



Achievement Partnership Success
Full Governing Body Meeting
Thursday 24th March 2023 at 4.30pm
Minutes

Present

Afshan Ahmed	Parent Governor
Michael Coates	Co-opted Governor
David Cooke	LA Governor – Vice Chair
Grace Dobson-Hughes	Co-opted Governor
Sam Howell	Staff Governor
Fran Jones	Co-opted Governor
Khadija Kalsoom	Parent Governor
Hannah McHugh	Parent Governor
Steve Parkinson	Parent Governor
Sameed Rezayan	Co-opted Governor (<i>from 17:30</i>)
Richard Williams	Headteacher
<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>
<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>

In attendance:

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
Kathy Hughes	Deputy Headteacher

The meeting was quorate

Any text in red bold italics represents Governor question (Q); challenge (C); Governor and/or clerk support (S). Black bold upright represents decisions and actions.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Michael Coates welcomed all Governors to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

All Governors were present.

3. Declarations of Non/Pecuniary Interest

Khadija Kalsoom and Fran Wood each have one child in the school. Afshan Ahmed and Steve Parkinson each have two children in the school.

Hannah McHugh works for a company that provides Educational Psychology services.

4. Items of any other business

There were no items of any other business.

5. Minutes of last meeting held 13th December 2022 & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held 13th December 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

C/F Action: Clerk to send the link governor proforma.

This was actioned on the 13th December 2022.

Action: Headteacher to bring data to the next meeting of the gender pattern of engagement in the after school activities.

This information was not available and this action is carried forward.

Action: Clerk to share pupil premium impact statement for 2021/22 on TG for approval. Two Governors responded to the Trust Governor request to approve.

Governors formally approved the pupil premium impact statement for 2021/22

6. Headteacher report including:

The numbers of pupil premium children is increasing from 118 in autumn one, 123 in autumn two and 132 in spring one.

Attendance update – Pupils & Staff

Attendance is excellent in Alma Park at 94.5% at the end of spring one, this is above the national average. The school has an aspirational target of 96%. PA (persistent absence) is where a child's attendance is less than 90%. The PA rate is 13.95% which is below the Manchester average of 22% and below the national average of 23%.

Q: Do you have any children with severe absence?

There are two children in reception and Yr1 who are on a re-integration timetable, this is a part time timetable, one of these children is moving to specialist provision.

Progress made towards SIP Priorities

Quality of Education

C: Governors asked about the phonics and e-books, and asked if there was any feedback on the use of e-books and screen time?

Q: What is the uptake of parents engaging with this scheme?

Kathy Hughes reported this is slow and two parents were initially negative about this. This was meant to provide an additional way of reading with your family, this is not required and is not recommended for bedtime reading. Children still have reading for pleasure books. The quality of teaching of reading has improved. The paper books on this scheme are flimsy and are not always returned to school to be available for other children. The e-book programme has all books accessible to all families and in school.

Q: Is reading for pleasure with any book?

Yes, the children can choose any book from the classroom and other books which can be coded are counted as reading for pleasure.

Q: How much is e-book scheme this costing?

The cost is approximately an additional £1000 on the top of the scheme books, and this will be reviewed. The staff governor was concerned that the programme indicates how much time has been spent reading and this is not consistent with the claims of books read.

Q: E-book only links to phonics, do the children in Yr2 who have passed phonics have access to e-books?

These children do not have an e-book scheme.

C: How do you judge the reading books impact?

Questionnaires to parents will be administered to review the impact of the e-books. The timetable for reading has been increased and there is impact of improved reading. Teachers keep a record of books read including the child's reading record from home, this gives a quick tally of when books are changed.

Governors wanted this scheme to succeed and suggested school staff needs to have more conversations with parents and more monitoring. It was suggested a parents workshop or drop in session is held when the scheme is introduced and this can address issues such as how to login. On reflection this scheme might have been rushed.

SDP (School Development Plan)

Autumn term was a challenge especially with the ransomware attack.

Q: Governors asked about the QE Update.

This is included in the SEF (School-Evaluation Form) which was reported previously. There has been much work on embedding the new curriculum and the book -looks are positive. The QA Liam Trippier now judges this school as good.

C: Is there any teaching that is not good or any teachers who are struggling?

Lesson observations give a snapshot but the monitoring of learning is more effective. Where teaching is less than good the teacher will receive planning support from Kathy Hughes or support from an Assistant Headteacher. There will be modelling, and opportunities to observe other teachers. Each time a concern has been identified, action to address this has been successful.

Q: Is this formalised in any way?

If the actions mentioned were not showing improvements the staff member would be put on a support plan, there is currently no one on a support plan.

Q: Do Governors get told if staff are on a support plan?

This would be shared (anonymously) at the Staffing and Budget Committee.

Q: Governors asked about the RAG rating in the SDP

Red means the target is not achieved; yellow indicates this is partially met; and green means this area for development has been achieved. Some developments will be ongoing or longer.

C: Governors noted personal development for February this year is RAG rated red, for example the focus on UNICEF?

There are two staff members responsible for this development and one of the staff members is absent due to sickness and the other staff member does not have the capacity to progress this alone.

C: There is more RAG rating of red for behaviour and attitudes, why is this?

The ethos and behaviour of children in Alma Park is good, there are no high level behaviour needs. However, there is much work to do in a wide variety of areas, but the curriculum development is more of a priority.

Q: Will Ofsted judge the school against this SDP?

Yes, this will be uploaded on the portal along with the SEF and LA QA (local authority quality assurance) reports. The expectation is leadership & management are aware of the priorities needed and inspectors will check the capacity for improvement. The RAG rating of red refers to actions not yet completed, not weaknesses.

C: How is cultural capital embedded in the school curriculum?

Work has been done to ensure the curriculum is diverse and enrichment occurs. There is a menu of trips and experiences for the children. A consultant helped shaped the knowledge and skills and the staff applied this to this community and looked at opportunities to make links in the local community.

Q: How much weight and volume do you place on cultural capital?

The school curriculum priorities personal development and 70% of children in this school are in bottom percentiles for poverty. Governors have previously agreed to pay travel for trips. There are children with responsibilities such as UNICEF councillors. Children take responsibility to promote anti-bullying initiatives. The children have raised money for international charitable causes and have raised money for the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey and the floods in Pakistan. The school curriculum does include initiatives for example for IWD (International Women's Day) and mental health. The curriculum is not tokenistic, Black History month is not needed, this is included throughout the curriculum.

Kathy Hughes reported on an EYFS video about cultural capital, the home corner needs to reflect all communities, and this is in all subjects. A piece of work for next year might be how to better celebrate the south Asian community "not about me without me". This will be developed in conjunction with parents.

C: Who will hold that space?

This is yet to be developed, this will include a focus on neurodiversity, LGBT, and other issues. External arts organisations were suggested, and for this to be sustainable.

Governors raised the tokenistic nature of some aspects of teaching. The Headteacher explained the leadership is working hard for a progressive broad and balanced curriculum meeting national curriculum standards. PSHE and RE is now taught by qualified teachers and is no longer part of PPA. The assemblies have changed, 22% of children are white British, more than 50% of children in Alma Park are Muslim. Yr4 will do an EID assembly and the school does celebrate the diversity.

C: How much weight on social and emotional awareness and skills is given to the child's development?

Sharing and being nice to each other is important for the wellbeing and to enable children to learn. This school is not an exam factory but standards are important for ensuring the children have the key skills needed for their development, this is a balance.

S: Governors noted this school does have outstanding behaviour; the children have always been encouraged to be critical thinkers.

Staffing Update including staff wellbeing analysis

The staff survey results were shared in advance of the meeting.

Q: How many staff were sent the survey?

65 or 70 were issued, only 19 responded. A paper version will be issued.

C: Governors noted staff responses in parts were negative and concerning for health. The Headteacher was asked what are his feelings about these results?

There has been much change, a new curriculum, the ransomware led to loss of information, so the responses are understandable. All staff now have an extra full day for planning each half term and each subject leader now has time out of class.

Q: Was this survey anonymous?

Yes

Q: Is there a way to capture the nuances behind this and explore?

Five people chose to comment, and these were summarised by the headteacher in the report.

Q: Are you worried about this when inspection occurs?

The Headteacher informed Governors he is concerned about staff wellbeing.

C: Have the changes introduced been too much too quickly or could this be done differently? Is the pace of change overwhelming?

The Headteacher felt the teachers, children, and community do not deserve a judgement of 'requires improvement', 12 months ago his judgement was the school was 'inadequate'. The change could have been slower but change had to happen. The school now is judged as good.

Governors noted 80% of responses felt there was a clear vision and ethos, and management are making changes for the better. The negative responses might reflect being a teacher in 2023 rather than Alma Park. Most respondents feel valued. Governors were surprised the responses were not worse given media reports.

Q: Is the timing of Ofsted window affecting responses?

Yes, this could be an explanation.

C: Governors were keen the Ofsted preparation does not have a negative impact on staff wellbeing. What is the leadership team doing to minimise concerns about Ofsted?

The Headteacher explained he tries to ensure the process is understood by all staff. Staff have been prepared for a deep dive and are now expected to know the whole curriculum for the subject they lead. Kathy Hughes explained the Ofsted window is a stress but the deep dive occurring now equips staff in preparing for this. If things are not going well in your subject you should know this and have a plan to develop your subject. The teachers standards require the children to learn the national curriculum, this was not happening in all areas of the school until the curriculum was revamped.

C: Has there been any spikes in sickness and stress relating illnesses?

Staff attendance was monitored by office staff and there has been a vacancy for some time. A new office staff member is starting after Easter, and this will be one of the duties. There is no staff sickness in KS2, there is more sickness in KS1 and EYFS. The school leadership is flexible in meeting requests for leave during term time.

S: Governors appreciated this has been a steep journey, this time next year should be embedding, and this is expected to settle. Governors noted there is a culture change occurring.

C: Governors asked if the Sandwell Wellbeing Charter Mark gained by the previous leadership is learning lost or is this still happening? There was an action plan and much data collected.

The Headteacher confirmed this Charter Mark is still important and was extended to all staff.

C: Governors were concerned about support for the Headteacher, where else do you get support from?

The Headteacher explained he receives termly supervision with counsellor; support from the leadership coach Kerry Cleary; safeguarding supervision; work within a group of headteachers; and the fantastic leadership team. The Headteacher feels well supported even though four out of five senior leaders have left this school in recent years.

Premises Update

A walk around with the link Governor David Cooke has occurred and the report was shared at Staffing & Budget Committee and has been uploaded onto Trust Governor. There were plans for expenditure on refurbishments.

S: Governors praised the leadership for the new furniture and improvements to the building. The new furniture was praised as money well spent.

Q: Can air conditioning be in more than two of the rooms?

The clerk will put include this on the Staffing, Budget & Premises Committee scheduled for the 3rd May 2023.

7. Behaviour and Safety Update

There is one child in child protection, one child receiving Early Help. There has been one accident report to the LA for bumped head /concussion.

Q: How much do governors need to know about safeguarding?

The Headteacher explained he has a statutory obligation and duty to report to Governors.

C: Governors questions the child on child abuse between two Yr6 boys, is this a new area for reporting? What constitutes child on child abuse for reporting?

Children fighting is abuse if there is an imbalance of power. This was two boys fighting, but no imbalance, but the children might be exploring what feels good or not good. This was reported but a referral not needed to social services. Parents were informed and supported school actions. Safeguarding supervision confirmed no more action was needed. The Headteacher acknowledged this was a difficult assessment.

Q: Do you use CPOMS? (Child Protection Online Monitoring System)

Yes

C: Governors felt this definition is unclear, what if there were SEND concerns and imbalance of power? What is being asked of staff to record?

The safeguarding health check has occurred, and the remit is wide, this is a learning for the staff and at a different school may be different. KCSiE (keeping children safe in education) guidance is followed.

Q: Would you do work on this in the curriculum?

Yes this was followed up with learning on good and bad touching and appropriate touching.

8. Deep Dive Writing - Kathryn Solley

The report was shared in advance of the meeting and questions were invited. The author of the report is Mylene Maguire from her discussions with Kathryn Solley.

Q: How does the external consultant work with the subject lead?

She simulated an inspection, observed three teachers and then there was a discussion about areas of strength and areas for development. Mylene Maguire is a national leader for education and this process is also provides a quality assurance.

Q: Was there any surprises?

The Handwriting Policy was already identified as a need. This is a priority for summer two. Kathryn Solley felt this was a positive experience and more security is needed regarding the data. The data will be a focus for next year. Linking the reading and writing has started in Yr6 and this will be rolled out.

Q: In reception, Yr1 and Yr2 how does this writing scheme work?

This scheme, Talk For Writing is for KS2. This scheme will remain but will link to reading to expose to the children to more quality. The Fred reading scheme is used alongside Talk for Writing.

Q: How do you ensure the children are reading different genres?

Each unit has three different texts, often one is a story, all different styles of texts will be covered.

Governors noted the report focused on the writing lead. The link governors report was shared with this meeting.

Q: Oracy is a key priority, what does the report say about Oracy?

Three lessons were observed having good opportunities for talking, in one lesson there was more teacher talk and less opportunities for children to talk.

Q: Spelling and SPAG (spelling, punctuation, and grammar) now have more time? Is this under your remit of writing? There is more to cover in less time.

Yes staff have been encouraged to have two spelling starters a week and three grammar starters each week at the start of the lesson. There is no extra time for English but time is saved if this is flowing better?

Q: Does this approach affect children's stamina for writing, this has been an issue since the partial school closure?

The advice is to keep the starter succinct and to balance time to accommodate the writing. Oracy will be more high quality in all lessons, there will be more structure, and more training is needed.

Q: Will this be in the long terms plans?

Professionals are expected to use the strategies that suit their learners.

C: How do you facilitate 'Talk For Writing' with new staff?

New staff can observe Kathryn Solley but a more structured training programme is needed. Kathy Hughes will support new staff and is more experienced in EYFS and KS1.

Q: When deep dive occurs, how do you choose who gets observed?

A record is kept so all staff are observed fairly and not observed too many times.

9. Cyber Security

Phishing has been trialled and the results for staff and governors are ignoring such emails were pleasing. This was successful and this will be an ongoing feature. There has been a conversation with those staff who opened this.

Q: What are your plans for moving to the cloud?

Three companies have quoted on the infrastructure, major improvements are needed before moving fully to google cloud. Google docs is not so different to the service currently used. The school pays for a lease line which provides an internet line just for this school.

10. Approve SFVS

Afshan Ahmed explained the process undertaken to report on processes and assurance for compliance. The document highlighted in yellow the changes since last year. The guidance document was used.

Governors formally approved SFVS

11. Budget Update

Governors were referred to the minutes of the meeting held last week (Item 13).

12. Governing Body Matters

Link Governor Reports

Reports were received from:

- Fran Jones, Reading
- Hannah McHugh, Maths Hannah McHugh SEND
- Michael Coates, Foundation subjects
- David Cooke – Health and Safety

Governors were reminded to complete their monitoring visits this term.

C: Safeguarding team needs to be bigger, can more people be trained on DSL?

The inclusion team will be trained in L3 giving access to CPOMS.

13. Committee Minutes (for information)

Staffing, Budget & Premises held 16th March 2023

QE held 9th March 2023

14. Ofsted working party update

The three meetings occurred and were reported as valuable.

15. Academisation Update

There was no new information to report on this agenda item.

16. Policies for Governor Approval

Ratify approval of Anti-Bullying Policy

Trust Governor approval was sought 10.03.23.

Governors formally approved the Anti-Bullying Policy

Health & safety Policy

Governors deferred approval of the Health & safety Policy as the correct version was not uploaded onto Trust Governor. Approval will be sought via Trust Governor.

Low Level Concerns Policy

This is for reference only and relates to KCSiE. This relates to incidents not meeting the threshold for LADO (local authority designated officer). This is for staff not meeting the code of conduct requirement. Low level concerns are to be recorded as they might be parts of a jigsaw. Staff can self-refer. The school is going to be using a new safer browser. The children in this school are e-safety aware.

Governors formally approved the Low Level Concerns Policy

Pupil Premium Policy

Governors formally approved the Pupil Premium Policy

17. Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

18. Dates of future meetings

Governors requested an additional FGB meeting.

- Quality of Education: Thursdays 4.30pm – 6.30pm - 8th June 2023
- Staffing, Budget & Premises: 4.30pm – 6.30pm - Wednesday 3rd May 2023 & Thursday 15th June 2023
- Full Governing Body: Thursdays 4.30pm – 6.30pm - 22nd June 2023

Meeting ended 18:40

Signed: Michael Coates

Date: 22nd June 2023

Summary of actions

- C/F Action: Headteacher to bring data to the next meeting of the gender pattern of engagement in the after school activities.