



**ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board**  
**Wednesday 25th September 2023. 7pm**

**Present: Dave Dymond (Chair); Robert Howell (EHT); Adedayo Benson; Kate Gordon; Andrew Burrell; Vincent Onuchi, Hajar Alami; David Colwill, Sze Hang Wong.**

**In Attendance: Alice de Croos (SBM); Rachel Lawson (DHT).**

**Clerk: Deborah Savage**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	This meeting took place via Zoom and recorded for the purposes of the minutes. Permission to record was obtained from those on the call.
	<b>Section One - Procedural</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies.</b> There were no apologies – a couple of Governors were a little late joining the call.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest.</b> There were no declarations of interest and Governors were reminded that they should record their declarations in GovernorHub as soon as possible.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the FGB meeting held 18th September 2024.</b> The actions from the last meeting were reviewed and Governors were reminded to complete their statutory declarations in GovHub if they have not done so. The minutes were accepted as a true record and <b>ACTION: will be signed in GovHub by the Chair</b> asap.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Matters Arising.</b> There were no matters arising.
	<b>Section two – School Business and Updates.</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report.</b> This report had been completed in the summer and had been circulated to governors. It lays out the financial position at the end of June 2024 and the SBM was invited to update Governors on any major changes since then. The SBM informed the meeting that she has just completed the April – August 2024 written outturn and sent this to the LA. The teacher pay rise has now been agreed at 5.5% which is higher than the 3% that was budgeted for, but there will be a grant to partially cover this. The pay rise for support staff is on a sliding scale ranging from 5.5 to 6% for the lowest range and 2% for those at the top of the range.  The school has received approximately £50K more than was expected in SEND funding and the original expectation that the school would finish the Financial Year with a surplus of around £22K has been revised with the possibility that the surplus might be as much as £60K. This is a very positive picture however, it is possible that we might need to put additional staffing in the nursery due to high level of need amongst the children attending.

	<p><b>Governor Question:</b> Have we found new Auditors yet? No – and we still have not received last year’s file back from the Auditors. <b>ACTION:</b> SBM to chase this.</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> Can you give us an update on our position regarding energy costs? Over the summer we upgraded our lighting to LED lights which has improved the quality of lighting in some areas of the school and will also lead to a cost saving. This was partly funded by the energy grant that the school received from the LA and partly by a £12K Salix loan. We are expecting an overspend on the energy costs line.</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> How is our staffing situation? Two teachers are expected back from Maternity Leave in the coming months.</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> After the creation of the new DHT posts, are we managing to back fill these teachers? We are a year 5 teacher down and we may need to add extra staffing capacity in nursery but we are pleased with the way our new ECTs are settling in. They have a great mentor and support programme.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Governors accepted the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial Report.</p>
6.	<p><b>EHT &amp; DHT verbal reports including SATs data.</b></p> <p>The EHT informed Governors that, as is usually the case in September, the school roll is gradually settling down as there has been some fluctuation in the weeks since term started. Currently there are 8 spaces across the school and the admissions team are working hard to fill these spaces before Census day next week. The school expects to be full within 2 weeks. Waiting lists can be counter-productive for us as parents on the waiting list join other schools and then are reluctant to leave when a space arises here.</p> <p>The EAL figure within the school is 51% (LA average is 32%) and the school is refining its induction for pupils with little or no English to help them adjust. The school is also working on tightening the first visit of children and families with EAL to better assess their needs. Our EAL figure is high and rising.</p> <p>The school is concerned that our FSM figure does not accurately represent the level of need experienced by our children. Our FSM figure is 15.9% where the national average is 24.6%. It is a complex process to register for FSM and that may be part of the issue for parents.</p> <p>Our SEND figure is also below the national average, but our number of children with an EHCP (2.4%) is higher than national figures (2%) due to us opening the ARP. We are seeing trends in increasing SEND need.</p> <p><i>(19.12pm Sze joined the call.)</i></p>

The ARP is fully open and proving very successful and the EHT invited Governors to visit the ARP and see the staff and children experiencing a very high level of provision led by the ARP teacher. The LA have visited and were complimentary about the high provision that they saw.

Staff sickness absence is proving an issue – with covering staff absence being very challenging. The leadership team are looking at ways to limit the impact of sickness absence which may, frustratingly, remain an issue.

The new executive leadership team is embedding well over both schools and is proving to be a strong team. We are pleased that the new DHT posts are offering career development for staff. The ECTs have settled well and have good mentors. There is a Year 5 class unexpectedly without a teacher and this class is being covered by an experienced HLTA. We are looking closely at this situation. We know from past experience that advertising at this time of year for a class teacher results in a small pool of suitable and experienced candidates. It may be that these children are better off with an experienced degree-level HLTA who has been with the school some years rather than an unknown new teacher recruited now. We do have teachers returning from maternity leave in the coming few months. The school is aware that the lack of a teacher in the Year 5 class in question has caused some concern for parents and we are closely monitoring the situation.

There are some major site works projects due to start although the roof works have been delayed and may not now start until after Christmas. The removal of the modular building is being planned with preliminary work due to start w/c 7/10 with the expectation it will be removed over the October half term break.

#### SATS results.

A data pack produced by the LA following the results of statutory testing along with data produced by the school had been shared in advance with governors. The EHT and DHT discussed the main points with Governors. The data shows the comparison with National and LA results over 3 years. Governors were reminded that the majority of children arrive at ASPS below expected and the data indicated that the children make good progress.

Alfred Sutton is in the top 10 of Reading schools for KS1 Phonics where our data is again above National figures. We have to work really hard to maintain that result with the growing number of children with a high SEND need. We are pleased with these strong results.

Our Year 4 Multiplication results were at national level. What is interesting here is that the Times Tables tests are carried out on a PC and we can see that children who regularly use the software available to them called “Times Table Rock Stars” outperform their peers who do not make use of it. We intend to hold parents’ workshops to promote parental engagement with encouraging their children to use this programme regularly and explain the correlation between children that regularly make use of this software and higher test results.

In KS2 there is a concerted effort made and you can see the value-added score between KS1 and KS2 is high. We are 8<sup>th</sup> in Reading for reading and the structure of year 6 lessons brings positive results. Our Year 6 writing result may be refined as we expect two children will be taken out. A tremendous effort was made in writing for Year 6 resulting in ASPs being placed in the top 4 schools in Reading. We are maintaining KS2 outcomes despite the increasing level of challenge.

**Governor Question:** Can you explain the average score for writing? This score is for SPAG – (Spelling and Grammar) as writing has to be teacher assessed. 85% of our children got at least Expected in writing.

Once again, our maths is strong and we are second in Reading's schools (with Redlands being first) which means we can send a strong message to the local East Reading community as we Federate. It is always important to understand the context but we have strong results and our children are achieving high at the highest standard where we are also above National figures.

When we look at our combined results, we are third in Reading's list of schools which is down to an outstanding performance by our teaching team and the children. We do expect our combined score to rise once two children are removed.

**Governor Question:** Will this data be posted on the school dashboard? Yes – there is a link on the school website to this data. The school are still working on the SEF and SIP to ensure that these reflect the areas we want to work on improving and these documents will be ready in about 3 weeks.

**Governor Question:** Congratulations on another year of strong results – but there is a slight dip in some areas on last year. Is it possible to identify why or is this a natural variance? There is a slight decrease in Year 6 SATS but this is not statistically significant. We have a high degree of cohort complexity but all our vulnerable groups performed higher than the national and LA averages and, in many cases, they performed very well against all average national figures.

In 2023 our PP children achieved combined figures of 60% and these were the highest in Reading. In 2024 this figure had increased to 65% which demonstrates a year on year improvement, especially in reading. Post Covid, we are really proud of that improvement in reading figures which is down to a whole school drive to improve reading in school.

**Governor Comment:** You should be really proud of these results. Congratulations.

**Governor Question:** You mentioned that you think the figures for FSM do not actually reflect the level of need – what can we do about this to encourage more entitled families to claim? We know that there are problems. Sometimes the language

	<p>barrier is an issue. Some families feel stigmatised so don't apply for this reason. The application is a long and tortuous process and when children move between schools sometimes their FSM entitlement is lost in the process. We see some high levels of derivation amongst our children.</p> <p><i>(7.33 – at this point Vincent joined the call.)</i></p> <p>During Covid, FSM was operated on a voucher system and numbers claiming did rise. It is based on household income and some families are only just over the threshold so are not able to claim. We do employ a data-checking service from RBC to help us with FSM claims, which previously had to be checked termly. Since the introduction of Universal Credit, anyone entitled to FSM will continue to get FSM until the child leaves primary which is an improvement to the system. Data for FSM will be collected in October but it is hard to know what more the school can do to encourage uptake amongst those entitled to it.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>School Development Plan 2024-5 (verbal update).</b></p> <p>Governors were informed that the SDP is being worked on as a team and is not quite ready. There are a number of clear headlines though that will be priorities for the school which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking progress from nursery to year 6 limiting fluctuations from year to year.</li> <li>• Inclusive practise – both in the ARP and across school.</li> <li>• Enrichment including pupil voice</li> <li>• Writing across the schools especially in 3,4 and 5.</li> <li>• Federation</li> </ul> <p>We want to encourage staff ownership of their data and staff to be more accountable.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>SEF (draft) 2024-5 (verbal update)</b></p> <p>Governors were informed that the SEF is being refined in the light of the data from statutory testing. The school is on an improving trend but there are areas that Ofsted identified that are being worked on. This is primarily assessment, especially in the foundation subjects. It is hoped that the SEF will be completed ready to share with governors soon.</p> <p><b>Governor Question:</b> Are we still progressing to our target of outstanding? Yes. We have lost some staff from their subject lead roles and our future plan is, besides helping our new subject leads to embed, to plan our subjects so tightly that we don't feel the loss of an experienced subject lead so much. We are moving to a model of team leadership, including over both schools, which will be a strength of the partnership. We want to maintain our good results and improve assessment so that we can progress further.</p>

	<p><b>Governor Question:</b> Can we write to Ofsted to tell them we have reviewed the areas they identified? No – we just have to wait for the next inspection, which is expected to be four years after the last one.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Federation Update.</b></p> <p>Governors were informed that the consultation phase of Federation is approaching, where all stakeholders are informed of the plans. The Federation proposal document – which is made public and contains all the background to the proposal was circulated in advance of the meeting along with a proposed Instrument of Government which has to be sent to the LA for approval.</p> <p>There had been some discussion among the Federation Steering group about the role of the Head of School on the future GB, but the IOG allows for this as the stipulations laid out in the guidance are being met.</p> <p><b>Governor Comment:</b> I am concerned that there is only one Staff Governor post over both schools according to the regulations. How do we decide which school will be represented? We will have to hold an election over both schools.</p> <p>There was some debate about only one staff governor post, which is in line with the statutory guidance on Federations. The concern was expressed that this possibly denies one school a voice. It was noted that the post of a staff governor is a hard one to hold – being both an employee and on the Governing Board and our current staff governor manages to juggle these two roles within school well, being both approachable and professional. Sometimes staff do not understand the remit of a staff governor which can make the role a hard one to manage. The view was expressed that having one staff governor might mean one school does not get an authentic voice.</p> <p>It was recognised that both the EHT and HoS would sit on the GB so both schools would be represented. The GB should play a more strategic role rather than become involved in day-to-day operations of the schools but some governors felt that it was still important to hear from staff.</p> <p>It was noted that governors could feedback on the proposal and that their observations can be contributed to the consultation process and in the report that will be produced after the completion of the consultation process.</p> <p><b>DECISION:</b> The Federation Proposal document was approved by majority vote (with one abstention.)</p> <p><b>DECISION:</b> The IOG was approved by majority vote (with one abstention).</p> <p>Governors were informed that the consultation would involve all stakeholders and that there would be feedback mechanisms in place to allow people to both ask questions</p>

	<p>and comment on the proposal. Comments would be considered before both GBs would meet separately to make a final decision. If both decide to go ahead with Federation, both GBs would hold an FGB (scheduled for late December) to ratify the decision, when both existing GBs would cease to operate and new Federation GB would form on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2025. Stakeholder open meetings would be held at both schools for parents and other members of the community to ask questions and discuss the proposal with senior leaders and governors.</p>
	<p><b>Section three – Policies.</b></p>
10.	<p><b>Policies requiring statutory (re)approval / adoption.</b></p> <p>a) <u>Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy updated for September 2024.</u>  It was noted that the new DHTs were joining the Safeguarding team which spreads the workload over a wider number of people which is to be welcomed. The formatting of the email address for the LADO might need changing. <b>DECISION: Safeguarding policy APPROVED.</b></p> <p>b) <u>Attendance Policy 2024</u>  This policy has been updated and governors discussed if the school had a preferred method of contact for parents to use to notify an absence as there were options (email/phone/Weduc) It was noted that some policies are being aligned between the two schools, but that Redlands does not use Weduc. <b>DECISION: Attendance policy APPROVED.</b></p> <p>c) <u>Suspensions &amp; Exclusions Policy 2024</u>  This has been updated in line with recent guidance changes. <b>DECISION: Suspensions &amp; Exclusions APPROVED.</b></p>
	<p><b>Section four – Organisation of the Governing Board</b></p>
11.	<p><b>Discussion on Link Governor visits.</b></p> <p>The Clerk had updated the link governor chart to include all staff acting as subject leads. This can be found in the PEC folder for this academic year.</p> <p>There was some discussion held on the best time to arrange link visits into school and how these were to be arranged. Governors are welcome to email staff to introduce themselves, especially if the governor and staff member may not have had contact previously. It was decided that the Wednesday staff meeting slot would be a good chance for governors to talk to staff – especially if Governors were the link for more than one subject or area. <b>ACTION: The staff meeting on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November (at 3.20pm for about 60-90 minutes) was identified as the best meeting slot for staff and Governors.</b> Governors were asked to prioritise new links and subject leads and to use the Link Governor visit template in the PEC meeting folder.</p>
12.	<p><b>Governing Board CPD updates.</b></p> <p>Opportunities for updated safeguarding training have been sent to all governors and governors are aware of the training programme put in place by BFFC. Governors were reminded to record all training they undertake on their personal records in GovHub (including uploading any certificates they receive.) The Clerk is happy to assist with this. <b>ACTION: Governors were asked to book onto the SG training on 8<sup>th</sup> October or</b></p>

	<b>complete an online alternative. Any governor who has not yet completed the online Cyber Security training module is reminded to do so.</b>
	<b>Section five – any other business.</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Any other Business.</b> The EHT informed the meeting that the whole of Year 5 from ASPs, and Year 5 from Redlands were being walked to Leighton Park school for an event with the resident author. Any governor able to join the walk to supervise the children's safety would be most welcome. This is to take place on Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> October leaving school at 12.30 to return by the end of the school day. Some governors volunteered to help with this.
<b>14.</b>	<b>Issues for parents / confidentiality.</b> There were no items to be communicated to parents and nothing requiring part 2 confidential minutes.
<b>15.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting: Federation FGB meeting: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.</b>

Meeting Closed: 20.35pm

**Actions:**

**New Actions from this meeting:**

<b><u>Action:</u></b>	<b><u>Owner:</u></b>
Minutes of FGB held 18th September to be signed in GovHub	DD
SBM to chase return of audited accounts.	SBM
Governors invited to attend staff meeting on Wednesday 13th November at 3.20pm to talk to link staff.	ALL
Book to attend SG training on 8/10 at 6pm (or complete alternative)	ALL

**Actions from last meeting carried forward:**

<b><u>Action:</u></b>	<b><u>Owner:</u></b>
Governors to complete Declarations of Interest on GovHub ASAP including declaring use of any school social media groups	ALL
Read and Sign KCSIE part 1 declaration	ALL
Update SG training	ALL

**Attendance at FGB meetings 2024/25 (2 meetings to date)**

Dave Dymond	2 of 2 meetings
Robert Howell	2 of 2 meetings
Adedayo Benson	2 of 2 meetings
Kate Gordon	2 of 2 meetings
Andrew Burrell	2 of 2 meetings
Hajar Alami	2 of 2 meetings



Vincent Onuchi	2 of 2 meetings
David Colwill	2 of 2 meetings
Sze-Hang Wong	2 of 2 meetings
Zoe Watling	On Maternity Leave