



ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board.
Wednesday 10th July 2024. 7pm

Present: Dave Dymond (Chair); Robert Howell; Adedayo Benson; Andrew Burrell; Kate Gordon; Zoe Watling; Vincent Onuchi; Hajar Alami; Sze Hang Wong.

Apologies: David Colwill.

In attendance: Alice de Croos.

Clerk: Deborah Savage.

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| Agenda Item | This meeting was a virtual meeting held via Zoom – permission was given for the meeting to be recorded for the purposes of the minutes. |
| 1. | Apologies. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from David Colwill and these were accepted. |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest made. |
| 3. | Minutes of the meeting held 24th April 2024. The minutes from the meeting held on April 24 th had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were briefly reviewed by the chair. They were accepted as a true record. ACTION: They will be signed in GovHub by the chair as soon as possible. |
| 4. | Matters Arising. There were no matters arising – actions from the last meeting were reviewed. Example TORs for FGB's had been sourced by the Chair -some schools do use these. Some HTPM paperwork had also been located. |
| 5. | Chair's Report. The chair gave a verbal report to the meeting summarising the year from a Governance perspective. The school had some time without our EHT this year due to illness, but the school was well managed in his absence due to our strong leadership team. The GB recognise that Robert's recovery journey has been long and we hope that he will find a chance to rest and recover during the summer break. Our long-awaited Ofsted inspection happened in the autumn term with a "Good" outcome and collaboration continues with Redlands school who are pleased with the progress made by the two schools working together. Next term we decide whether to formally Federate. |

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| | <p>SATS results have just been published and are very strong – we are very grateful to Rachel Lawson and the Year 6 team, along with the children, for all their hard work. We note from school contextual data that ASPS has numbers in excess of 50% EAL – which is much greater than national or local figures.</p> <p>The chair wanted to praise Laura Kerr who has been working at Redlands as HoS for this academic year for her excellent leadership and also to the DSLs, including the SENCO and Family Support Officer for their support of our growing number of vulnerable families and children.</p> <p>Besides Federation, next term sees some big projects as the ARP will be installed into the old staffroom, roofing works will commence, the modular will be removed and hopefully the field will be returned to us.</p> <p>We said goodbye to a couple of Governors this year – Attia Kiani and Yota Dimitriadi. We thank them for their contribution to the Governing Board and wish them well. We will have a governor on maternity leave for the early part of the next academic year.</p> <p>I would like to thank everyone for their contribution to making the last year a very successful one at ASPS (and also Redlands) – we hope it was also a happy year for the children.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Executive Head Teacher’s Report to Governors.</p> <p>A comprehensive written report to governors had been shared prior to the meeting along with reports from the phase leads which governors were advised to read in conjunction with the EHT report. (There was no Year 6 phase report as there are some staff off on long term sick leave in Year 6).</p> <p>Governors had been invited to submit questions in advance, and some observations were shared by the Chair after the meeting.</p> <p>The EHT summarised the main points of note from the reports which revealed some key trends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased SEND need – which will only be partially addressed by the new ARP. SEND needs continue to increase. • Early Writing remains an issue and intense work to catch children up in Year 6 takes place to secure good results but writing in the years below remains impacted by Covid, high numbers of EAL children and high numbers of SEND children. • Staff illness – sometimes linked to stress caused by efforts to meet the needs of high levels of SEND children (some with significant need). Teacher mental health remains a concern. <p>The EHT noted that much senior staff time is taken up with supporting staff with mental health concerns – and whilst the school are supportive it is felt that staff need to be encouraged to manage their own mental health concerns where possible – with the school pointing staff to sources of support. It is hoped that staff resilience can be</p> |

developed but the school recognise that the numbers and needs of our SEND children do impact staff wellbeing as does staff absence due to sickness on those remaining in school.

Governor Question: Diagnosis of a SEND need is made by outside bodies? Yes- but schools are required to put measures in place prior to a formal diagnosis, which can take a considerable amount of time.

The EHT informed governors that a big project on inducting EAL children into school will begin next year, working alongside The EAL Academy and some trailblazing schools in London. It could be seen reflected in the phase reports written by staff that the 3 key issues of SEND need, EAL numbers and writing are a major focus and underlying themes in the classrooms.

Governor Question: Are you over subscribed in the Nursery and Reception? Yes – our numbers are secure and therefore our budget is more healthy than other schools, such as Redlands, whose nursery has low numbers for September and a deficit budget.

The EHT wanted governors to be aware of the pressures in school – as the school continues to work towards an “outstanding” Ofsted judgement. It was noted by Ofsted that work on assessment in school needs to be done – but that these other pressures do impact on staff availability to work on assessment improvement.

Governor question: Do we need to change the classroom model with more TA’s for example? Its not a question of more staff – it is appointing appropriately skilled staff that is the problem with the pay structure not reflecting the skill level. This is a national problem. When we advertise for staff we often get a large response but sifting these leaves a small pool of candidates from which to appoint and recruitment occupies a great deal of staff time.

We put an extra teacher into Year 6 for the mornings and this has reaped great benefits as can be seen from our SATs results. Our Year 6 results are significantly above the national average and in Maths half of our Year 6 achieved Greater Depth. The combined figure (across all 3 subjects) gives the truest picture of a school – 83% of ASPS children reach expected but the National average for expected is only 61%. These are significant outcomes and demonstrate that children achieve well at ASPS but we need to ensure that Governors are aware of the different pressures felt in each year as detailed in the staff compiled phase reports. It is important that governors are aware of the subtexts behind these reports. The ARP will bring benefits but it will be at a loss to start with and as the aim is that ARP children spend 20% of their time in the mainstream classroom with their peers (which is right that they should have this opportunity) it does mean that we need to think carefully about how we achieve this and how we staff this. The RBC staff member driving the ARP project has now left RBC and there are still some question marks over funding. High levels of staff sickness mean that planned interventions for children that need additional support suffer as

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| | <p>staff have to cover classes. It is important for Governors to understand the situation in school which is the background to the SATS results. There are especially high levels of additional need amongst children coming into the Nursery and Reception years. The EHT reminded Governors that he would welcome any questions should they wish to email him directly or via the Clerk.</p> <p>There are staff mental health issues in Redlands too which Laura and Alice are coping with – the situation in both schools day to day is fluid, unpredictable and challenging. However, there is great cause for optimism with the appointment of 3 additional DHTs, new teaching staff and the prospect of Federation. It is important that key strategic staff are freed up to manage these developments – Laura will have support from September in Redlands from the new DHTs but Alice’s SBM role over the two schools is currently unsustainable.</p> <p>The school expects to be near the top of the Reading schools results table even though our EAL figure, closer to 65% is much higher than the local average. We are working on plans to identify EAL needs and support these children moving forward. In fact, we would rather re-categorise them as multi-lingual children rather than EAL. Multilingual children often flourish where is there not also a SEND need or a need for pupil premium support. It is about helping them access the curriculum.</p> <p>Governor question: Is there an Employee Assistance Programme for staff to use if they need mental Health support? Yes – and Governors can also access this Employer Assistance Programme. RH, LK and AdC are attending a Stress Risk Assessment Workshop run by RBC HR and H&S departments as the LA recognises the size of this issue in schools at the moment. It is often issues in a staff member’s home life that come to school and affect them in the workplace.</p> <p>Governor Comment: It is knowing how to encourage staff to utilise the confidential support that is available to them and I have found that EAPs can be very helpful.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is this something the GB should be worried about – if staff are overstretched and the situation is only likely to get worse? These issues have really arisen over the last 2 years, but they have got more acute. This is a problem in schools as a whole and is not unique to us – but we hope to equip our staff to become more responsible for their own mental health, and working with our cluster heads, empower our staff to leave their personal issues at home. The situation is likely to be worse in other schools that are facing budgetary issues, unlike us. We have a positive future ahead of us – staff focus on ensuring children are happy in school and keen to learn. We do want to address this now, so that it does not continue to be a growing problem and in order that we can tackle these big projects that we have ahead of us.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is the LA aware of the size of this issue for local schools? Yes – which is why they are putting on this stress awareness course and other mental health courses. We want to help and support our staff, but we have to continue to run the</p> |
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| | <p>schools and these major projects as well. We are hoping that the course will help us have these difficult conversations with staff who are not always aware that they have an issue impacting their work. We are moving the FSO office to be closer to the EHT & SBM as she does a lot of this staff support, along with the DSLs. Around 50% of the FLO's time is now spent on supporting staff – she is very good at this. The FSO is also working a little at Redlands – we are fortunate as a school to have really skilled staff in some of our key roles. We are very aware that our success is due to our staff and that is why we are keen to find ways of keeping our high calibre staff within the Federation.</p> <p>Governor Question: If the EHT, FLO, and SBM are supporting staff – where do you get your support? Including the HoS and all the DHTs we get support from within our team – frequent dialogue helps.</p> <p>Governor Comment: Thank you for being so open with us – it is important that we understand the challenges you face and we appreciate your openness. We know the school is only as good as its staff and we wish to keep these skilled people. It is great that you have a strong team around you so that you can delegate.</p> <p>Governor Question: After this training for 3 staff, what is next? Is RBC putting too much pressure on you by training you to support Mental Health and stress in the workplace? I don't think the LA's approach is the best approach to take. The fact that the EHT was ill and absent for some time helped us look at our strategic staffing model and reflect how we can remove some of the admin pressure from key roles to enable more time to be spent on strategic planning. Our staffing model should help us lessen administrative pressures and we are working to make it more sustainable in the future. In particular the business continuity of the SBM role is not there yet. There are supportive people within the LA that we can reach out to.</p> <p>Governor Comment: The investigation into the death of Ruth Perry resulted in RBC being told that they needed to step up their game with regard to supporting school staff.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Reports from Phase Leads.</p> <p>These reports had been circulated prior to the meeting but were not individually discussed. The key points common to all years were discussed in the EHT's report. It was noted that the impact of the numbers of EAL children in school is reflected in these reports. Early writing is an SDP target along with performance coaching and assessment. Governors were invited to submit any questions they later have to the EHT. The Chair subsequently sent a number of observations from the phase reports.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Staffing Structure 2024/25.</p> <p>Governors were informed that the staff vacancy in the Nursery has been filled and that 5 new ECT's have been appointed to start in September. They have already spent a day visiting the school and have met their mentors who will support them. The school is pleased that these newly appointed staff are strong candidates and that the school is able to attract high calibre staff keen to benefit from the opportunities that working</p> |

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| | <p>over two schools, and in a big primary, offers them. The appointment of 3 new DHTs over the two schools has also meant that the school has been able to retain these high calibre staff within the Federation. These DHT roles are initially for 1 year but they have already had meetings with staff and started cross-school work and planning activities. They will each work 2.5 days in each school with the Senior DHT having responsibility for Year 6 in both schools.</p> <p>Governor Question: Where has the funding for these new DHT roles come from? Has the LA helped with this funding? It was clear that in order to ensure Federation was successful, we needed more leadership capacity over both schools so at a budget setting away-day we planned a new staff structure to appoint 2 DHTs over both schools to be paid for on a 50% split over both schools. The benefit of this for ASPS is that the cost of these expensive staff is now spread over both budgets. When we wanted to appoint 3 DHTs instead of the planned 2 roles, Brian Grady from the LA had to approve this extra spend from Redlands side as Redlands is in a deficit budget position. It is clear that everyone is a winner from this staffing model and we will be able to model good practise for our newly appointed ECTs.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors unanimously approved the new staffing model for the year 2024/25.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Approve extension of Interim EHT/HoS/SBM posts for another 12 months.</p> <p>Governors noted and supported the extension of these interim posts for another 12 months or until Federation is completed.</p> |
| 10. | <p>Approve PE and Sports Premium Report.</p> <p>There was an issue with the upload of this report into GovernorHub prior to the meeting, but it was shared online to Governors during the meeting. Governors were informed that the report is in a new format designed by the DfE and informs readers how the funding has been spent. It is spent in a number of ways, including on swimming lessons and for sports coaching. It is intended to develop competitive sport opportunities in the future.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is there anything we should note from this report? This grant falls over two financial years and is ring fenced for sports provision only. We have spent all of the funding. There is talk that this grant might end (it is possible that it is not always used properly in some cases).</p> <p>DECISION: Governors approved the report which will be published on the school website by 31st July.</p> |
| 11. | <p>Approve Music Report.</p> <p>It is a new requirement that schools also report on music provision in school and report to governors – but staff have not yet had a chance to complete this new form issued by the DfE. This report will be completed in the new academic year and reported to governors.</p> |
| 12. | <p>Governor Morning in school 12th July 2024.</p> <p>There was a discussion about how the re-arranged governors in school morning to take place at the end of the week would be facilitated. It was noted that only a few governors were able to attend on this date and that next academic year similar events would take place 3 or more times in the year. It was not going to be possible to meet</p> |

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| | <p>with the school council on 12th July. It was suggested that a couple of governors might like to attend a scheduled school council meeting in the new year.</p> <p>The three new DHTs (each responsible for a phase) have been asked to host a governor to visit in each stage so that teachers feel less intimidated by governors dropping into their classes and so that introductions can be made. The most important part of the visit will be the chance to talk to the children although the DHTs have been asked to make a range of children's books available to governors to look at. Year 6 classes will not be visited due to staff illness absences.</p> <p>Visits will start at 9.30 until 11.30 being hosted by a DHT and then Governors will meet with Robert to discuss their experiences. Lunch is available to those who have pre-booked this.</p> <p>Governor Question: Can we speak to staff beforehand to introduce ourselves before we arrive in their classrooms? Staff might feel less intimidated this way. The DHTs have been asked to host so they can facilitate entry to classrooms and to reassure teachers that these visits are celebratory. We are looking at this as a trial run for a larger number of governors to visit next term.</p> <p>Governor Comment: This arrangement sounds brilliant – I am sorry to miss it this time. It is really great talking to the children about their learning and what they enjoy.</p> |
| 13. | <p>Draft Federation Proposal Document.</p> <p>A draft Federation Proposal document (the document that needs to go to stakeholders for the formal consultation) had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. Governors were informed that Redlands needs to have a successful Ofsted visit first. Discussion has been taking place about the makeup of the new Governing Board for the Federation, and the EHT is keen to have the HoS on the GB as a full voting member.</p> <p>Governor Question: Are we sure we are not being pushed by the LA to pick up a school with "issues"? Will parents ask this?</p> <p>We are following the stipulated guidelines as we plan Federation – not all, but many Federations have been successful and this is an alternative to Academisation. We have to remember that the key aim is to improve the education offer for children in the East Reading area whilst keeping some nuances and differences in each school. At APSP, we do not want to academise – we want to remain independent and successful and this is the way we can do this. Federations can be reversed, but we are proceeding with the mindset that we will be successful.</p> <p>Meetings will continue in the autumn term as we work to bring Federation into effect. Parents meetings will also be arranged next term. Any governors that hear any questions/comments from parents are asked to feed these back to the GB. There have been no parental or staff concerns raised yet – although staff are very busy with accommodation moves and settling into new classroom spaces at the moment. Neither has there been any questions from parents about the three new DHT roles. It is likely that the consultation period will bring some questions.</p> |

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| | <p>It was noted that effectively the schools have been running as if they were already Federated for the last 12months and great results have been seen which is something to point out to anyone raising concerns.</p> |
| 14. | <p>Clerks Update.</p> <p>The Clerk had circulated a report to governor prior to the meeting highlighting two issues to discuss.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new requirement that at least one governor on any GB has to have completed some Cyber Security training and that we have a Link Governor for Cyber security. 2. Switching on Multi Factor Authentication in our use of GovernorHub. <p>Some training modules on cyber security were shared with governors and ACTION: all were asked to consider if they wished to do this so that in September we can appoint a link governor for cyber security.</p> <p>The SBM noted that using MFA authentication on our governance document storage and communication system would help the school with its GDPR audit and governors noted that this is commonplace in many aspects of life now and would be inevitable.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors agreed that MFA authentication should be switched on for GovernorHub.</p> <p>Governors were alerted to the draft meeting schedule for the autumn term which follows the usual pattern apart from an additional FGB meeting following the Federation consultation period at the end of December.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is there any way to link the school calendar with GovernorHub?</p> <p>There are some changes coming to GovernorHub in September and it is possible that a more sophisticated calendar is one option they are working on.</p> |
| 15. | <p>Safeguarding – advance notice of training.</p> <p>It is a requirement that all governors undertake updated Safeguarding training every year now and the LA Governor Support Service has arranged for training to be delivered online on the 8th October 2024, so governors were alerted to this date for their diaries. Alternative training will be offered to those unable to make this date.</p> |
| 16. | <p>Wellbeing & Equality.</p> <p>There were no issues raised.</p> |
| 17. | <p>Issues for Parents/Confidentiality.</p> <p>There were no confidential issues raised nor any issues that need to be communicated to parents/carers.</p> |
| 18. | <p>Any Other Business.</p> <p>There were no AOB items raised. Governors were reminded that they could email any questions to the Clerk or EHT.</p> |
| 19. | <p>Date of Next Meeting: TBC (September 2024).</p> |

Meeting closed: 8.30pm

Appendix A: Chairs observations from the Phase Leads Reports.

These observations were sent to the Clerk after the meeting for inclusion in the minutes.

- Nursery - Are there more applications than places? What additional resources would be needed?
- Reception – Is this when progress tracking starts for an individual?
- Reception - Do you have enough resources?
- year 1 – High number of undiagnosed SEN – is a new plan needed for starting SEN assessment?
- year 2 -Governors recognise that some children still on phonics causes a delay in beginning reading comprehension.
- Year 2 behaviour issues - what games does Michael play in lunchtime club that have positively impacted the behaviour issues?
- year 3 – governors note that this is a challenging year with 65% EAL and 45% Sen
- year 4 -governors noted the wish for additional parental reading support and that pp and SEN attainment figures are lower.
- year 5 – governors noted the focus on reading & writing practice, with adult support for some readers.

There was no Year 6 report due to staff illness absences.

Actions:

| Action: | Owner: |
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| Chair to sign minutes from 24 th April in GovHub. | DD |
| Governors asked to consider doing cyber security training and becoming the link governor for cyber security. | ALL |

Attendance at FGB meetings 2023/24 (5 meetings to date)

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| Dave Dymond | 5 of 5 meetings |
| Robert Howell | 5 of 5 meetings |
| Adedayo Benson | 5 of 5 meetings |
| Yota Dimitriadi | 1 of 4 possible meetings |
| Attia Rafiq-Sharif | 0 of 2 possible meetings |
| Kate Gordon | 5 of 5 meetings |
| Andrew Burrell | 5 of 5 meetings |
| Hajar Alami | 4 of 5 meetings |
| Zoe Watling | 4 of 5 meetings |
| Vincent Onuchi | 4 of 5 meetings |
| David Colwill | 3 of 4 possible meetings. |
| Sze Hang Wong | 3 of 3 possible meetings. |