

LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

Minutes of the

GOVERNING BOARD OF AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Virtual meeting held on Thursday, 9 December 2021 at 6pm

Present:	Abu Abdullah	Co-opted
	Benedicta Asare	Co-opted
	Iqbal Hussain	Parent
	Sayesta Miah	Parent
	Hafise Nazif	Headteacher
	Nisha Ramanathan	Associate
	Neha Shivhare	Associate
	Iqbal Singh	Co-opted
	Sara Wilson	Parent
In attendance:	Mrs Julie Ammi	Clerk
	Mr Lee Franklin-Lewis	Deputy Headteacher
	Ms Sara Shamas	School Business Manager
	Mrs Manpreet Chhabra	Deputy Headteacher

The meeting commenced at 6.04pm.

303. Welcome and apologies for absence

The headteacher welcomed everyone to the meeting and new governors to their first full governing board meeting. Introductions were made.

The chair (Denis Shea) and vice-chair (Soyeb Patel) had sent apologies. In their absence it was agreed that Abu Abdullah would chair the meeting.

Geetha Unnithan and Halima Khatun had also sent apologies.

All apologies were condoned.

304. Child Protection Training

Governors received a 30 minutes' informative child protection training session, delivered by Lee Franklin-Lewis, deputy headteacher and designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

305. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest on any item of the agenda.

Action: The newly appointed parent governors to complete a register of interest form and return it to the school business manager.

306. Membership of governing board

a. To note the board membership – appointments/resignations/expiration of term of office

Governors were informed that Kay Scoresby had resigned from the governing board. Kay had been a governor for a number of years and had made huge contributions to the school.

This resignation created a co-opted vacancy. There were currently two associate governors.

Action: The headteacher to speak with the associate governors outside of the meeting to arrange for one person to move into a co-opted role.

307. Minutes of last Governing Board meeting

a. Approval of minutes of the governing board meeting held on 14 October 2021

The meeting was agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting subject to the amendment of the attendance of Abu Abdullah as co-opted and Soyeb Patel as a parent governor.

b. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

308. Governing Board Committees

a. Minutes of committee meetings held since the last board meeting:

The governing board received and noted the minutes of the three committee meetings.

The headteacher gave an overview of the three sub committees and an outline of the most recent meetings. It was requested that the new governors select one or more to join.

i. Finance and resources 7 October 2021

The headteacher informed governors that the internal clerk had recently moved into an acting role from admin, into the finance team. It was asked whether governors felt this would be a potential conflict of interest when taking notes for the finance and resources committee.

Governors did not feel there was any conflict as the minute taker was not present in a decision making capacity.

New members:

Neha Shivhare

Nisha Ramanathan

ii. Quality of Education 9 November 2021

New members:

Neha Shivhare

Benedicta Asara

Iqbal Singh

Sayesta Miah

iii. Human Resources 11 November 2021

New members:

Benedicta Asara

Sara Wilson

The headteacher's performance management had previously been carried out by Abu Abdullah, Denis Shea and Kay Scoresby. Due to Kay's resignation it was preferred that a third member join the committee. Appropriate training would need to be taken up for this role. Training dates would be circulated by the headteacher's PA. The mid-year review usually takes place in March/April and the final review in October.

309. Headteacher's presentation

The headteacher advised that documents were online in advance of the meeting and governors should read these and send in questions where possible. The headteacher's presentation included the following areas:

- a. **Avenue Primary School data compliance health check form for schools May 2021**
- b. **Curriculum leader report**
- c. **Year group leader report**
- d. **Inclusion leader report**
- e. **Inclusion leader report**
- f. **Whole school TA2 pupil progress year group overview 2021 – 2022**
- g. **TA1 and TA2 pupil progress combined overview 2021 – 2022**
- h. **Nursery data**
- i. **Reading deep dive**
- j. **Reception data**

Aspects of the report for discussion were drawn to governors' attention by being highlighted in green.

Avenue was one of 17 schools in Newham affected by falling rolls and no new houses were being built in Manor Park. There had been a dramatic fall in pupil numbers. The school has a capacity of 944 and there were 260 vacancies. This affects the budget as there would be a reduction of funding. Although the school is very careful with how it budgets, it is possible that staffing would need to be considered. In March/April the finance committee and the governing board would be presented with budget related proposals. In 4–5 years' time the school may become 3 form entry, and the hope was that there may be a staff natural wastage rather than having to go through redundancies.

The school is not expecting an Ofsted inspection until 2023. Last time the rating was good and the school continues to be good. It is working very hard to overcome the effects of the pandemic. The school is doing extremely well and getting back on track.

For January the school will be looking at the covid risk assessment again and this will be shared with governors before the next meeting.

Governor's question: You mentioned roll numbers. There is some housing being built. Does the council consult with headteachers to find out about housing or plans for this?

There are notifications of consultations. If there will be new homes on Church Road we would be encouraging this.

Governor's question: Do we still have the old IT equipment and could it still be used?

We have 56 Chromebooks that were given by the DfE. A letter has been sent to parents to ask whether they have access to technology. Some parents have responded and they will be given a Chromebook. The school is set up with technology to use Google. There were no concerns around this.

Governor's question: What is the current picture at school in relation to coronavirus? Has it impacted already on pupils and staff?

Avenue have not had as many cases as other schools. This week the number was reported as 7 children and 4 staff members. Staff absence continues to be extremely high. There are high numbers of vaccination booster side effects which increase staff sickness absence. Parents will be asked to come on site with a mask. There will be a limited number of Christmas events with limited parents. However, the covid numbers are not as high as this time last year.

The covid risk assessment is on the website, which will be updated. There is also an outbreak plan which will be reviewed too. This shows the mitigating measures to be taken.

Governor's question: Pupils and families tend to travel abroad over the Christmas holidays. There are a number of countries already on the red list. Do you have information on potential families travelling abroad?

Unless families tell the school it is unknown. If they request leave it is unauthorised. Office staff and the attendance officer have good engagement with parents.

Governor's question: If a child is required to self-isolate what is the schools provision for their education during this time?

During lockdown and the return there would be a lot of children remote learning, around 30-40 and there were set times during the day where online lessons were held. In the morning and the afternoon, the teacher would catch up with the children. Now there are usually 1 or 2 children, there is not a provision for a teacher to go online, but work is set and communication made.

If it went back to whole school online learning all teachers would be expected to teach online. The welfare assistant calls families to check on well-being during isolation periods. Some children are unwell so they are not able to carry out work. A standard letter and tutorials are on Google classroom. The self-isolation work is marked and feedback given.

Governor's question: During the various lockdowns have we had any children that have never returned to school and if so what have we done to ascertain their safety? Does this impact on school roll numbers?

There were a few children. Some was in relation to families moving. Some moved abroad too. The procedure is similar to usual September returns. The CME procedure is followed.

It includes a variety of attempts to make contact with the family by various methods, including home visits. The school liaises with the LA and the CME team. This is mostly managed by the DSL and attendance officer on a case by case basis.

It was highlighted that one focus for governors would be a group in preparation for the next Ofsted. A mock assessment could be carried out so the school could use this tool to aim for outstanding. Governors should let the headteacher know if they would like to be part of the Ofsted taskforce group.

There were other areas where link governors were still required and governors were asked to think about this again and let the headteacher know. Sara Wilson requested to be the EYFS link governor. Iqbal Hussain would remain the health and safety link governor. School visits were always encouraged and a simple report is to be drafted after a visit and sent to the headteacher. The headteacher's PA would email governors the link job descriptors. Going forward the Avenue school emails would be used for all email correspondence.

The chair thanked the HT for her report.

310. Setting attainment targets

This is not mandatory. However, SATS tests are statutory at the end of KS2. In the past the school has set an aspirational but realistic attainment target.

There is a national benchmark and for the last 2 years prior to covid the school achieved in the early 80s (%) and the national attainment benchmark was 65%.

This year the tests will be taken again. An attainment target has not been set as it is difficult with the 18 months of covid uncertainty. The school is still looking to achieve over 65% to achieve 3 consecutive sets of results above national.

The school reassured governors that the school is aiming high and above national. Staff were working hard and supporting children through interventions and boosters, as they have always done.

End of KS1 year 2 tests are sat and marked internally and the school has a duty to report to the DfE. Some formal assessments are completed at the end of reception to measure the progress made from the end of reception to the end of year 2, and then to the end of year 6.

311. School self-evaluation (SEF) update

This comes to governors reviewed in February along with the school improvement plan (SIP) and school evaluation report.

Ofsted may ask to see the SEF and the SIP. The SIP talks about where the school is going and the SEF is what the school has worked on, what the summative data is saying and summarises the school's strengths and the even better ifs. It also asks the school to judge itself in the Ofsted areas and summarises the evidence that demonstrates the decision. SLT work on this and provide it to governors as they are the wider leadership team of the school.

When Ofsted arrive there is an expectation that some governors will be spoken to and there needs to be a number of governors ready for this.

312. Safeguarding

The DSL had completed the section 11 annual report to the Local Authority (LA) 2020-21.

This was circulated to all governors and looked at as part of the quality of education committee.

313. Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

This had become a LA standing item and there was already a section in the headteacher's report to cover this.

It was agreed that this would be removed as a standing item.

Action: The GBSO to remove RSHE as a standing item with immediate effect.

314. Compliance calendar items/school policies for review

The headteacher and school business manager review the compliance calendar regularly.

Governors to look at the compliance calendar on the portal where the policies are rag rated. It highlights who is responsible for action of review. A number of the policies were also available on the school's website.

315. Governance review

This would be an opportunity to review the governance of the school and how the governing board performs. The recent newsletter has made it mandatory to have a yearly skills audit. The stages are briefly set out in the headteacher's report. On the 24th March 2022 governing board meeting the person carrying out the review will come to the meeting. Governance has to be outstanding too. This then leaves almost a year to work on highlighted areas before Ofsted are due.

Governor's question: Who is carrying out the assessment?

The school buys into a service agreement with governors support services, which is where we have our clerk. Sarah Beaumont the head of that service is going to carry out the review for us.

316. Mental health and well-being

This standing item had been added by governors' services.

This area was difficult to get right at the current time. The school was working hard to achieve a balance between doing its best for the children, and for the staff.

The governing board respected the wellbeing of leadership too. It is important to keep talking and this is what the school does. A recent offer to headteachers and deputy headteachers for assistance with wellbeing had come out.

Governor's question: Under this category have we seen any issues around mental health and well-being at this time?

Yes, there is a lot of anxiety and fear. There was insecurity particularly when we first came back to school. There were a lot of individual risk assessments carried out. A lot of strategies were put in and spending time talking with the welfare assistance helpline.

Governor's question: Does the school, and do you have the necessary tools to deal with that or do you need additional support?

School leaders are not trained to be the person to listen and diagnose. The governors previously agreed that the headteacher would complete a 2-year diploma to qualify as a coach. There are assistant psychologists in school that can offer soft counselling and coaching. In time the capacity would grow. Governors also allowed the headteacher to train as a mindfulness practitioner. Lots of staff attend the weekly sessions. The school would also like to offer yoga and relaxation classes.

Children's mental health is high on the radar too. There is regular support by touching base from trusting and known adults, through to designated intervention programs. There were also learning mentors.

In 2023 all schools will be required to have a qualified mental health practitioner on site and a member of the senior team will work towards that accreditation. The training is offered with a grant on a first come first served at the moment. The DSL is mental health first aid trained for pupils.

317. Governor education and training

a. Governors to report any training attended

There were no items to report.

b. Governors' training required

- Monitoring and evaluation training
- Safer recruitment training for a small number of governors

Governors to email the headteacher's PA with any training completed so a record can be kept.

c. Link governors' reports and visits.

Geetha Unnithan had completed the safeguarding link visit form.

Iqbal Hussain carried out a health and safety link visit.

There were a number of concerns. Coat hangers for children were a priority. Some improvements had been made such as the radiator in the main hall. Some door guards need adding.

Governor's question: In the headteacher's report under accidents. There were a high number of accidents in the autumn term with 5 leading to fractures predominantly elbows or arms. Is that a cause of concern?

This is a major concern. The school believes these have happened due to the children's gross and fine motor skills developments. Since returning to school in September it has been noticed children are fearful of climbing. 3 of the accidents in Reception were caused by children swinging from bars. Another child fell off balance blocks made for children fell and another child was going up the slide the wrong way. Children do not seem to have the awareness and the physical strength, the older child during the PE lesson was for the same reason.

However, it should not happen. Every accident has been thoroughly investigated, spoken to parents and reported to the LA. It is not about ratio of adults to children. In Reception we are way over the ratio.

All the equipment has passed health and safety checks and was designed for children of this age.

Governor's question: Since the report have we had any further accidents where fractures or breaks? With equipment is anything further required such as foam mats?

There have not been any further accidents of this kind since the report was written. The 3 reception children in the playground have surfaces which are foam and grassed over. They are soft landings. In the hall mats are placed on the floor. This has been reviewed and these are all genuine accidents.

Governor's question: Has any parent thought about taking legal action in relation to any of these incidences?

Not that we are aware of. The parents have been spoken to. They rightly ask how it happened and we show them the area. I tell them I report to governors and the LA. One of our governors is a compliance manager with the la and I talk through those with her too.

Governor's question: Is it worth having an independent health and safety review of the equipment?

It is inspected by Newham LA on a quarterly outdoors inspection. Indoor equipment is inspected by a contractor annually.

In comparison to previous years it is exceptionally high due to development of skills.

d. Governor visit reports

Iqbal Singh had visited the school and was impressed with the running of the school by the headteacher and the team.

Governors now needed to look at areas of development and where it could improve so that with Ofsted it could go from good to outstanding.

e. Governor training offered at The Education Space

There was plenty of online training available for governors and GovernorHub was also available. Governors were encouraged to attend as much training as possible.

318. Dates of future meetings 2021-2022

Spring Term

3 February 2022

24 March 2022

Summer Term

19 May 2022

14 July 2022

All virtual meetings to commence at 6pm unless otherwise stated.

319. Any other business

a. autumn term newsletter

The autumn term newsletter was packed full of really good information. The headteacher's PA would email a copy to governors.

c. Projects within the next financial year (base costs)

i. Bus conversion

Coachbuild quality £65,000

Quality conversions £58,500

SEC £58,390

The specifications were not the same. The third option did not include an emergency ladder from the top floor in case of a fire.

Children had been involved in this project. The conversion included decorating the bus in one colour. SEC had included a vinyl banner for one side of the bus.

ii. Trim trail for upper KS2

The SBM had obtained tenders obtained for both projects and shared the financial information. For the trim trail the visuals were similar and the specifications were the same. The preferred option was the cheapest one.

Action play and leisure £23,172

Playforce £36,941

Natural playscapes £28,330

These are base costs. It was anticipated the cost would be £30,000 for the trim trail.

The bus would not go above 60-65k including the finish. The children had a competition to decide what it was going to be; a reading, chilling, relaxing, area and they are also working on external designs

Governor's question: Does the cost include safety checks or is that additional costs?

The contractors are all accredited to the production of children's play equipment.

Electrics are installed by qualified electricians.

The school has chosen to have a safety ladder.

Governor's question: Have any of the contractors worked with us before or have you spoken to any other schools where they have done projects?

For the trim trail no, but they specialise in school playgrounds.

For the bus we have spoken to other schools. A couple of schools recommended one contractor but 3 quotes were required.

A lot of detail will be covered at the finance committee.

Approval: To begin preliminary works with SEC and Natural Playscapes which were the lower of the quotations. A maximum of 30k and 65k. governors would be kept informed in due course.

320. Agenda items for the next meeting

There were no additional items for the next meeting.

The chair thanked everybody for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.