding Link Governor carried out a visit in May as part of her ongoing termly visits. A report will follow on Dropbox. JH took this opportunity to thank AM for being so organized and proactive in her role.

Fire Evacuations

Q – Do the fire doors work?

A – The HT confirmed they do

Monitoring

Q – Are the learning walks for teacher development or quality of teaching?

A – The HT answered they are used to assess quality of teaching. Teachers are given informal personal development feedback.

Q - Are teachers told in advance about the learning walks?

A – The HT told governors that teachers are told they are happening that week but they are not told the time. Teachers might get nervous but they need to practice for the School Improvement Partner and Ofsted inspections that will come in the future.

The relevant priorities from the SDP have been assigned to the committees and discussed.

The HT report gives governors an update against each priority. The SDP priorities for 2020-21 are the following:

1. An effective and reactive Recovery programme for all children;

Q – What’s the issue with writing “data and feedback from teachers is telling us we need a more bespoke programme for writing”?

A – TH answered that the issue is grammar based and building writing stamina is also a focus. For KS1 it is more about being creative. The staff governor added that perhaps some children have not been reading as much during lockdown and this has an impact on writing. The HT mentioned that this priority may still be a priority next year.

2. A succinct and progressive Curriculum for our children and community;

3. To ensure all the SDP priorities from 2019-20 are completed (PP, Oracy, Technology, Reading)

4. Maths and English teaching and learning reflects the needs of our children post lockdown.

Aine Donegan is hoping to speak to governors in the autumn term about some likely changes in Maths at the curriculum committee meeting.

5. Ensure that all our teaching and learning embodies our “Allfarthing Absolutes”.

Other notable items/changes

The HT told governors that an informal diversity forum met (without HT present)

Q – How many parents/carers attended?

A – The HT told governors it was a small number. It was hoped that more would attend the next forum.

The Y6 school trip to PGL went ahead and only six children did not attend.

JH told governors that RA carried out a visit around pupil premium children. RA asked if the school can evidence engagement of pupil premium children in wider and extra curriculum activities? JH has done some research and reported to governors that Y5 has 9 children who are pupil premium. The children attend 7 clubs between them and the club attendance average is three clubs per child. This illustrates a good level of engagement.

Governors went on to review the NFER data in detail. The data covers Y3, Y5 and Y5 in English, Maths and Reading and Comparative Judgement.

Q - There is a drop in Y5 English-Reading at higher standard and a slightly bigger drop for Y4. Is there an explanation?

A – There are not as many pupil premium children in this cohort and the pupil premium children are high achieving. Y4 has a higher number of pupil premium children.

Q – Is there a reason why Y5 has managed to maintain 56 pupils in the year group?

A – The HT answered that this cohort has experienced stable numbers and they have always been a high ability cohort. Y3 and Y4 are different cohorts. The staff governor who teaches Y5 told governors that this cohort is keen to learn and very able. The children are well supported at home. JH added that the drop in writing in relation to pupil premium children does not quite match up due to the task. Pupil premium data for Y5 stayed within the range and others achieved greater depth.

The HT summed up by saying that the majority of children are doing well which can be seen in the percentages of children who meet expected and greater depth in all subjects.

The HT mentioned the Recovery Plan catch up presentation which was sent to governors prior to the meeting.

School Link Inspector Record of visit

The most recent report from a visit on 1 July was circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

Q – The 6th bullet point states that a small number of children are displaying concerning behaviour”

A – The HT clarified that the comment was made about the children when they were at home and that there is no evidence of poor behaviour, and no comments from the School Link Inspector on the children’s behaviour during her visit.

The Chair thanked the HT, SLT and staff for making the school feel as normal as possible during the last year or so.

<p>Action: Aine Donegan to speak to governors in the autumn term about some likely changes in Maths at the curriculum committee meeting.</p>

5. Governing Board Committees Report from Committees

The minutes from the Finance and Premises, Staffing, Curriculum and Children, Families and Community Committee meetings were posted on DropBox prior to the meeting. There were no comments or questions.

Link Governor Reports and other governor visits to include Health and Safety and Safeguarding

AM – Safeguarding Visit – May 2021. Please see item 4

RA – Pupil Premium Visit – June 2021

MN – Curriculum Visit – Summer Term 2021

HS – Writing – recovery and plans for next year – July 2021

6. Financial Management

- a. Budget Plan monitoring (Receive and Note). Please see 2021 summer term Finance and Premises meeting minutes.
- b. Formally agree and approve the end of year budget 2021-2022 – DF explained that Finance and Premises held a separate budget review meeting on Friday 28 May 2021. The minutes and associated documents have been posted on DropBox. The committee carried out a benchmarking exercise. It is the first time in a couple of years that the school has set a balanced budget which is pleasing. Due to inflation and other factors it is expected that the school will use the surplus. Governors formally **agreed** and **approved** the end of year budget 2020-2021.
- c. Formally agree and approve the 2021-22 budget – Governors formally **agreed** and **approved** the 2021/22 budget.
- d. School Financial Value Standard (SFVS). The document was completed by the Finance and Premises Committee and the SBM, emailed to all governors for comments and submitted in time for the 28 May deadline.

7. Policies and Decisions (According to Annual Work Planner)

- a. HT Appraisal Panel – LW asked for one volunteer to join JF and herself.
- b. Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) Checks – The SBM confirmed that DBS checks are up to date and checks are in progress for the new parent governors SR and JC.
- c. Get Information About Schools (GIAS). The SBM confirmed GIAS is up to date.
- d. Equality Objectives – As mentioned under item 3 JH will present the Equality Objectives at the 2021 Autumn Term FGB meeting.
- e. Risk Register – LW to look into how to move the Risk Register forward as mentioned under item 3.
- f. Health and Safety Policy – The policy having been reviewed by Finance and Premises was sent to governors by LW. Governors have 7 days to send any comments to TH. After the 7 day period the policy will be considered approved.
- g. General Data and Protection Regulation Report – LW confirmed that GDPR will be reviewed at the staffing committee meeting in the autumn term.

Action: One governor to volunteer to join LW and JF on the HT Appraisal Panel in the 2021 autumn term.

Action: Staffing Committee to review governors responsibilities towards GDPR at the 2021 autumn term meeting.

8. Governing Board Strategy and Evaluation

- a. Governing Board Self-Evaluation – LM and JF to look into how best to take this forward. Please see item 3.
- b. Governor Training
Governors are urged to undertake any necessary training, via the different organisations available.
- c. School and Governing Board Strategy 2021/22 – As discussed under item 3, it is hoped 3 or 4 governors can attend the staff inset day on Tues 31 August 2021 from 9 to 11am.
- d. Preparation for the Academic year 2020/21 (including agreeing Meeting dates 2021/22; succession planning; review committees' structure and membership and election of Co-Chairs). FGB meeting dates are a work in progress, committee membership will be reviewed to include the two new parent governors: SR and JC. LW mentioned that AM's term of office has come to an end. She thanked

AM for her strong contribution to the Board especially as Safeguarding Link Governor. She wished AM every success for the future. Governors **agreed** RA as the new Co-opted Governor to take over from AM. TWG's term as staff governor comes to an end. The Chair thanked TWG for his hard work and time on the Board. A new staff governor will start on 1 September 2021. Governors **agreed** for MN to stay on as an Associate Governor. RC has resigned as a Co-opted Governor and governors are looking for a replacement with the correct skills match for the Board.

- e. Annual Workplan – HS has drafted an annual workplan ready for approval in the autumn term.
- f. Review governing board performance and procedures including visits – Governors will do this when they review their effectiveness as mentioned under item 3.

Action: HS to prepare annual workplan ready for approval in the autumn term.

9. **Any other business**

Staff Survey

As mentioned in the School Improvement Partner's record of visit report, a staff survey took place which was mostly positive.

TH explained that 18 members of staff completed the survey. However, a small number of members of teaching staff answered that they were unhappy with the following areas:

- 1) Being motivated, respected and work valued and;
- 2) Well led and managed.

The format of the questionnaire asking staff to respond with agree or disagree is ambiguous. The HT has spoken to staff and had a long discussion with the SLT, the Co-Chairs and JB.

Covid has played a part. Staff are missing socialising. However, the SLT realise they do need to look at the results in more depth. Perhaps with the HT leaving, staff might be more open. The SLT does have some solutions and suggestions.

The questionnaire was sent out just after half term which might have had an impact. Possibly some staff are disgruntled due to not getting promotions.

A governor stated it has been an extremely challenging year. There are a couple of isolated answers in relation to workload and fairness. There are no real trends compared to last year. Perhaps it is a good time for governors to touch base with staff. Governors have written a letter to staff offering 1:1 feedback meetings. The HT told governors that generally staff are happy and the school and SLT have worked very hard at well-being concessions such as days off for staff etc. Nothing has changed since 8 March. One governor added that the definition of workload is different for everyone and all teachers nationally have a high workload which is not specific to Allfarthing. Some of the issues might revolve around teachers not being able to work from home.

Q – Can the GB do anything to help?

A – The HT questioned whether some teachers have the aspiration to work in an outstanding school and have the drive for constant improvement. The SLT is planning to meet staff in September and remind staff a new HT will be joining and stress the aspirational side of the school. Also there is a mix of experienced and fairly new staff. Some newer staff work very hard. The experienced staff bring perspective.

The Chair summed up by saying it is good for governors to have this discussion and there will be an update at the staffing committee in the autumn term.

HT Leaving

JF took the opportunity to thank the Headteacher for his many years of service to the school. He is leaving the school in a very good place. Governors now need to make some plans to recruit a new HT. The whole process will be driven by the calibre of candidates. The plan is to recruit the best person

possible. This may mean recruiting an interim HT to give the school and governors more time to find the most suitable candidate. JF asked governors to be patient and to consider all the options. Engagement of all governors is key and the LA is on board. Governors need to think about the school in the long term and strategically.

The HT commented that staff and parents are disappointed but are also supportive and positive.

A governor passed on his sincere thanks to the HT. He is a great ambassador for the school and he has instilled excellence and stability.

10. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 30 November 2021

Tuesday 22 March 2022

Tuesday 5 July 2022

Approved on _____

Signed by _____
Co-Chair of Governors

There are no confidential minutes.