



**Alma Park Primary School**  
**4:30p.m. Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024**  
**Celebrating Difference, Achieving Together**  
**Full Governing Body Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**Present**

Afshan Ahmed	Parent Governor
Neilam Atcha	Co-opted Governor
Michael Coates	Co-opted Governor / Chair
David Cooke	LA Governor / Vice Chair
Grace Dobson-Hughes	Co-opted Governor
Mariam Herd	Parent Governor
Sam Howell	Staff Governor
Fran Jones	Co-opted Governor
Steve Parkinson	Parent Governor
Sameed Rezayan	Co-opted Governor
Richard Williams	Headteacher

**Apologies**

Pakeeza Batool	Co-opted Governor
Khadija Kalsoom	Parent Governor

**In attendance:**

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
Kathy Hughes	Deputy Headteacher
Sarah Butler	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 all to the meeting. There was one item of any other business relating to academisation and the chair reported this school has

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Pakeeza Batool and Khadija Kalsoom.

**3. Declarations of Non/Pecuniary Interest**

Fran Jones and Neilam Atcha each have one child in the school. Afshan Ahmed and Steve Parkinson each have two children in the school. Mariam Herd has three children in the school. There were no other declarations other than those previously reported on the annual declaration and the school website.

#### 4. Minutes of last meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 & Matters Arising

**Governors formally approved the minutes of the meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

##### Matters Arising

Action: The Headteacher will provide the comparative data from previous years on progress.

The progress scores were shared with the Quality of Education Committee (the historic data report is shared on Trust Governor). Historic data was shared at this meeting.

***Q: KS1 results show a decline in 2023 this cohort are now in Yr3, does this group have targets to be at the national average?***

All school targets are aspirational, the data shared is the current data, children make good progress in this school.

***C: How are you managing to bring this cohort up to the expected standard?***

There is additional TA time and a tutoring service called Lightening Squad have been approached for additional tutoring. Every child in this cohort will receive additional tutoring in summer two. The school has purchased a three-year subscription for reading support. Children working below in maths will receive additional tutoring on their Yr2 gaps. The lower KS2 phase leader will QA this provision. The tutors will be provide reading interventions for years three, four, and five. There will be six children from each class. This is evidence based with evidence of impact

***Q: Is this paired or online?***

The children work together online, this is interactive.

***Q: Are any other schools using this programme?***

Yes, Cavendish Primary follows this programme. This provision will be ring fenced and the school will fund 50%.

***Q: Can the laptops cope with six children logging on at the same time?***

There are new chromes and One Education assure the school the new internet service will improve access.

***Q: Are there maths interventions?***

Yes

***Q: What are the costs?***

The maths interventions will cost approximately £7,500, 50% of this is funded, the school will pay £3,750. The school may pay back some money from the grant allocation. The impact should be evident this year.

Phonics outcome is above national averages and KS2 are also above national. There are great outcomes for reading and maths and the school is in the top 5% for reading progress and the top 8% for maths progress. SEND pupils progress higher in this school.

Action: The Headteacher will check how the parents have registered the language of the children on the SEND register.

The report was shared and it was explained the small numbers skew the percentages. In Acorns all children are non-verbal.

***Q: Do you have staff who speak languages from this community, 40% of children are from Urdu speaking homes?***

The school employs three Urdu speakers and one Arabic speaker.

***Q: Are these teachers?***

Two are TAs (teaching assistants) and one staff member works in the school office. The TAs work with all children

***Q: Do you find the Urdu speaking admin staff member useful?***

The skills of this staff member are incredibly useful when communicating with parents.

Action: Clerk to share a version of a collaboration agreement with the Headteacher.

This was actioned on the 8th December 2023.

#### 5. SFVS (school financial value standard)

Grace Dobson Hughes had addressed governor questions on the TG (Trust Governor) forum in the Staffing and Budget Committee meeting. Chairs of committee are expected to attend training.

**Q: Section 27 states school money is locked in the safe? Does this apply to PTA (parent teachr association) monies?**

PTA funds can be stored in the school safe.

**Governors formally approved the SFVS.**

## 6. Headteacher report

Governors had contacted the Headteacher to ask if the report including information about the ethnicity of SEND Pupils could include a new column for school totals to enable data on proportions. This was included.

**C: "The SEF (Self-evaluation framework) identifies KS1 in Reading, Writing and Maths are significantly below national, and that "Grammar Punctuation and Spelling is above average for the whole cohort... apart from disadvantaged pupils" what more can or will be done to develop these skills?**

This was answered in agenda item 4.

**C: Attendance in 2022/23 looks worse and why is there now a disparity?**

There were more children on holiday in 2022/23. The new attendance officer is having impact, the school has an award for good attendance, school attendance is in the top 25% nationally.

Reception children attendance is lower, for many children this is their first contact with education. If statutory age children miss 20 consecutive days they can be off rolled. Parents are aware of this and often arrange holidays around these regulations. Statutory school age counts from the term after a child becomes five.

**Q: Is the PA (persistent absence) data due to holidays or non-attendance?**

This is mainly holidays, some of this is also illness. After 20 days a child is defined as CME (child missing in education). Attendance of less than 50% is categorised as "severe". PA in this school included multiple illnesses. Acorn's children who are on reintegration timetables may be in the PA data. This explains the increase in Alma Park as there are more children with needs affecting attendance.

**C: The SEF has much CPD focus, are you assessing the impact of this training?**

Kathy Hughes reported lesson observations emphasises the new practices covered in CPD is in the teaching. This includes retrieval questioning and awareness of cognitive overload. The environment changes are also monitored. Book looks, learning walks, discussions will check for this. This will be ongoing.

**C: Is this showing in the progress of the pupils?**

This will be reviewed in the data, checks for consistency are occurring. Middle leaders and subject leaders will be checking threads of learning.

**Q: The assessment of non-core subjects is an issue for teachers, how do you make learning quantifiable?**

Not all learning will be quantifiable. Pupil voice will provide some evidence. There is now a more rigorous approach to assessment, there can be a cover sheet identifying objectives. Some learning objectives are broad, spider diagrams can be used. Curriculum leaders are finding children often write what they already know, not what they have learned. Work needs to be undertaken with staff to identify key knowledge. Subject leaders will need time to identify the key knowledge without narrowing the curriculum. Secondary educators need the children to be able to retrieve knowledge. The Headteacher explained decisions are needed on the identification of skills.

The chair of the Quality of Education Committee reported on the History presentation which had identified the need for children to learn to think like a historian. There has been much work done in History and the benefits will take some years to identify the impact.

#### Staffing Update including Staff Survey

##### ***C: The staff voice was mixed, has this shifted? Are there any concerns?***

50% answered which was a disappointing response rate.

##### ***Q: Why was there a low response rate?***

The survey was anonymous, it could be because staff were busy.

##### ***Q: Were staff given time to complete the survey?***

No, this was an electronic survey to be completed in their own time. This was completed on google forms. Some respondents did put their names on their survey return.

##### ***C: Can you act on these results given the low response rate?***

The leadership will act on this survey as some staff have taken the time to answer the questions and there were some positives. Some questions might be hard to analyse.

##### ***Q: Governors asked Kathy Hughes if there were any surprises?***

Yes, there were some surprises. Kathy Hughes explained mental health is not the remit of just one person, the clinics will continue.

##### ***Q: Have the clinics had good attendance?***

There has only been one clinic so far. There is work done on an individual basis which remains confidential. The work on mental health and wellbeing is the start of the journey. Only 9% of respondents did not enjoy working here, this is positive. The comments might skew the analysis, the percentages are positive.

The questionnaire was administered in January 2024 and the timing of future surveys might change. Governors discussed how much the responses are connected to the environment and the world in general, many industries are experiencing issues with staff wellbeing and staff retention. Mental health support is relatively new and this is a very subjective area. Kathy Hughes explained the culture needs to enable all staff to recognise their colleagues' feelings, the role of the lead is to signpost. Teachers generally do not prioritise their own health as they are more focused on the needs of the children, this makes teaching a very pressured job.

##### ***C: Should you have a mental health first aider who is not a senior leader?***

This was considered and will be reviewed. All staff are already too busy to take on additional responsibilities of wellbeing.

Governors shared experiences from companies where there is a more open culture to discuss neurodiversity issues. Kathy Hughes is mindful of the need for a team approach, the school is at the start of raising the profile of mental health issues. Governors found this approach refreshing.

It was agreed to remove the 'don't know' box and include the free text box for all questions.

##### ***Q: Will you administer this at different times of the year?***

Yes. Governors felt the training impact needs to be measured. Governors wondered if there was a confidence issue affecting the low response rate. The findings were shared at a staff meeting with the actions to follow. There will be another survey given in autumn two and summer two.

The new inclusion leader is a qualified mental health first aider and the team is now growing.

##### ***Q: Is there a theme of workload affecting mental health?***

There is a whole school planner for the academic year. The assessment drop points have been moved around to avoid pinch points. The assessment timetable is being reviewed and streamlined; this should support staff. The Monday morning briefing aims to support staff and give clear expectations. Time is given for tasks such as moderation of writing. The school does not have

meetings for meetings sake. Staff have had recent time allocated to develop their painting and drawing skills. Teachers have 1265 hours of directed time, most of this is spent with the children. Time is given for phase meetings, and subject leadership. There is much change and there is much development about the science of teaching.

**Q: Are you changing the staffing structure with the new inclusion lead?**

No

**Q: Will the assistant head be replaced**

It is unsure at this stage as there is a class teacher role to be filled.

## 7. Behaviour and Safety Update

**Q: There are increases in cases in the report, is this normal?**

There are more cases than historically. Two children have had their level of support reduced from child protection to child in need. Two children are looked after. The numbers are not unusual.

**Q: what is Early Help?**

Jo Young leads on this, this is school support for families and this can include working with siblings across schools.

There was one incident of racism in Yr5 and Yr6

**Q: How do you get to know about these incidents?**

The children know right from wrong and will tell teachers.

**S: Governors were pleased to see the inclusion of misogyny**

**Q: Governors noted the inclusion of reporting incidents of 'shadism and colourism' and the explanations given in the Headteachers report. Was this discussed with the children?**

A child who was a new international arrival was struggling to get on with some children, discussions with the family occurred.

**Q: Governors asked about preventative measures, these issues are included in the national curriculum, do teachers talk to children about these issues?**

Teachers will ask children to not use inappropriate language, and teachers talk to children about how to treat each other. PSHE (personal, social, health, and economic education) and world book day are places to challenge stereotypes.

**C: When dealing with misogyny, might boys get the wrong message of this not being for them?**

The school aims to deliver a curriculum appropriate for the world we live in without "bolt-ons" like Black History Month and International Women's Day, these are threads running through the whole curriculum. The South Asian and LGBT communities will be contacted to ensure the curriculum is reflective. 'Girls in sports' leads to discussions with boys, this school is not overly competitive. As the children get older a gender split develops and the coaches work with girls to increase their participation in sport. In Alma Park the girls have a football team and the boys don't. A trip to Emmaline Pankhurst led to children asking about votes for men. Adults have these concerns also and this is challenged.

**C: Is there something about this demographic school where there are more gender splits.**

Staff felt the playgrounds are mixed. Football, basketball, and tennis are mixed, skipping is mainly but not solely girls. Cricket tends to be mainly boys but girls are learning the skills. Girls are more confident with gymnastics; they are more likely to do this outside of the home. Coaching companies are unwilling to provide gymnastics services after school as they will not offer one-hour sessions. The school is employing a yoga teacher and there will be free places to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Governors raised the issues of age-appropriate understanding, the need for balance when teaching progressive issues and the children being allowed to disagree and reflect on this.

## 8. Proposed change to terms of reference for committees

The chair explained there is more consideration needed for the premises. The chairs recommended the Staffing, Budget, and Premises committee to be separate and for Dave Cooke to chair the new Health, Safety, and Premises Committee. Michael Coates will join the premises committee, along with the SBM, this committee will meet a few times per year. This committee will be have a focus on monitoring the building and the long-term development of the school building. **Governors agreed to the new terms of reference for the Staffing and Budget Committee and the Premises, Health, and Safety Committee.**

The Headteacher shared plans for internal and external developments. The school is losing an ICT suite and gaining a library. Before 2018 a group of parents worked with the old leadership team and produced plans for the school grounds. These plans have been shared with parents at the summer fayre. There are plans for the junior playground, to include a MUGA (multi-use games area). The plans were available for governors at this meeting. There was list of 40 items at one time.

The KS1 playground needs to be reimagined. Governors were encouraged to look at Beaver Rd playground for ideas. There are plans for an Early Years Forest School. Governors were aware local residents like the wild plants and tree area and cautioned the need for effective communication. The plans can be shared on the school website.

**Q: Is there a scope for including these changes in the curriculum?**

Yes, the forest school area will change the curriculum for EYFS. The aim is for all children to experience more outdoors education, this ethos can be shared. Governors reminded the meeting this links to the PTA fundraising.

## 9. Parental Questionnaire

The survey was shared in advance of the meeting on TG. Governors noted there was a mixed picture.

**Q: Did you share a parent's survey last year?**

No, the plan is to undertake two parents survey each year.

**Q: How many responses were received?**

Between 107 and 109, not everyone answered every question.

**Q: Are there any causes for concern?**

There is now a communication page on the school website and 'parentmail' will highlight this.

Communications are more concerning for some year groups, there could only be 10/12 responses out of 60 parents.

**Q: Could you issue this survey at parents evening to improve responses, iPads could be available.**

This will be considered and consideration will be given to paper copies to increase the number of responses.

Governors noted question one asks about your child in school and parents might have more than one child so this is hard to answer. There was concern from Yr1 parents about communication, this might be because they are newer parents. The school will respond to this with a parent workshop, parent workshops were held pre-covid. Reception classes use Tapestry to share information and this stops in Yr1.

Governors noted the year group email address could be changed s there is a class email. Parents might be reluctant to discuss the specific issues about their child not knowing who has access to the emails. This impacts on staff workloads and governors felt this was a good suggestion. The communication pages try to identify the best way to approach the class teacher, staff will respond to emails within five days.

***C: Should the parents evening be earlier in the year than October?***

The Headteacher felt it should be later, after the data drops, next year the assessment drops change and parents' evenings will be November and mid-March. Governors suggested if there are any issues with new teachers an early parents evening helps. The school agreed and will organise a meet the teacher drop-in before the parents evening. This is likely to be a 9am offer and a 3.30/4pm slot during staff meeting time. Governors felt this would give much reassurance.

***Q: Is the need to meet your child's new teacher greater for KS1?***

Governors felt reception and Yr1 parents have greater need.

***Q: Were there any surprises in the parent's survey for the school leadership?***

No, there were more positives than expected. The Headteacher was aware of the negative issues as these have often been raised already.

***S: Governors felt 75% plus for most categories was a brilliant response.***

## **10. Committee Minutes**

The minutes from the Staffing & Budget Committee held 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and the Quality of Education Committee held 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were shared in advance of this meeting. There were no questions on these minutes.

## **11. Governing body matters**

### Collaboration Agreements

The school now has a collaboration agreement with Acacia Primary School and collaborates as part of a triad with St. Oswald and St. Agnes. Any of these three schools can ask any governor to help out with panels. MCC (Manchester City Council) were very helpful in advising governors.

***Q: Has the staffing matter been resolved?***

The LA (local authority) clerk will be contacting those governors who were involved.

### Governor Monitoring Reports

Governors monitoring reports were shared in advance of this meeting via TG. There was a history monitoring report from David Cooke; a health & safety report from David Cooke; and report on EYFS from Grace Dobson-Hughes and a report from Steve Parkinson on SDP (school development plan) Priorities three, four and seven. There were no questions on these monitoring reports.

### Training Record

Governors had been contacted by the clerk to remind them to upload their training on TG.

## **12. Policy Review and Approval**

The Governance Handbook has been changed and the link is now on TG. A main change is the requirement for one governor to have undertaken cyber security training. Steve Parkinson, Sameed Rezayan, and Michael Coates have completed cyber security training. The clerk reminded governors to update this training on their profile on TG.

### School Complaints and privacy policy

***Q: Are there any changes since the last approval?***

The passing of complaints now has to be in a sealed envelope.

The policy has been used twice and has worked well so there are no significant changes.

**Governors formally approved the School Complaints and Privacy Policy**

This will be reviewed in three years.

### **13. Dates of 2023/24 meetings:**

*Some of these dates have changed since the last meeting*

Staffing & Budget - 25th April 2024

Premises Committee - 16th May 2024

Staffing & Budget Committee - 20th June 2024

Quality of Education 27th - June 2024

Full Governing Body- 4th July 2024

### **14. Proposed Dates of 2024/25 meetings**

**Governors agreed the following schedule of meetings for 2024/25**

#### ***Autumn Term***

- Full Governing Board – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 16:00
- Staffing & Budget Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 16:30
- Pay Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 15:30
- Premises, Health, and Safety Committee – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 at 16:30
- Quality of Education Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 16:30
- Full Governing Board – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 16:30

#### ***Spring Term***

- Staffing & Budget Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 6:30
- Quality of Education Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 16:30
- Full Governing Board – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 16:30
- Premises, Health, and Safety Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 at 16:30

#### ***Summer Term***

- Staffing & Budget Committee – 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 16:30
- Staffing & Budget Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 16:30
- Quality of Education Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 16:30
- Full Governing Board – 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 at 16:30

*Meeting ended 6pm*

***Signed: Michael Coates***

***Date: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024***

### ***Summary of actions***