



ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Full Governing Board.
Wednesday 28th April 2023. 7pm.

Present: Dave Dymond (Chair); Adedayo Benson; Yota Dimitriadi; Kate Gordon; Robert Howell; Zoe Watling.

Apologies: Attia Rafiq-Sharif; Andrew Burrell.

Clerk: Deborah Savage.

Agenda Item	
1.	Apologies. Apologies had been received from Attia Rafiq-Sharif and Andrew Burrell and these were accepted. No apologies had been received from Hajar Alami or Vincent Onuchi who did not attend the meeting.
2.	Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Minutes of the meeting held 18th January 2023. The minutes from this meeting had been circulated in advance and the Chair updated those present on the current Ofsted situation. There has been much debate, both locally and nationally, about Ofsted since the events in Caversham with the local East Reading MP contributing to a debate in Parliament. Alfred Sutton is still awaiting an Ofsted Inspection. Actions from this meeting were reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes from 4/1/23 have been signed by the Chair• The Chair has had a conversation with the Director of Education who will place extending the London Weighing area on a future agenda for discussion. It is hoped that this will improve pay for all staff.• The Governor Skills Audit is still ongoing. The minutes were accepted as a true record and ACTION: will be signed by the Chair in Governor Hub as soon as possible.
4.	Part 2 minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held 13th March 2023. The Minutes from this EFGB had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the chair stated that this matter would be discussed later in this meeting. These minutes will remain confidential whilst the discussions on Collaborative working with Redlands are ongoing.

	<p>The minutes were accepted as a true record and ACTION: will be signed by the Chair in Governor Hub as soon as possible.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Matters Arising. There were no matters arising other than collaborative working which the HT will discuss as part of his HT report.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Head Teacher’s report including update on Collaborative working with Redlands. The Chair thanked the HT for producing a comprehensive HT report that was circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. The HT talked Governors through the main points. Alongside the HT report a number of appendixes and also phase reports from each year group lead had also been circulated and the HT asked ACTION: all governors to read these over the next few weeks to familiarise themselves with the current situation in school in preparation for an Ofsted visit.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that the lengthy wait for an Ofsted visit was causing anxiety but that the national debate around Ofsted and the expectation that changes would occur at some point has maybe seen a slight drop in staff anxiety levels. As always, the school are prioritising staff wellbeing.</p> <p>The parent’s survey was largely positive, with the main feedback from parents, as expected, being a request for more opportunities to come into school now that Covid is receding. The school already had plans to offer chances for parents to do this and there are opportunities now on the school calendar and some face-to-face parents’ meetings too.</p> <p>Teachers are continuing to take strike action with more days of strikes taking place this week and next around the May bank holiday. For these strike days, being so close to SATs testing, the school plans to move working staff around so that Years 2 and 6 can be offered the chance to attend school alongside vulnerable children on these days. As usual, planning remains hard as the exact numbers of staff taking strike action are not known until the day.</p> <p>Looking at the contextual data provided in the report, the school is currently full with strong admissions figures into Reception for September 2023. As predicted some time ago, due to the falling birth rate, allocations for September are low compared to previous years but some schools are currently well below capacity at a half or even a third of their PAN. ASPS currently has only 5 vacancies (85 of 90 places taken) and it is expected that these will be taken up over the coming months. This is a very pleasing and reassuring situation for ASPS.</p> <p>The report included a supporting narrative about children with SEND including information on internally and externally run interventions. These include an increase in Play Therapist and Mental Health Support Team provision. Some of this need for support has been driven by children’s covid and lockdown experiences.</p>

Governor Question: are BFFC getting better at responding to requests for support?

We do source some support from BFFC but much of our external provision comes from other partner agencies. BFFC do not have a very large input into the provision we offer.

Governor Question: Are we managing to maintain a steady number of children/families on our support books – around 10? Yes – more or less, but the level of need varies. We do have an excellent support team in school, but their case load is rising as the level of support available externally falls. To cover the shortfall in services from Social Services we are finding our staff are having to write additional reports and make home visits.

Governor Question: Does this mean we need to look at Job profiles for some staff to review them? Not at this point, no. Situations in schools currently change so rapidly and the staff have broad job specifications. Our staff are very dedicated and driven and we try to support them by giving them time so that they can maintain a good work: life balance. We continue to prioritise the support of our staff.

Referring to the staffing update figures on page 10 of the report, the HT pointed out that ASPS is broadly inline with local and national figures.

Governor Question: I note that there were no excessive workload incidents reported which is pleasing – but I am interested to know how you define excessive workload?

It is quite a crude measure really. As a school, we discuss workload regularly and would record an excessive workload when a member of staff was visibly stressed. We would like to make excessive workload more definable but the nature of working in schools means that there are key points over the course of an academic year that cause higher stress levels than at other periods (such as SATS.) We have just carried out a staff wellbeing survey and are in the process of analysing it now. We have 6 Mental Health first aiders amongst our staff team and encourage open dialogue amongst our staff. Our staff are reflective, and this helps contribute to talking about stress. Sometimes open discussion can prevent a situation developing into a recordable incident. We enable our union representative to hold meetings with staff and we talk regularly to the union rep to try to alleviate problems earlier rather than later. Union membership is valued by our staff at ASPS.

Continuing the staffing update, the HT informed the meeting that 4 new LTC's joined after Easter and that first impressions are very positive. The new Year 1 teacher has also settled very well into her role.

Behaviour, Attitudes and Attendance.

Data was included in the HT report and also in the appendixes and additional reports from the AHT with responsibility for attendance and the HT reminded governors that attendance is a focus for Ofsted. Schools nationally face attendance problems, and it is

expected that Ofsted will want to know what measures the school is taking to try to improve attendance rates.

Governor Question: What are the main causes of poor attendance? Holidays taken in term time to visit relatives after being unable to do so during the covid years. Also, children that are leaving us to move elsewhere but are still on our books until we receive confirmation that they have joined a new school and are not missing from education. Until this confirmation arrives, they are recorded as taking unauthorised absence. When we have several children moving schools this can build up our unauthorised absence figures. Often families have more than one child in school, so a small number of families can skew our figures significantly. The way absence is recorded, the system does not truly reflect the situation in school with attendance. It is difficult, as we understand families want to get together after long absences, but we have fined some families for taking holidays in school time.

Governor Question: Have these fines been challenged? Not that we are aware of, as the LA handles the fine process for us once we report unauthorised absence for holidays.

Governors will note from the appendix on trips that the school are now offering a range of curriculum lead trips to children, and the phase leads have written reports for Governors to update everyone prior to a potential Ofsted visit.

The HT drew Governor's attention to the fact that reading progress is strong through out the school but that writing is weaker in year 3,4 and 5. This is because years 2 & 6 face statutory testing and these years not only have a focus on writing but are also strong in their moderation and assessment of writing – it may be that our assessment of writing is weaker in years 3,4 and 5. The end of year results will show us if children have made accelerated progress in writing.

Governor Question: With SATs rapidly approaching, how is the balance between teaching for SATs and delivering an enriched curriculum? This is a tricky balance as we have a broad curriculum to deliver, but we also need to get our children through the SATs tests. With a very high percentage of EAL children, we always make English and Maths a priority anyway and our Year 6 SATs predictions this year are very strong. We have done lots of moderation training with our staff and also with other schools. The training for teachers around assessing writing in other years is not as tight. It is correct to say that nationally, writing is lower after the pandemic as this is the subject most affected by absence from the classroom.

Governor Question: Is improving writing in years 3,4 and 5 as simple as sharing staff expertise? Yes – to an extent but it is also about giving children opportunities to write. In years 2 and 6, writing is systematic -it is less so in Years 3,4 and 5.

	<p>Governor Question: So, is it necessary to have all years focus on preparing for SATs then? No – we want our children to experience a rich and vibrant curriculum rather than have a narrow focus on specific areas to get through testing. With a large number of EAL children, we must focus on the fundamentals of language, which may be different to the focus in other schools. It is a question of trying to balance all these different pressures.</p> <p>An update on Collaborative working.</p> <p>The HT updated Governors on Collaborative working with Redlands School and informed them that he has joined a recruitment panel for a new ECT teacher; met parents and the PTA of Redlands and contributed to an RIG improvement meeting with the LA to ensure Redlands improvement journey is still on track. There was a joint GBs social meeting at Redlands too, which the LA’s Director of Education attended, and much work had gone into drawing up the Memorandum of Understanding which was approved by both school’s GB’s just before the Easter break. One of ASPS’s AHT’s is now working 2 days a week at Redlands along with a DHT seconded for the summer term only from Churchend Primary School. ASPS’s SBM has now started working to support Redlands too which is earlier than expected and due to the absence of an SBM at Redlands and the acute need to close down the financial year of 2022/23 and prepare the budget for 2023/4. This has entailed long days for the SBM.</p> <p>Staff recognise that there are many challenges to overcome but the enthusiasm to make this work remains undented. Work will now start on the consultation process and communication with all stakeholders alongside working out a timetable to ensure milestones are met along the road to Federation by March 2024.</p>
7.	<p>Update from the Resources Committee including Budget for 2023/24.</p> <p>The SBM informed this meeting that, at the recent meeting of the RCC, the committee approved the final (4th) Quarter financial reports from the 2022/23 financial year and looked at the proposed budgets for the 2023/24 financial year.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that the last financial year ended with a balance of £69K which means that the school is carrying forward around £189K into this financial year. The SBM had prepared two proposed budgets for this year (one based on Federated working with Redlands, and one based on ASPS remaining a stand alone primary.) The RCC looked carefully at these figures and discussed the options available before recommending the Federation budget to the FGB meeting. A document summarising the figures from both options had been circulated to the FGB in advance of the meeting. Governors agreed that financially, Federation was the only viable option for the school and DECISION: the FGB unanimously approved setting a Federation budget for the 2023/24 financial year.</p>
8.	<p>Update from the Pay Committee.</p> <p>The Chair of the Pay Committee was unable to attend this meeting but had prepared a short report which the Clerk read out to the FGB meeting in order to keep the GB fully informed.</p>

	<p><i>2nd November 2022</i></p> <p><i>The Pay Committee met onsite in ASPS.</i></p> <p><i>We were given and looked at samples of anonymised performance review reports for a range of teaching staff. These included examples of class teachers, MPS (main pay scale) staff, AHT'S and unqualified teachers, We accepted the recommendations and unanimously approved the appraisal system and pay recommendations made by the HT.</i></p> <p><i>22nd March 2023</i></p> <p><i>The Pay Committee met onsite in ASPS.</i></p> <p><i>In this meeting we were given and looked at a sample of anonymised performance review reports for a range of support staff including some who are classroom based and some who are office based. We considered the appraisal process based on the example reports we were given and concluded that the process system followed procedure and appeared to have been carried out fairly. We unanimously accepted the support staff appraisal system and the pay award recommendations made by the HT.</i></p> <p><i>The Pay Committee chair also stated that he was happy to answer any questions governors may have if they wanted to email them to him.</i></p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Update from the Performance Enrichment Committee.</p> <p>The Chair of the PEC was unable to attend the meeting but had written a report which the Clerk read out to the meeting:</p> <p><i>Everyone part of the governing board has been allocated phase/year groups along with specific subjects to monitor. This has been successful and a very positive start to the year.</i></p> <p><i>Phase/Year Leads (AHT), provided governors with detail progress reports in January. These reports gave us an insight into what is working well, (celebrating success), and what areas need focussing on to further improve.</i></p> <p><i>Governors have built positive relationships with Phase/Subject leads and have met to discuss the school's curriculum/subjects. These meetings have helped to understand:</i></p> <p><i>Subject delivery - (what's taught, why it's taught, and how it's taught)</i></p> <p><i>Subject action plans</i></p> <p><i>The quality and use of resources</i></p> <p><i>The impact of interventions</i></p> <p><i>Teacher workload and professional development</i></p>

	<p><i>Attainment and progress made by the end of a Key Stage.</i></p> <p><i>Key groups within the school (including pupils with special educational needs, pupil premium-eligible pupils, and pupils with English as an additional language) have also been discussed to find out their levels of progress and how they are supported.</i></p> <p><i>Identify areas for closer review.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to this, some governors have had the opportunity to talk to children about their learning and watched a lesson in action.</i></p> <p><i>Our PEC meetings have been a great opportunity for everyone to update the board on their monitoring visits and planning next steps.</i></p> <p>A governor reported that he had a recent meeting with the geography lead in school where he was able to discuss the geography curriculum. This was a very positive meeting although the governor expressed his disappointment that government guidance on what the geography curriculum should cover was so limited. Guidance seemed to consist of referring schools to the National Geography Society. The governor also informed the meeting that he hopes to attend a geography lesson shortly to set geography being delivered and talk to the children. He said he is also interested to see how SEND children are supported to access the geography curriculum.</p>
10.	<p>Safeguarding.</p> <p>Safeguarding had been a part of the HT report and had been discussed earlier but the meeting was informed that the current economic and social pressures were seeing an increase in levels of support needed which was increasing staff workloads. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that LA support levels are falling meaning school staff have to pick up the slack. The HT assured the GB that the school wants to do what it can to support and protect the staff from increased workloads and that staff wellbeing remains a priority. The team are very supportive of each other. All staff, including new joiners, have had safeguarding training.</p>
11.	<p>Wellbeing & Equality.</p> <p>There were no additional issues raised for discussion.</p>
12.	<p>Governor Training/Skills Audit.</p> <p>As was covered in a section of the HT report, doing a Skills Audit amongst the GB is a requirement, and one was circulated to governors some weeks ago. However, the response has been low so ACTION: Clerk to circulate this again to those governors who have not yet completed the Skills Audit so that the HT report can be completed and it can be discussed at the next FGB meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that our new governors are booked onto new governor training courses taking place this term and that there are a few statutory requirements that need completing. ACTION: Clerk to email new governors about statutory training.</p>
13.	<p>Issues for Parents & Carers and Confidentiality.</p>

	There were no issues to be communicated to parents and no items of a confidential nature.
14.	<p>Any Other Business.</p> <p>The SBM suggested that future meetings are held over MS Teams rather than Zoom to save the school funding a Zoom license. Internal, school email addresses should also be used to MS Teams. DECISION / ACTION: This was approved, and the new governors would be set up with school email addresses. The use of One Drive for storing governor documents was also discussed.</p> <p>Appeal for help with SATs testing: The school asked if governors would be willing to observe the SATs testing procedures in school, as they did last year. SATs testing will take place every day from May 9th-12th inclusive and ACTION: the SATs timetable would be shared so that Governors could attend some sessions.</p> <p>Governor Question: Can you update us on actions following the Climate Education Conference please? The school are currently looking at our next steps, but this is a big project. Staff will be updating SLT about which parts the school can do as budget implications mean we are limited and there is no means to reward staff for the additional work required. We hope to have an action plan in the next few weeks.</p> <p>Governor Question: Does this fit under the science curriculum? Climate change and environmentalism is multi-disciplinary, and we hope to have it embedded into the entire curriculum rather than have it as a “bolt-on”.</p>
15.	Date of next meeting: 12th July 2023.

Meeting Closed: 8pm.

Actions:

Action:	Owner:
Chair to electronically sign minutes from 18th January 2023 in GovHub	DD
Chair to electronically sign minutes from EFGB 13 th March 2023 in GovHub	DD
Read phase reports attached to this meeting over the next few weeks to familiarise with the current situation in school in preparation for an Ofsted visit.	ALL
Governor Skills Audit to be re-circulated for completion ready for the next FGB meeting.	Clerk
New governors to do statutory training.	Clerk/ZW/VO
Future meetings to be held on MS Teams and school email addresses to be set up for new governors.	Clerk/SBM
Governors to monitor SATs testing and timetable to be posted on GovHub	ALL

Attendance at FGB meetings 2022/23 (4 virtual meetings to date)

Dave Dymond	4 of 4 meetings
Robert Howell	4 of 4 meetings
Adedayo Benson	3 of 4 meetings
Yota Dimitriadi	3 of 4 meetings
Attia Rafiq-Sharif	2 of 4 meetings
Kate Gordon	4 of 4 meetings
Andrew Burrell	3 of 4 meetings
Hajar Alami	3 of 4 meetings
Zoe Watling	2 of 2 possible meetings
Vincent Onuchi	1 of 2 possible meetings

Items circulated to the GB since the last FGB:

- Governor Skills Audit
- Info on Climate action planning network meeting
- Collaborative working documents
- Results of the parents' survey
- Info on Teacher's strike action
- Info on workshop for evaluating attendance & absence figures
- PP guidance
- Info on the Director's briefing 2/5/23
- Info on Governors role in observing SATs testing
- BFfC Governor Services spring newsletter
- Info on webinar on managing school complaints
- Presentations from March Director's briefing
- Info on Directors Briefing held 7/3/23