



ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the virtual Meeting of the Full Governing Board.
Wednesday 24th January 2024. 7pm

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

Present: Alice de Croos (SBM); Sze Hang Wong.

Apologies: David Colwill; Rachel Lawson.

Clerk: Deborah Savage

Agenda Item	Permission was sought from those on the call to record this Zoom meeting for the purposes of the minutes. This meeting was recorded and will be deleted once minutes are produced.
1.	Welcome introductions and Apologies. As we had a new governor application to consider and Sze joined us at this meeting, those on the call introduced themselves. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been sent in advance by David and Rachel and these were accepted. Yota Dimitriadi did not attend – she is taking a break from governance due to work pressures.
2.	Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Co-Opt a new Governor – Sze Hang Wong. The clerk informed the meeting that the school had received Sze’s application to become a school governor from Governors for Schools after they held a recruitment event at Reading University. His application and CV had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. Sze informed the meeting that he is a first-year student at the university studying a degree in Politics and International Relations and has been educated in Bath, Hong Kong and New Zealand. Sze then entered a Zoom “waiting room” while governors held a vote. Governor Comment: It is great to have a young person join us on the board at this point when we have some big but exciting projects underway. This was echoed by other governors who said they were pleased to approve the application and that perhaps this would help forge closer links with the university. DECISION: Sze Hang Wong was unanimously voted on to the Governing Board of Alfred Sutton Primary School. Sze re-joined the meeting and was welcomed to the board.

4.	<p>Minutes of the FGB held 27th September 2023.</p> <p>These had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were accepted as a true record. ACTION: They will be signed in GovernorHub by the CoG as soon as possible.</p>
5.	<p>Review of actions & Matters Arising.</p> <p>The actions from the last meeting were reviewed. These had been completed. There were no matters arising.</p>
6.	<p>EHT Report.</p> <p>A comprehensive report to governors had been written by the EHT and circulated prior to the meeting. Also circulated were the slides from an LA briefing to borough SBMs. Governors were also asked to read the EHT report in conjunction with the reports from the phase leads that had been written and discussed in the last two PEC meetings held in December 2023 and January 2024. Of particular importance were the safeguarding and attendance and behaviour reports written by staff.</p> <p>The EHT outlined the main points of his report which was the first written report to governors since the Ofsted Inspection.</p> <p>Governors were reminded that schools performance data is now uploaded on to the DfE website, where comparisons of performance can be made between schools and doing this shows that ASPS has performed well in comparison to other schools. ASPS is ranked 3rd the LA – below two Caversham primaries – but only 2% below these schools. The school is very proud of its results although they recognise that this is not the main measure of success. The data indicated that children at Alfred Sutton do not just reach “expected” but achieve higher than this demonstrating that the school has a secure offer to parents considering schools for their child/ren.</p> <p><i>(19.15 – at this point Vincent Onuchi joined the call).</i></p> <p>After years of discussion and decision reversals, the modular building is to stay at ASPS after all, but to be re-purposed as an ARP (Additionally Resourced Provision) for SEND children.</p> <p>The school have held tours for prospective parents looking for reception places for their children and the turn out on these tours has been very good which is a good indication of the level of interest.</p> <p><u>School Roll:</u> the number fluctuates frequently with leavers and new joiners. Governors were warned that the PP numbers were only a (low) guide and give a false indication as some parents entitled to this support do not register for it.</p> <p>The number of SEND children at ASPS is high but the number of EAL children is especially high – double the national average and significantly higher than the local LA average. However, the results data indicated that ASPS is able to meet the needs of these children many of whom arrive with no or very little English.</p>

	<p><u>Leadership & Management:</u> Safeguarding is a key element of an Ofsted Inspection but schools are only judged “compliant” or not. However, Inspectors gave verbal feedback on their findings which was very positive with a strong level of pastoral support for children and families. Ofsted surveyed parents & carers, 97% of whom stated that they would recommend the school to others. The school plans to survey parents shortly.</p> <p>The EHT drew governor’s attention to the fact that the SDP has a new action added after the inspection which is to work to ensure that the use of assessment is further developed across all subjects so that children have opportunities to recall and demonstrate knowledge and skills learned. Whilst assessment is strong in some subjects currently, it is not consistent over all subjects.</p> <p>The LA Mental Health Support Team is in school regularly working with children that need support.</p> <p>Governor Question: Do you have a maximum number of SEND children you can accept? We would not look to go over our PAN. We have 90 children per year group and some years have waiting lists. If we went over our 90 children, due to the rise in the number of SEND children, this might impact the offer for the children as whole.</p> <p>The levels of staff sickness have decreased from the pandemic years.</p> <p>Governor Question: There is a rise in the number of cases of measles – do we record measles cases? We would record these if we had any as we do record cases of communicable diseases.</p> <p>Governors were informed that the sports coach had left the school after his paternity leave for personal reasons and a new sports coach was settling in well. The new sports coach is working across Redlands and ASPS. A number of staff are working with Redlands teachers, especially with regard to subject expertise and the HoS is doing an amazing job at Redlands and indeed exceeding expectations of what we hoped to achieve there.</p> <p>Attendance is a continued focus – the Autumn term always sees a drop due to illnesses and we hope for an upturn as the year goes on.</p> <p>With regard to behaviour, Governors will note we have, usually for our school, suspensions this year. This is one child who has been suspended on three separate occasions. This child joined ASPS with acute needs that were undisclosed to the school and with no history and has had a significant impact on staff. However, since the start of the spring term he does seem more settled.</p> <p><u>ARP:</u></p> <p>The SBM was asked to explain the funding behind the new APR that is planned for the school. The meeting was informed that the LA has recruited a strategic lead for SEND across the borough who will run a LA wide RISE project. (Reading Inclusion Support in</p>
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	<p>Education). This is to meet the increase in SEND demand and the lack of special school places. The plan is to educate SEND children, including those with high levels of need, in mainstream primaries until they reach secondary age when the LA hope to establish a special secondary school to educate those with the highest levels of need.</p> <p>The national rise in the numbers of SEND children and the rise in the level of need has been reflected at ASPS where last financial year we had 4 EHCP children and this financial year we currently have 12 with the expectation this will rise to 18. Under the existing funding formula, schools are expected to find the first £6K for each child out of their existing funding and then children are banded A-E depending on level of need. This additional funding is paid termly. Band E – the highest level of need where children really require a place in a specialist setting – only attracts £8K which is not enough to cover the costs of educating these high need children. Currently the LA spends £77K per child to send children to private provisions outside the borough. The plan is to fund schools properly so that they can cope with the additional demand. The new funding formula is based not per child, but per place based on square footage. There will be two levels of funding depending on need either £21,500 or £28K per place.</p> <p>Governors were told that many aspects are still to be planned, especially the staffing of the new ARP at ASPS. It is possible some of our existing staff will move to the ARP but we will need to recruit a SEND teacher.</p> <p>An SLA (Service Level Agreement) will be drawn up. Some places may be taken by our existing children and the LA may place children with us. It is possible that some places will be paid for by other LAs for children out of borough. Depending on need, children in the ARP will spend between 20-80% of their time in the ARP where they can access such support as Speech and Language Therapy. Currently the school has to react, often at short notice, to the arrival of children with high levels of need, which does have impact on the support that can be offered to other children. Having the ARP is expected to mean the school will be less re-active and lessen the effect on support provision in classrooms. There is a team of Senco's working to support schools in the borough now, so we have external support that we can draw on. It is reassuring that the LA are making long-term funding plans for SEND provision across the borough.</p> <p>Governors attention was drawn to key aspects that need to be considered with the planning of the ARP and governors were invited to participate in the planning process. Key aspects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding issues & number /type of spaces • Staffing • Admissions to the ARP- ringfencing places for existing ASPS children? • The possible admission/participation of Redlands children • Benefits of an ARP and risk analysis
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	<p>Governors were informed that Redlands may establish their own ARP which may open earlier than the anticipated start date for ASPS's ARP of September 2024.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is there funding for the conversion building works required? There is a capital grant for the building works – but this will be spread across the borough. At ASPS we will need to re-develop the toilets. Any resources and furniture required will not be covered by the capital grant.</p> <p>Governor Question: We have the modular we can use for our ARP – what space do Redlands have? They have a lot of space in their building and a room has been allocated. They need to do less preparation of their physical space than we do. As our modular has 4 rooms we may decide to have one room per Key stage, i.e. KS1, LKS2 UKS2 and the last space as a sensory or quiet space.</p> <p>Governor Question: You will have to move Year 6 out of the modular – what are your plans for this? This move has caused some staff concerns but we have made improvements to the KS2 building and the move will have little real impact long-term. We had great uncertainty about the removal of the modular – when this would happen and how it would be moved with heavy lifting equipment and now the concern over this disruption is gone. Year 6 will still be able to take their SATS in the modular building in early May.</p> <p>Governor Question: Will the KS2 playground be updated? Once some ground works are completed, the Trim Trail will be installed on the grassed area at the back of the school near the bike shed, hopefully later this term or in the summer term. We do need to do some playground improvements, yes and we will also maybe look at the outdoor education area too.</p> <p>Governor Question: With the emphasis on pupil attendance, do we as a GB need to have a project around absence in school? No – what the GB are currently doing in the way of attendance monitoring – meeting with the AHT for attendance is sufficient. Ofsted did look at attendance and could see that we are proactive in this area and work closely with the LA and a small number of families with persistent absence.</p> <p>Governor Comment: I know we compare our attendance data with other schools – I think we will address this in the CEC and talk to our neighbouring schools about attendance.</p>
7.	<p>Redlands Update.</p> <p>Redlands Governing Board recently held a “Strategic Day” attended by the GB and the EHT, HoS and SBM. Some parents at ASPS are pressing the Director of Education at the LA for an update on Federation but it is believed that, with local elections approaching, and the fact that one parent is a local councillor, this pressure is politically motivated.</p>

	<p>Now that we have been working in Redlands for the autumn term, we are better able to understand the level of work required to get the school “Ofsted ready” and it would not be wise to Federate with Redlands until Ofsted has returned for another inspection. This is expected in January 2025. By this time, Redlands needs to have reached a position where it will be judged “Good” and we have no doubt that this will be achieved by then with the continuing hard work that has started. There is much work to complete before then, including putting in place an appropriate staffing structure and working on the budget. We are continuing to work collaboratively with Redlands Primary, which is not vastly different to working as a Federation. The work is impactful so we are confident that Federation is achievable, at the right time.</p> <p>There are some pressing issues to resolve – in particular the SBM’s workload across both schools. We need to carefully think about a staffing restructure to enable this role to become more strategic and put staff in place to support this. It is important that we get the staffing structure in both schools right.</p> <p>Considering all the issues mentioned, we are working towards a Federation date of 1st September 2025. Getting Redlands Ofsted ready, and working on the staffing structures (including suitable employment contracts) within the budgetary limitations are our next priorities.</p>
8.	<p>Chair’s Report.</p> <p>The Chair reported that there had been some LA wide meetings for Governance including Director’s briefings. The slides from these are available for Governors to view in GovernorHub. A focus for the LA is staff mental health and wellbeing – particularly for SLT but also for Governors. The LA has now made the EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) available to all Governors and information on how to access this will be communicated to Governors and is also given in the BFfC area of GovernorHub.</p> <p>The LA’s new RISE project to support schools with the increase in SEND need is a positive move and the Director of Education is also pushing schools to implement Therapeutic Thinking for behaviour management in schools.</p>
9.	<p>PEC Update.</p> <p>The PEC chair informed the meeting that two very successful PEC meetings have now been held where Governors had the opportunity to talk to staff leads about their phases and subjects. Governors are really grateful to staff for their time in writing reports to Governors and attending the meetings. A strong theme that emerged was SEND need and the high demands placed on staff so we are pleased to hear about the ARP project. Some governors have had the chance to meet with staff and have written reports which are available to read in the GovernorHub meeting folders. There are some subject link Governors who are yet to arrange meetings with staff. These include meetings for RE, maths, computing and science. Due to the fact that the new sports coach is still settling into his role, a meeting to look at PE and sport will be delayed. Our next PEC meeting is May 8th (which will be the last PEC of the academic year) so</p> <p>ACTION: Governors are asked to have completed these meetings and the reports in time for this meeting.</p>

10.	<p>Policies for approval/adopting: Four policies were circulated to governors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>a) Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school. Governors were informed that this is an RBC Policy for adoption and has been used twice recently as there are two children with serious medical issues who are currently unable to attend school. Governor Question: Who is responsible for managing these children's cases? The Inclusion Lead, with the full knowledge of the EHT. DECISION: Governors unanimously approved adopting this RBC Policy.</p> <p>b) ECT Policy. DECISION: Governors unanimously approved the policy.</p> <p>c) First Aid Policy. Governor Question: How many qualified first aiders are required and how many do you have? We have 13 qualified first aiders who hold the First Aid at Work qualification. The HSE stipulates how many first aiders are needed per number of employees. We are also required to have Paediatric First Aiders due to the fact we have an EYFS setting and we have 3 staff with this qualification. Governor Question: Does this feel like the right number? Yes – if anything we have too many first Aid qualified staff. We have a Medical Administrator who does the majority of First Aid required. Governor Question: Will the new ARP need its own First Aider? Yes. Four of five members of the office team are First Aid qualified as they tend to be the most accessible staff. DECISION: Governors unanimously approved the policy.</p> <p>d) Suspensions & Permanent Exclusions Policy. Governor Question: Do you have a check sheet or proforma that you work through when deciding if a suspension is warranted? Yes – and also a staff team briefing. Assaults on staff are a trigger for suspension in our school. We have to send the paperwork explaining the reason for the suspension decision to the LA. Governor Question: How do you consult and inform the parents about the decision? Parents are invited in for a discussion before the suspension and afterwards for a re-integration meeting. As a school we really do try to avoid suspending children and we do that in order to put in place risk assessments in the hope that we do not need to suspend a child again. DECISION: Governors unanimously approved the policy.</p>
11.	<p>Wellbeing & Equality. Wellbeing surveys are currently underway and once analysed the Wellbeing Link Governor will meet with the staff lead for wellbeing and report back to governors. There are currently no wellbeing or Equality issues to bring to Governors attention.</p>
12.	<p>Governor Training. The chair of governors informed the meeting that he is working on a spreadsheet to record link governor roles against suitable training opportunities to plot CPD opportunities for governors.</p>

	Dates for a Governors into School morning were discussed and the date of Friday 8th March was decided on (for a morning event). If governors wish to have lunch with the children this can be arranged. ACTION: Timings of the morning and a programme of activities TBC. The clerk drew governor's attention to some training opportunities that are coming up, especially New Governor Training on 28 th February. ACTION: Training event details to be circulated to the GB.
13.	Issues for parents/confidentiality. There were no issues to be communicated to parents & carers nor any items requiring confidential minutes.
14.	Any Other Business. No items of AOB were raised.
15.	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 24th April (Budget setting meeting).

Meeting closed: 8.10pm

Actions:

Action:	Owner:
CoG to sign minutes of 20 th and 27 th September in GovHub	DD
Remaining Link Governors to hold meetings with staff (RE/maths/science & computing) by last PEC of 8 th May 2024.	AdeB/VO/YD
Programme plan for Governors in school morning 8 th March	EHT
Training opportunities to be circulated to the GB	Clerk

Attendance at FGB meetings 2023/24 (3 meetings to date)

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