

## Allfarthing Primary School

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### Virtual Meeting of the Full Governing Board (FGB) 8 July 2020 at 9am using Zoom

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#### Minutes – Part A

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**Present:**

Andrew Bacon	AB	LA Governor and Chair of Governors
Tom Holmes	TH	Headteacher
Rachel Amankwa	RA	Parent Governor
Matt Newman	MN	Parent Governor
Hannah Shashall	HS	Parent Governor
David Forbes	DF	Parent Governor
Tom Walton-Gould	TWG	Staff Governor
Robert Cachia	RC	Co-opted Governor
Lorraine Wait	LW	Co-opted Governor
Alison Olmi	AO	Co-opted Governor
James Heale	JH	Co-opted Governor
James Francis	JF	Associate Member

**In attendance:**

Debbie Tyson Gooden	DTG	School Business Manager (SBM)
Helen Watts	HW	LA Clerk to FGB meetings only

*The meeting opened at 9.10am*

The Chair warmly welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and thanked governors for making the time to attend at the start of the working day. The spring term meeting which was due to take place on 1 April 2020 was cancelled due to the lockdown imposed on 23 March. Any pending or outstanding items from the spring term meeting are tabled for discussion below.

**1. Ratification and approval of protocol for holding virtual meetings**

The protocol was posted onto DropBox prior to the meeting and **approved** by governors.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Anna Mulcahy (AM).

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Governing Body administration**

a. Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) Checks

The School Business Manager (SBM) confirmed all DBS checks are up to date.

b. Get Information About Schools (GIAS)

The SBM told governors that GIAS is up to date.

**5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2019 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2019 were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting. AB agreed to organise delivering a signed copy of the minutes to the school for filing.

**Action:** AB to organise delivering a signed copy of the 2019 autumn term minutes to the school for filing.

Governors noted an update on actions as follows:

Item 6– Governors decided to ask the School Improvement Partner Kate Saksena to attend a FGB meeting to discuss the strategic role of governors as well as to observe part of the meeting. Governing Board Strategy is also tabled under item 11.3

As the Board is reviewing all urgent and time bound issues at this meeting, governors decided to review the Risk Assessment document at the autumn term FGB meeting and every FGB meeting going forward as discussed in the 2019 autumn term meeting.

Item 6 – Governors to continue training and research into the new Ofsted framework.

**Action:** HT to invite Kate Saksena to the first half an hour of the autumn term FGB meeting.

**Action:** Chair/Clerk to include the Risk Assessment document to all FGB agendas as a standing item.

**Action:** Governors to continue to train and research into the new Ofsted Framework.

6. **Headteacher's report to governors** – Focus on the leadership and management of the school during the current situation and update on RSE Guidance

The Chair took this opportunity to thank the HT, SLT and all staff for their exceptional hard work, commitment and dedication during the Covid-19 situation. The school has been running extremely smoothly during this unprecedented time. Another governor agreed with the above comments. The report having been posted on DropBox prior to the meeting the Chair invited any questions or comments on the content.

*Q – Are there any trends or patterns with the choice of Y6 transfers to secondary schools?*

*A – The HT answered that he has a document ready for September which highlights the destination of Y6 leavers. The HT commented that the number of children moving onto the independent sector has declined. Some children who passed the entry exams have turned the places down as they are moving abroad or did not receive adequate funding to be able to accept a place. A higher percentage of pupils have successfully gained a place at Graveney which is positive for the school.*

*Q – Out of the 60 children who have accepted a place in Reception, are there any children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP)?*

*A – The HT answered that the school is not aware of any children with EHCPs starting in Reception at present. One child with various challenges is starting in the Nursery.*

*Q – A governor commented that it is encouraging to note that the child who started at the school from an independent school during lockdown is staying on in September.*

*A – The HT confirmed this is encouraging.*

*Q – Have the numbers of key worker children attending school gone up since lockdown began?*

*A – The HT told governors that the numbers of key worker children has risen as time has gone on for a variety of reasons and this is very much in line with other schools.*

*Q – Is the school offering any provision over the summer holidays?*

*A – The HT commented that the school will not be open during the summer holidays and has not been open during any of the holidays. The relevant families were consulted and shared this decision.*

*Q – Can the Free School Meal Vouchers be distributed easily over the summer holidays?*

*A – The HT answered that the vouchers will be distributed in a six week block. Each family will receive a voucher for £90 per child on 19 July 2020 to cover the summer break.*

*Q – Are there any plans for holiday catch up sessions?*

*A - The HT informed governors that the Local Authority has not agreed any guidance on schools organizing catch up sessions in the summer. The school has set some work for children who wish to complete it. The school is also running a summer camp. The camp has invited all pupil premium children. One local school is closing one week earlier and is opening for two weeks in the summer holidays. Headteachers in the Borough are meeting later in the day to discuss the issue and the various ramifications from the teaching unions. A governor asked the HT to update governors after the meeting. JH added that the school has organized one week of online work for Y5 during the summer period.*

**Action:** HT to update governors on the outcome from the HTs meeting on 8 July in relation to a local school opening during the summer break.

*Q – After months of remote learning is there anything positive the school can take forward?*

*A – The HT answered that parental engagement has been very successful. Attendance has been high. JH added that the Oak National Academy online learning and interactive format has worked extremely well. The school is researching into the various curriculum maps and resources that might be available for use in the longer term. The school is considering linking the online learning provision to the current curriculum going forward. If children are off school the school can identify and cherry pick suitable online learning sessions which might benefit the children. The HT went on to say that if the school has to close again, the school has made good use out of zoom meetings which it would adjust and use more.*

*Q – A governor asked about the three members of staff who although not at school, were experiencing Covid-19 symptoms, but when tested were negative?*

*A – The HT told governors that the school is staying alert in relation to all members in the community with symptoms. In September if a member of staff is tested positive the school may have to look at closing.*

*Q – How do attendance figures compare to other schools?*

*A – The HT answered that schools in higher deprived areas tend to have an attendance rate of approximately 15 to 20%. Other areas with lower deprived families are experiencing an attendance rate of between 75 and 80%. The school has calculated 68 non-attendeess, 8 of which will not be returning in September. 38% of that number are pupil premium children.*

*Q – The home and online learning is very impressive. How is the school planning to deal with the disparity in engagement and bedding in of learning?*

*A – The HT answered that a whole school model is not possible. The school will react to the children. The approach is regular and consistent learning. The school will focus on Maths as linear learning. The school will also work hard to ensure staff confidence and during the first half term testing Y3 to Y5. It is hoped that the LA will carry out some benchmarking with other schools. The school is prepared to monitor the children carefully and track the progress of all children when they return in September. The relevant intervention will be put in place for each and every child. The HT has taken on the school's recovery lead role.*

## **7. Finance**

a. Budget 2019-2020 – budget approval – report.

Governors agreed to delegate the initial approval of the 2019/20 budget to the Finance and Premises Committee. The Committee Chair highlighted the following for governors:

- 1) There is an in-year deficit budget of £82,000 but there is a reason for the deficit;
- 2) Covid-19 will have an impact on income which will be assessed fully at the earliest opportunity. The current loss of income is estimated at approximately £15,000. The school is hoping to receive £5,000 from the government to cover some of the loss.

Beyond the above observations, the Finance Committee, having reviewed and scrutinized the budget in detail, recommends that the Board approve the budget.

*Q – Will the school receive a refund from the school trips?*

*A – The HT told governors that the residential trips have been rolled over to the next academic year. The Y6 PGL has moved to June. The Y5 trip has been pushed back by one month.*

- b. Budget monitoring to date to include any Covid-19 expenses and loss of income due to the virus from lettings etc

Please see 7a.

- c. School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) – The SFVS was reviewed in detail by the Finance Committee and sent to the LA to meet the deadline of 31 March. DF agreed to forward a copy to governors.

**Action:** DF to forward a copy of the 2019/20 SFVS to all governors

## 8. Policies and delegation

- a. Safeguarding and Child Protection (two annexes to cover Covid-19). As referenced in the HT’s report, JH told governors that the school adapted the two additional annexes to cover Covid-19 using the models sent from the Local Authority. Governors **approved** both annexes.
- b. Relationships and Sex Education – The HT explained that the Dfe has given schools a grace period until the summer term 2021 to start teaching the new guidance. The preparation of the curriculum and policy is a work in progress. The Curriculum Committee can review the subject at its autumn meeting to include consulting the parent/carer body followed by the FGB.
- c. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy and Information Report – The school Inclusion Policy which includes SEND was posted onto DropBox prior to the meeting. The policy was **approved** by governors.

**Action:** Curriculum Committee to discuss the implementation of the RSE guidance to include consulting the parent/carer body at its autumn meeting followed by the FGB.

## 9. Governance monitoring to cover the following themes:

Safeguarding  
Health and Safety  
Headteacher and staff well being  
Continuing education

The HT has been updating governors regularly with bulletins and emails about Covid-19. The above issues are also covered in the HT Report. On that basis governors were invited to ask questions on any of the above topics.

*Q – Do staff wish to comment on staff well-being?*

*A – The HT started by saying that staff have had an extremely positive and can do attitude during Covid-19. The staff governor commented that all staff are managing very well. Members of staff feel strongly supported and staff are a close knit group. Staff who have been able to are ready and want to come back to school. Some staff as highlighted in the HT report have not been able to return to school. The HT added that whilst there are valid reasons for some members of staff not to return to school, for those returning it is not necessarily fair and equal and some staff are not teaching their own year group. However, not one member of staff has complained. Some positive aspects to emerge are that one member of staff will stay in the early years foundation stage and others have gained some good Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Staff teaching other year groups have still managed to find that important level of consistency. Children are happier with structure and routine. The school feels that it is prepared for September and any well-being issues that may arise.*

*Q – Would the parent governors like to share their own thoughts or feedback from other parents about continuing education and other aspects of Covid-19?*

*A – The parent governors agreed that the feedback they have received has been positive, good structures have been put in place and communication has been clear and regular. There is some difference of opinion about the learning provision, however the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. Leadership is*

*strong. Drop off and pick up times have been running smoothly. The children have been keen to return to school. It is understandable that some families will be facing some quite difficult challenges.*

*The staff governor told governors that from his point of view he has experienced closer engagement with parents and children through class email and zoom. The situation has reinforced the importance of the home/school relationship.*

*Another parent governor added that the parent/school relationship is a hard balance to meet and the recent situation has illustrated an excellent building of bonds.*

*Q – With regard to well being is Place2be still available and are parents aware of any provision?*

*A – The HT confirmed that Place2be has been and continues to be available. In September the school will use Place2Be as creatively as possible and adapt to the needs of the school community. JH notified governors that some well being information about Thrive Wandsworth went out in a school newsletter about 3 weeks leading up to 1 June. The HT and JH have spoken to several parents to assess their situation and well-being. They are working hard to continue an open dialogue with parents and families.*

#### **10. Check arrangements for panel meetings**

The school has not had any panel meetings this term.

#### **11. Governing Board Business and Strategy**

a. Review any vacancies. Note any appointments/reappointments

Governors **unanimously agreed** for JF to become a Co-Opted Governor replacing AO who has completed her one her term.

AB is also standing down as LA Governor and Chair of Governors. Governors have been actively looking to fill the LA Governor post and have one potential candidate. Governors also hope to interview at least three other candidates, one of whom has an educational background. Governor Services has been informed that the Board and school are in the process of filling the LA Governor post. It is hoped that if any of the three new candidates have the relevant skills match to join the Board, one or more can join as Associate Members to bring new skills and allow for good succession planning.

As AB is standing down as the Chair of Governors, the Clerk emailed all governors two weeks prior to the meeting to ask governors to consider standing for the role of Chair or Vice-Chair or possibly Co-Chairs. Two governors put themselves forward for the role of Co-Chairs. JF and LW were **voted in unanimously** as Co-Chairs for one year. Governors thanked them both for standing and taking on the role.

b. Succession Planning

Please see item 11a.

c. Agree strategy for 2020/21 - Short and medium term.

Governors had a short discussion about the best way to devise and share the school strategy. Governors decided to meet in early September and a group of governors to join the inset day session when the new School Improvement Plan is discussed so that governors can contribute to the plan. LW to organize.

d. Governor Training

The Clerk will re-send the free online training provided by the National Governance Association (NGA).

e. Annual Governance Statement

AB and LW offered to draft the statement and send a draft to all governors to agree.

f. Preparation for the Academic Year 2020/21 (including agreeing meeting dates 2020/21; review committee structure and membership)

AO commented that as she is standing down, the Board needs to find a Chair for the Children, Families and Community (CFC) and an Inclusion Lead Governor. HT, JF and LW to discuss the above and committee membership and dates.

g. **Governing Board Self-Evaluation**

Governors to review the Key's 20 Questions when possible. From the recent skills audit, governors are aware that they need some experience and skills in premises, health and safety and education.

**Action:** Governors to continue their search for a LA Governor and interview three other potential candidates with a view to one or more candidates joining the Board as an Associate Member. Governors to try and find a LA Governor with skills in premises, health and safety or education.

**Action:** LW to organise a meeting in September for governors to discuss their short and medium term strategy. A group of governors to attend some of the school inset day to contribute and participate in the discussion on the School Improvement Plan.

**Action:** Clerk to resend the email about the online NGA training.

**Action:** AB and LW to draft the annual governance statement 2019/20 and send it to governors to agree.

**Action:** HT, JF and LW to find a new Chair of CFC and a new Inclusion Lead Governor.

**Action:** HT, JF and LW to discuss committee membership and dates for 2020/21.

**Action:** Governors to review the Key's 20 Questions when possible.

## **12. AOB**

The HT took this opportunity to sincerely thank the Chair for the many years of extremely hard work and support to him personally and the school. He has helped and supported the school in many ways including continuous and regular meetings and visits to the school. He provided solidity to the governing board at a time when it needed it. He understands and knows the school so well. His time as Chair has been an enjoyable, constructive and collaborative experience. The HT also thanked AO for all her help as a parent governor. The HT has several examples including very recent ones where AO's advice, feedback and updates in relation to the parent body and other matters has been invaluable.

The Chair thanked the HT for his kind words and commented that he and other governors are very pleased to have a HT of such high calibre on board. The difference the HT, DHT and now senior leaders such as TWG and all staff bring to the school is exceptional. Governors, parents and the local community are extremely grateful.

The Chair also thanked AO for a remarkable four years as parent governor and her final year as Co-Opted Governor. He also expressed his thanks to all governors for their hard work and support over the past few years.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for her help and support.

Another governor thanked AB and AO for their consistent approach to governance. Both are very accessible and she was made to feel very welcome. Her transition of becoming a governor was very easy. She has not known another governing board like it.

A governor added that he hoped governors and staff could organise an informal get together when lockdown eases and that governors are in the process of organising a collection for both governors leaving the Board.

## **13. Date of the next meeting**

TBC

There are no confidential minutes

