



Celebrating Difference, Achieving Together

Full Governing Body Meeting Thursday 20th March 2025 at 4.00pm Minutes

Present

Michael Coates	Co-opted Governor
David Cooke	LA Governor
Grace Dobson-Hughes	Co-opted Governor
Sam Howell	Staff Governor
Fran Jones	Co-opted Governor (Chair)
Steve Parkinson	Parent Governor
Mariam Ramadan	Parent Governor
Mark Turner	Co-opted Governor
Richard Williams	Headteacher

Apologies

Pazeeka Battool	Co-opted Governor
Sarah Butler	Associate Governor
Sania Rafique	Parent Governor
Priti Shah	Associate Governor

Absence

Neilam Atcha	Co-opted Governor
Khadija Kalsoom	Parent Governor

In attendance:

James Cole	Teacher/UNICEF Lead
Kathy Hughes	Deputy Headteacher
Steve Mason	Year 4 Teacher
Helen Walker	Clerk – Just-A-Sec

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 and Introductions

The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting. At the last meeting, there was a review of governor skills and the areas of premises and financial management were highlighted as requiring further governor support. A communication had been sent to parents and via the Local Authority (LA). Mr Turner had come forward as a potential co-opted governor and was a Quantity Surveyor who worked on large scale projects which had included schools. He also had facilities

management skills and was a parent of a pupil in Year 3. The approval of Mr Turner as a co-opted governor had been passed on The Trust Governor (TTG).

Governors ratified Mr Turner as a co-opted governor and to join the Premises, Health & Safety Committee

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Ms Battool, Ms Butler, Ms Rafique and Ms Shah.

3. Declaration of non/pecuniary interest

Mariam Ramadan has three children in the school, Steve Parkinson and Sarah Butler each have two children in the school, Sania Rafique and Pazeeka Batool each have one child at the school. Sam Howell's partner had undertaken some voluntary work in the school for Peace Pathways who were paid by the school for work undertaken.

There were no other declarations other than those previously reported on the annual declaration and the school website.

4. Declarations of Any Other Business

One item of any other business was declared. Also, the two policies for approval would be uploaded to TTG and agreed virtually.

5. Minutes of last meeting held 5th December 2024 & Matters Arising

Governors formally approved the minutes of the meeting held 5th December as an accurate record.

There were no actions arising from this meeting.

6. Headteacher report

SDP update – Unicef – James Cole, UNICEF Lead

The UNICEF Silver Report school was uploaded to TTG. The school was working towards the silver award as they already had bronze. There were nine outcomes to meet and evidence. UNICEF would be visiting in May. The school had also chosen five rights to focus on – freedom of expression, freedom of thought, belief and religion, children with a disability, right to education, and leisure, play and culture.

Question. How did you choose Greenpeace as the global charity? Mr Cole gave pupils four choices; Oxfam, Water Aid, Save the Children and Greenpeace. Pupils were shown videos of the work of each charity.

Question. How would you measure outcome 1? (Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere). This would be evidenced during the meeting with UNICEF. It was a journey for pupils getting to know each right.

Question. When the school achieved it, what would that mean? It was not all about achieving the award. The LA had declared a rights respecting city and this work fitted with that as well as the curriculum with a knowledge of local, national and global issues. Pupils would be aware of these rights and it binded them with other pupils in the class and children around the world with a common thread of humanity.

Question. Did the school teach about an understanding of global issues? Did pupils raise these in class? Global issues had been raised previously and the rights of children had been discussed.

Governors thanked Mr Cole for his work.

Mr Cole left the meeting at 4.18pm

Restorative justice – Steve Mason, Restorative Lead

The Restorative Approaches Report was uploaded to TTG. Mr Mason provided some resources to governors during the meeting. He had been assigned the task of moving the Behaviour Policy forward and to replace the old system. Mr Mason had attended training in July 2024 and since then, had implemented changes. A steering group was set up and members were selected on their background, current role and one member of staff had a therapy background. This academic year, there had been a process of adding elements and language was not expected to change overnight. Pupil behaviour was already good but there were still some low level issues. A consistent approach had been implemented with language cards and changes to the reflection sheets. The school would try to measure the difference in behaviour although staff did not see all conversations between pupils. There would be an evaluation at the end of the year.

A check-in was introduced at the start of each day. This was an opportunity for pupils to talk about any new issues, which they appreciated. Also, a new promoting positive behaviours approach was introduced. Accessible information had been provided for staff and pupils. The school would also move away from the current reward systems to house points. Staff would receive anti-bullying training and would model this for pupils.

Govs thanked Mr Mason and colleagues for the huge amount of work undertaken.

Question. Was the work difficult to evaluate as behaviour was already very good?

Everyone had got on board and it was only implemented recently. An evaluation would take place at the end of the year.

Comment. It was important for pupils to know their rights. The ‘what’s happened’ sheet made the information child friendly.

Question. Would these resources be used from Year 1? That would be the case.

Question. Had you noticed less pupils having to be seen with behaviour issues? No behaviour issues had been identified in classrooms. It felt that the new approach was effective. Pupils received specific feedback regarding their behaviour.

Question. Was bad behaviour always from the same pupils? Some struggled to conform but the pegs in classrooms helped.

Mr Mason left the meeting at 4.32pm

Headteacher report

An earlier version of the Headteacher report was uploaded to TTG. Two sections had subsequently changed. 457 pupils were on roll in September and this had increased to 467 against a PAN of 472. Each pupil brought funding to the school and the office were working to keep pupil numbers higher. There had been an increase in pupils eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium from 124 in September to 146 currently.

The new Attendance Officer was working hard and met with Mr Williams weekly. Attendance was very strong and the school had the second best attendance in the LA. Attendance for all vulnerable groups was above the national average. Persistent Absence (PA) was currently 5.4% without Reception and 6.9% with Reception. This was more than 10% below the national

average and was a credit to the ethos of the school and the work of staff. Members of staff did their best to greet all pupils by name in the morning and the school provided challenge to non-attendance. They were working to identify pupils with absence patterns and there was an historic issue with some parents of Nursery pupils not understanding that daily attendance was required. There was a real push on attendance and the Officer was looking at before and after figures to see the impact of their role.

The school consistency had a low number of pupils in contact with social services. Children had to be really struggling and at immediate risk of harm in the LA to meet the threshold.

Question. What were the main reasons for PA? This was due to holidays in term time which were mainly taken around school holidays.

Question. Was there an issue around pupils taking longer holidays? Holidays around February half term were an issue. A large percentage of pupils had family abroad.

Question. Were the fines and three strikes rule working? They seemed to be working as PA had reduced since September. Pupil attendance had increased by 1% year on year which was more than the national trend.

Question. What was driving the increase in attendance? The school had effective systems in place and the Attendance Officer was working hard on this.

Question. Might parents not tell the whole truth regarding absence such as telling the school their child was ill rather than admitting to a holiday? There was a small number of parents who might do this. More parents realised that if there was more than 20 days absence, the pupil could be off rolled.

Question. Was there any animosity from parents regarding absence procedures? This could potentially be an issue; however, the school was up front with parents about the procedure. The school celebrated attendance in a number of ways such as in the newsletter and during parent walk arounds.

Question. Did the high LA threshold for social service support place additional pressure on the school? This was the case. The school had expanded the capacity and experience of the team with the inclusion lead appointment last year. Staff did contact the LA and log issues. The school supported pupils but could only do so much. This support included a food bank, help with school uniforms and a charity was present at parents evening.

Question. How was extending the timetable for some pupils from part time working? Those pupils now had lunch at school and were in school from 1pm. Pupils did struggle to regulate themselves in the school environment and the school was working with parents to find the right place for them. They had to be honest about what the school could offer but were turning a corner with parents.

Question. Were the pupils with additional needs in a regular classroom? The pupils were in the Acorn provision classroom which had less distractions. They had targets that met their plans and there was a high staff ratio. There were at least three members of staff in Acorn all the time; three teaching assistants (TA) and the Inclusion Lead.

Question. Did Acorn have higher costs in staff time due to this ratio? This was the case and the school was mindful of the impact on other staff.

The Zen Zone was no longer in operation which had been for pupils working significantly below their age related level. The school felt it was not financially viable and the cohort had changed.

Question. What the cost to the rest of the school for the loss of TA time to Acorns? There was a cost but the school factored in the EHCP income. Acorn provision was running at a loss but it was not significant. It was aimed at Years 1 and 2 but had one Nursery pupil.

Question. If the parents of the Acorn pupils chose another school, would these staff lose their jobs or be reassigned? From 39 Nursery places, there would be 30 siblings this Sept and so their families were known to the school. There were staff on fixed term contracts and supply staff which allowed the school to manage staffing.

Question. Had the increase in pupils with EHCPs created pressure? The pupils required more Educational Psychologist (EP) time. The school was looking for 15 EP days next year and this should mean all pupils were assessed.

Regarding writing and oracy, there had been an audit of the ELKLAN programme yesterday. The school had collated evidence and the auditor had been on Zoom. The school would raise a complaint about this. The school had put a timetable together for the audit which included lesson observations. They had looked at the school environment, scaffolding and implemented practice. The auditor had confirmed that the school had passed and were very impressed. Ms Hughes thanked all staff involved.

Question. So the school did not struggle for audit evidence? There was a lot of evidence and it took a lot of work to gather this. It was unclear why some evidence was needed.

Question. How did the ELKLAN programme develop from now? The school had to now maintain standards and they were in touch with the Voice 21 charity.

The Wellcomm toolkit was used in Reception and Nursery for pupils with communication needs.

The initial statutory data for end of Spring 1 showed good progress for Reception pupils. This was a different cohort to last year and their targets were in line with national. The school was looking for above national achievement for phonics screening and attainment for all groups continued to be high. For the End of Key Stage 1 targets, the pupils had been divided into the whole cohort of children and those who had been in the school since Reception. Those who had been in school since reception were achieving at least in line with national averages. Progress had been strong with aspirational targets. In the current Year 6, there had been a significant number of international new arrivals throughout Key Stage 2; 14 pupils were new to the country with no English spoken from Year 4.

There was an area of weakness in Year 6 Writing. Some pupils were working outside the class with extra support. The school was aware that the level that pupils went to high school with would affect their targets and they were striving for pupils to go up as expected.

Question. The Key Stage 1 Maths outcomes for disadvantaged pupils had increased from a baseline of 53% to 78% at the end of Spring 1. Why was this? Pupils had been stronger coming up and there was also a small number of pupils so there was a larger percentage per pupil. This was a consistent cohort and language understanding was not as much of an issue. The foundations from Year 1 had been really positive.

Comment. The phonics data was great and it was clear that a foundation of strong attendance made a big difference.

Question. Was the new approach to Writing coming through in this data? One of Miss Solley's targets was Writing. He had looked at aspects such as handwriting and a new approach was needed for next year. Effective writing should be ingrained earlier in school and life experiences such as trips were important as this would provide a purpose for writing. The school had slimmed down objectives for the year, identified key elements and were using repetition. The moderation from One Education had focused on what else pupils needed and teachers had found this really valuable.

Early Years provision was working well. Staff had visited local schools to provide a perspective on the school's journey and this helped to drive work forward.

Question. How was the school ensuring year group parity for trips? The expectation was that there were six trips per year, both local and further afield. This was not monitored. Trips for Year 1 might be less than other years. The school would try to introduce a way to ensure parity and then make sustainable changes year to year. It would be useful for teachers to have a plan for trips by year so these were not repeated.

Autumn / Spring SEF

The Self Evaluation document was uploaded to TTG. The Self Evaluation Form (SEF) was completed twice a year. This was the first SEF completed without the school improvement partner. The Ofsted criteria for the ratings such as good and outstanding were used and evidenced. The evaluation of overall effectiveness was the top end of good for this SEF. Other Headteachers wanted to look at the school. The SEF also referenced aspects of outstanding, especially for behaviour and attitudes. Attendance was a large part of Ofsted criteria. The school was on a journey and had driven a huge amount of change. Staff had bought into this and there were no concerns about observations in any classroom.

Question. When would Ofsted be expected to visit? Tomorrow was the halfway point from the last inspection in March 2022 to the next.

Question. How much was the SEF driving strategic direction? How important was achieving an outstanding rating? The rating was not important alone. The SEF was used to measure the school and provide a picture to governors. It also provided a robust system of accountability.

Development Work with Parents and Carers

Question. How was the extended parents evening for pupils with EHCPs? It went well and provided more time to co-create plans. The Inclusion Lead was in attendance.

Question. Was there a risk of labelling pupils by having a separate evening? Was the engagement helping? There were a few conversations with parents of pupils who would not catch up. These were necessary discussions.

Question. Do we ask in the parent survey if their child had SEND? This was not in the current survey but it could be added.

Action – Mr Williams to add a question to the parent survey – ‘Does your child have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities?’

7. Behaviour and Safety

This was covered in the Headteacher's report.

8. Approve Schools Financial Value Statement

This had been approved at the Staffing & Budget Committee and required ratification. This would be sent via TTG for approval virtually.

Action – Governors to approve the SFVS online by 31st March

9. Committee Minutes – for information only

Staffing & Budget Committee 06.02.25

Question. The low staff expenditure was interesting. Did this include agency and supply cost and insurance? Insurance did not cover staff absence for less than five days.

Question. Did the school pay for teacher or TA supply? The school did not have supply teachers. The insurance payment would be used for TA supply. The school was looking at the insurance cost versus the return for next year. The absence insurance also covered a Employee Assistance Programme which was available to staff.

Question. Was there an update on the MUGA? It was not going ahead currently. Mr Williams was meeting with United Utilities on Tuesday. They owned the ground where water pipes ran under the school grounds. United Utilities were refusing to have lorries over six tonnes driving over the ground to undertake the MUGA work and therefore a bridge would need to be built. The school could not afford that expenditure.

Quality of Education Committee 06.03.25

There had been a positive visit to the EYFS provision.

10. Governing Body Matters

Co-opted vacancy

Mr Turner had filled this vacancy. There was another potential co-opted governor.

The governing body currently had two associate governors who had been asked by Ms Jones if they wanted to become full governors. Governors were asked to approve Ms Butler's conversion to a co-opted governor.

Decision – Governors approved the conversion of Ms Butler from associate to co-opted governor

Training Undertaken since the last FGB meeting

Governors had logged their training undertaken.

Link Governor Roles

Ms Ramadan would replace Mr Coates as Safeguarding Link Governor. There was an expectation that link governors would undertake at least one visit per year. Mr Coates would forward the visit training information. The school did not have a governor visit policy and this would be discussed again in future.

Action – Mr Coates to share link governor training information with governors and add a visit policy template to TTG

Question. Was there an expectation that link governors would visit classrooms as well as meeting with staff? This was the case.

Governor Monitoring Reports

These were shared at the QE committee held 6th March 2025:

- Sarah Butler, Speech and language report;
- Sarah Butler, Writing;
- Steve Parkinson, SDP priorities 3&4.

11. Policies for Review & Approval

Both policies below would be added to TTG and approval sought online:

Anti Bullying Policy

E-Safety Policy

Ms Howell left the meeting at 5.50pm

12. Items of Any Other Business

Confidential item

This item is contained in the confidential minutes.

13. Dates of Remaining 2024/25 meetings:

Spring Term

- Premises, Health, and Safety Committee – 3rd April 2025 at 16:00

Summer Term

- Staffing & Budget Committee – 24th April 2025 at 16:30
- Staffing & Budget Committee – 19th June 2025 at 16:30
- Quality of Education Committee – 26th June 2025 at 16:15
- Full Governing Board – 3rd July 2025 at 16:00

Meeting ended 5.55pm

Signed: Fran Jones

Date: 3rd July 2025

Summary of actions

- Mr Williams to add a question to the parent survey – ‘Does your child have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities?’
- Governors to approve the SFVS online by 31st March
- Mr Coates to share link governor training information with governors and add a visit policy template to TTG