



Celebrating Difference, Achieving Together

Full Governing Body Meeting Thursday 3rd July 2025 at 4.00pm Minutes

Present

Sarah Butler	Co-opted Governor
David Cooke	LA Governor
Sam Howell	Staff Governor
Fran Jones	Co-opted Governor (Chair)
Steve Parkinson	Parent Governor
Sania Rafique	Parent Governor
Richard Williams	Headteacher
<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>

Apologies

Michael Coates	Co-opted Governor
Grace Dobson-Hughes	Co-opted Governor
Mariam Ramadan	Parent Governor
Mark Turner	Co-opted Governor

In attendance:

Kathy Crotty	Clerk – Just-A-Sec
Kathy Hughes	Deputy Headteacher
Priti Shah	Associate Governor

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.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Michael Coates, Grace Dobson-Hughes, Mark Turner, and Mariam Ramadan.

3. Declaration of non/pecuniary interest

Mariam Ramadan has three children in the school, Steve Parkinson, Sania Rafique and Sarah Butler each have two children in the school. Mark Turner has one child in the school.

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

4. Declarations of Any Other Business

Link Governor roles and the governor away day.
Safeguarding

Governor roles in regard to Safeguarding

The chair has recently attended LA (local authority) training regarding safeguarding and shared scenarios with governors for discussion. The scenarios focused on hypothetical events and governors acknowledged and understood their role was strategic and not operational. The meeting was informed the LA is providing a new Lettings Policy with more focus on safeguarding issues.

Q: Does the Headteacher check who uses the premises?

Yes, the hirer must complete a declaration.

Governors were aware of e-safety policies in relation to social media use. The staff governor reported she could remind staff of their settings when using social media. Governors felt the second scenario was an operational matter and were aware staff have lost their jobs due to inappropriate internet use. Governors were informed One Education provide HR support for this school and Governors were advised they can seek support there if there was an issue related to the chair or Headteacher.

Scenario three related to a parent's issue and governors were advised to follow the complaints procedure and refer to the Headteacher, chair, or clerk.

5. Minutes of last meeting held 20rd March 2025 & Matters Arising

Governors formally approved the minutes of the meeting held 20rd March 2025 as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Action: Mr Williams to add a question to the parent survey – 'Does your child have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities?' This will appear on the next survey.

Action: Governors to approve the SFVS online by 31st March. This has been actioned.

Action: Mr Coates to share link governor training information with governors and add a visit policy template to TTG. This was actioned on the 6th March 2025.

6. Approvals

Ratify approval of 2025/26 Budget

Governors formally ratified approval of the 2025/26 Budget

Ratify approval for expenditure with of £154,112.95 for premises works.

Governors formally ratified approval for expenditure with of £154,112.95 for premises works. See discussion in item seven.

Approve Staffing Structure for 2025/26

Governors formally approved the Staffing Structure for 2025/26

Approve Pupil Premium Statement

Governors formally approved the Pupil Premium Statement

Approve Collaboration Agreement with St. Pauls Withington

Governors formally approved the Collaboration Agreement with St. Pauls Withington

Approve the co-option of Grace Dobson-Hughes for a second term.

Governors formally approved the co-option of Grace Dobson-Hughes for a second term.

Ratify Approval the co-option of Sarah Butler

Governors formally ratified the co-option of Sarah Butler

7. Headteacher report

The numbers of pupils in the school is stable, there has been an increase in FSM (free school meals) and attendance is positive, the school is in the top 10% nationally for attendance including attendance for children receiving SEND support and FSM. This school is the best attended non-faith school in Manchester, the four schools who have better attendance are all faith schools. The INSET days were not held during the Eid celebrations; it was not possible to plan this year. PA (persistent absence) is 30% of the national average, the national average is 18%, this school's PA is 6.6% and reflects the ethos and hard work of the staff in Alma Park.

SEND numbers remain stable, there are seven children in Acorn, four children have places at a special school which shows this is a good stepping stone. Two children have high needs.

Q: Are there any children in Alma Park who would be better placed in Acorns?

There are currently three children accessing Acorns and three more joining in September. One child in the nursery is naming a specialist school on their plan, and there is one child in Yr1 and one child in reception who will be accessing nursery provision. The school is working with the parents. Currently there are children with potential need, the school wants them to access the early years provision first. Staff have undertaken home visits and stay and play, the staff need to undertake more assessments.

Q: Are the staffing levels of Acorn needing to reduce?

The school will wait and see, the supply person will be informed she will not be needed; however, she might yet be needed.

Q: Who makes the decision to place a child in Acorns?

The decision is made with the teacher, the inclusion lead, and the Headteacher and deputy, this is based on observations and discussions.

Q: Do the parents have to agree?

Yes, the parents are involved in the decision.

S: Governors praised the school regarding the good news about the EHCP (education, health and care plans).

The staff have done well advocating for these children, the LA are paying for independent provision for one child.

Premises Update

The Headteacher explained each year the school had saved a surplus for the MUGA (multi use games area), if the surplus is above 8% the LA can claw this back. In 2023/24 there was a surplus and the school transferred £100,000 from revenue to capital and informed the LA, this was to purchase the MUGA. The final approval for the MUGA was only completed three weeks ago. There is another £186,000 needing to be spent. Governors were aware of the premises issues and the need to improve the site.

The Headteacher has been working with Governors for three years on the premises and established a sub-committee to focus just on premises. The committee had recommended expenditure to the Staffing and Budget committee who approved expenditure on the library the staff room, and toilets. The school co-opted a quantity surveyor who has been working with the school on the tenders for the school and he has worked in the background to ensure value for money. The quotes for the toilets came in at £50,000 less than the final agreement due to Marks input. The prices were all adjusted downwards and Mark Turner has saved the school about between £50,000 and £60,000.

Q: Do schools get charged more for working in the school holidays?

This cannot be proven but it is suspected, educators are not trained in construction.

Governors have agreed to spend £314,000 from revenue and £100,000 capital on the refurbishments. The playground improvements are welcomed. The library improvements can benefit the community for ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) provision.

C: Could this money be spent on support for children?

The capital amounts allocated to the school for premises updates is £9,000 each year and the school needs to use revenue to supplement this.

C: Why is there a surplus?

There has been savings, the leadership re-structure has saved money with retirements and a smaller senior team. The school also enrolls siblings into full classes to keep families together and this enhances the budget.

You can spend revenue on staff but these costs are year on year. A UP3 teacher would cost £75,000 with oncosts. This spending might buy you six teachers for one year. Governors believe this school has a good reputation, but the drop in the birth rate means schools have to compete for places. There are reductions in the number of children in many local schools. Governors felt spending on the premises would help with enrolments. This discussion has ensured there are no staff affected.

Q: Is there no other access to funding for premises?

There are other sources which tends to be for emergencies or relating to safeguarding. The school has been successful in funding from the DfE, they are spending £80,000 on fencing for the school (safeguarding reason). The LA supported the school with this bid. This school received £200,000 to drain and flush the boilers some years ago, the roof has also been repaired with funds from the LA.

The chair reiterated the rationale for this expenditure and governors reaffirmed their agreement for this expenditure

C: The admission for September is 50, if new staff are needed is there the budget for increasing staff?

Yes, on a case by case basis.

Governors reiterated their concern this is spending on buildings and the children benefit most from additional staffing. Governors have undertaken a premises walk and their report was shared in advance of the meeting.

School Development Plan Progress / Quality of Education

The priorities were writing, oracy, and statutory assessments. The first sessions of the moderation cycle are complete.

Attainment Data

Early Years attainment is in line with national averages, two children have EHCPs and if these are removed from the data, the school is above national. The phonics attainment is in line with national averages for the whole cohort. The consistent cohort (not DHI {deaf, hearing impaired} or new international arrivals) is above national in all areas.

The KS1 data (non-statutory) for consistent cohort (children who have been two years in this school) is in line with national.

The Yr4 cohort is the most vulnerable group in the school. The multiplication assessments dropped compared to last year in full marks but increase in the children attaining 23 and 24 out of 25. The percentage who attained 20 or above is still above national and is the same as historical figures and the same for average scores.

In KS2, the DfE recognises children who are new to county in Yr4, Yr5 & Yr6 are at a disadvantage. In September the Head can share the arrival dates of some children. The cohort has 67 children, only 53 were in this country from Yr3. 14 children can be removed from the data. Writing is in line with national, this is progress. Writing attainment is 70% and is in line with peers nationally. This year there was an apprentice teacher which gave three teachers and one TA for Yr6. Kathy Hughes has been running booster groups

C: nationally girls attain higher than boys but in Alma Park this is the reverse, why is this?

This is the cohort. There were many new children who joined when in Yr4.

C: Catherine Solley was designing a new model for writing, has this been introduced?

This will be introduced in the autumn term, the school will spend each term on a development area: autumn is writing, spring adaptative teaching and summer is oracy. This will be preceded by staff training.

Q: Does this new termly approach affect teaching?

No, this relates to CPD.

Q: If parents want to volunteer do they apply to the school?

Yes, the school prioritises volunteers from Alma Park families. Kathy Hughes explained the process; parents are not placed in the classes where their children are. Parent volunteers do read with the children. One parent volunteer is now employed by the school.

Trips and Visits

The list of trips and visits for each year group was included in the Headteachers report.

Staffing Update including wellbeing

The Staffing and Budget committee have reviewed staff wellbeing.

C: What has been the impact of the menopause training?

The initiatives were outlined and the impact of the bereavement initiative.

C: How is the wellbeing team going, and what is the impact?

The wellbeing group meet each half term; this is a positive initiative. The attendees can be approached by their teams. There is more awareness of the need to 'check-in', this is a general level approach. Governors shared experiences of wellbeing days.

The findings of the staff survey was shared and the findings was shared with the meeting.

S: Governors gave formal thanks to Kathy Hughes for her work on staff wellbeing.

Parent Voice

The report was welcomed by Governors. There were 90 responses which is slightly lower than previously. All comments were copied and shared with Governors. Overall, this was positive, there were new areas questioned about areas for development, including embedding UNICEF, and lunchtime behaviours. Parents will be invited into school.

Q: Are trips organised close to the date?

No, Sam Howell organises hers in September. Sometimes the school does book late or is offered a cancellation. The parent comments were about sports days, especially parents who work shifts. Governors felt parents need longer notice, maybe more than six weeks. School staff reported if this is announced too early the children keep asking when. Local walks are weather dependent.

C: There were comments on homework, what is the schools thinking about homework?

Yr6 are given CGB books to be shared with the children and parents, the CGB books are for reading, maths, and grammar. The are inexpensive but do not follow the pattern of learning. The school does send home spellings, times tables, and brain builder. 87% of parents think the level is good and this is the view of the school.

Parents evenings identify gaps in learning which the children could do at home. When homework is set, parents expect this to be marked and this impacts on staff workloads

Q: Governors asked about transitions exercises?

The children have books to take home.

C: School dinners has the lowest score, what is your thinking?

Next year those families on packed lunch will be asked to not answer. Next year is the final year of the contract with Trafford MBC. The school is considering letting the parents choose the school dinner for their child but staff are concerned about waste. There is always a salad trolley fruit, and yoghurts. The staff are proactive to encourage children to eat healthy. Governors noted the food might not be familiar to children of other cultures. The Rights council can undertake some work with the children regarding menu options. All food will be nutritionally balanced. There can be samples of new menu items for some children to try.

Q: Is there an opportunity for a re-tender of the school meals contract?

Yes after Easter 2026

Q: What do we know about who is responding to the parent's survey?

This is anonymous. It was suggested giving parents devices to complete the survey during parents evening.

Q: What are your SDP priorities for next year?

Writing will carry forward. Restorative approaches are positive. UNICEF is not ready for the gold award. There has been much positive curriculum work and positive early years developments.

The school will take more children in nursery next year. Science will be a priority next year. The governor away day will look at headlines.

Q: Will more staff be needed for the nursery?

Yes, there is one Assistant head, two TA3's and one TA2.

School Improvement Progress against success criteria

Personal Development: The school has achieved the UNICEF silver award, and the children are campaigning for double yellow lines. The children have undertaken a cake sale every half term led by a different year group.

Leadership & Management: The Deep dives have occurred, the QoE committee minutes indicate the work discussed.

Alma Park has achieved the ELKLAN award, this is a communication friendly school.

Q: Are there ways to ensure ELKLAN remains embedded?

This will be woven into all documents, the CPD will include retrieval activities. Many staff are now using retrieval.

Q: What is RHS?

This is the Royal Horticultural Society, the school has progressed from level one to level five. The school has a gardening club; the school grows vegetables all year round. The level five needed involvement of parents. 20 children from Yr5 and Yr6 are visiting a working cattle farm, 16 are disadvantaged children. This organic farm grows its own food for the cattle.

Governors suggested a visit to the Jewish Museum on Cheetham Hill Road, it was explained Yr6 were due to visit there or Gorton Monastery but this has not yet happened.

8. Behaviour and Safety

Suspensions and exclusions

There has been one fixed term exclusion, this is unusual for Alma Park. This was a child with high needs and the reason was aggression and violence towards staff. This exclusion was for one and half days, the parents confirmed this behaviour occurs also at home. A reintegration timetable was introduced, the child attends afternoons only and requires two adults for support, the child is currently attending two hours each day. The Headteacher was communicating with the LA and external support was given to prevent a permanent exclusion. This child now has a place in a specialist setting.

Behaviour incidences

There has been one incident of racism since the last meeting, this was an undirected comment. The perpetrators and their parents were very upset. The girls did know this was a taboo word, which made this an attraction.

Steve Parkinson has provided a link governor report on restorative behaviour which was shared in advance of the meeting. The report noted the ambassadors' routines will change for next year. The classroom behaviour is positive, and parent voice indicates this. The house points system has been successful. Parents present praised this school for its nurturing environment. The Yr6 sports day was excellent and the children respond well to responsibility.

Child protection referrals, early help

There has been an increase in incidents outside of school and the school is working with other agencies. The issues might be substance misuse or domestic violence. There has been one referral to MCC (Manchester City Council).

9. Committee Minutes

- Premises Committee held 12.06.25
- Staffing and Budget Committee (extra meeting) held 05.06.25
- Staffing & Budget Committee held 18.06.25
- Quality of Education Committee held 26.06.25

There were no further questions on the minutes.

10. Governing Body Matters

Governor Vacancies

The parent governor election has occurred; there was one nomination so an election was not needed. This person is a governor at Burnage High School. There is one co-opted vacancy and the chair has identified a gap around accountancy and a balance on the GB (governing body). The vacancy will be held until this criteria can be met.

Training Undertaken since the last FGB meeting.

Sania Rafique has undertaken Early Help training and emotional based school awareness

Link Governor roles

Mariam Ramadan will replace Michael Coates as the link governor for Safeguarding monitoring

The governor roles will be discussed at the governor away day.

Governor Monitoring Reports

- Computing - David Cooke met with Danny Bullivant - see QE Minutes
- Geography - David Cooke met with Harriet Spence - see QE Minutes
- SDP Priority 3 - Restorative Approaches, monitored by Steve Parkinson
- SDP Priority 4 - Unicef, Rights Respecting Award, Steve Parkinson
- Health & Safety Monitoring – David Cooke & Priti Shah

Sania Rafique will join the Quality of Education Committee

11. Policies for Review & Approval

Safeguarding Policy

This is from the LA, the new information was highlighted in yellow.

Q: This is impenetrable, is there a summary version for parents?

There is a safeguarding page on the school website. This advised how to report concerns, this starts with speaking to the child's teacher and identifies the many referral agencies.

Governors formally approved the Safeguarding Policy for 2025/26

12. Items of Any Other Business

Governor away day

This has been held previously in August or September in the last two years, this is the meeting where link governor roles are discussed. This is held during the week and needs to be held outside of school premises, Sarah Butler offered to help with a room at MMU.

13. Dates of 2025/26 meetings:

Full Governing Board Meetings – Thursdays at 4pm

- 18th September 2025
- 4th December 2025
- 26th March 2026
- 9th July 2026

Quality of Education Committee Meetings – Thursdays at 4pm

- 27th November 2025
- 12th March 2026
- 25th June 2026

Staffing & Budget Committee Meetings – Thursdays at 4.30pm

- 6th November 2025
- 5th February 2026
- 30th April 2026
- 18th June 2026

Premises, Health & Safety Committee – Thursdays at 430pm

- Thursday 9th October 2025
- Thursday 19th March 2026
- Thursday 11th June 2026

Meeting ended 5.50pm

Signed: Fran Jones

Date: 18th September 2025