

LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

Minutes of the

GOVERNING BOARD OF AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Virtual meeting held on Thursday, 14 October 2021 at 6pm

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| Present: | Mr Abu Abdullah | Associate Member |
| | Mr Iqbal Hussain | Parent |
| | Ms Halima Khatun | Staff |
| | Ms Hafise Nazif | Headteacher |
| | Mr Soyeb Patel | Co-opted (vice-chair) |
| | Ms Kay Scoresby | Co-opted |
| | Mr Denis Shea | LA appointed (chair) |
| | Mrs Geetha Unnithan | Co-opted |
| In attendance: | Mrs Julie Ammi | Clerk |
| | Mr Lee Franklin-Lewis | Deputy Headteacher |
| | Ms Sara Shamas | School Business Manager |
| | Mrs Manpreet Chhabra | Deputy Headteacher |
| Prospective governors: | Benedicta Asare | joined for 10 minute slots |
| | Nisha Ramanathan | |
| | Neha Shivare | |
| | Iqbal Singh | |

The meeting commenced at 6.02pm.

283. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and laid out the procedure for interviewing the new prospective governors. The meeting was quorate.

284. Declarations of interest

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

285. Membership of governing board

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

See minute 285b.

b. Board to consider 4 prospective governors, 2 as co opted governors, and 2 as associate members. Governors are reminded that associate members do not have voting rights, although can be link governors and sit on panels.

The chair thanked the headteacher for her hard work of locating these 4 prospective governors. The candidates joined the meeting individually with 10 minute slots to deliver on their brief and to answer any questions. Collectively these candidates had a wide skill set including, but not limited to; strategic leadership, finance, risk management, safeguarding and corporate environment skills.

After discussion and a vote, the decisions were made.

Decision: To appoint as follows:

Benedicta Asare : co-opted governor

Iqbal Singh : co-opted governor

Nisha Ramanathan : associate governor

Neha Shivare : associate governor

Action: The headteacher to contact the candidates to inform them of the outcome and welcome them to the governing board

c. To note the appointment of 2 parent governors

Governors noted the appointment of Sayesta Miah and Sara Wilson as parent governors. There were 2 nominations received for 2 vacancies. The parent governors would attend the next full governing board in December.

Action: The headteacher and SBM to contact the new parent governors and make arrangements with NPW and DBS etc.

d. To nominate/re-nominate a governor forum representative

It was agreed that Denis Shea would continue.

e. To nominate/re-nominate link governors (including appointment of governors with specialisms: inclusion and SEND, safeguarding, curriculum, safety, wellbeing and mental health

Governors agreed to think about areas they would like to be linked to and come to the next meeting ready with their proposal/s. Link governors included the options in the list above but were not limited to this.

After a suggestion was discussed, it was agreed that there should also be a link governor that included RSHE.

Action: This item was deferred to the next meeting where governors are to come ready with suggested area/s they would like to be linked to.

f. To nominate/re-nominate NPW authorised representative and delegated attendee

The chair gave a summary of what this role entailed and invited any governors to nominate themselves.

Agreed: Denis Shea would continue as the NPW authorised representative and Kay Scoresby as the delegated attendee.

286. Election of chair/vice-chair

a. Board to elect chair for a period of 1 year. Nominations to be received at the meeting.

The clerk presided over this item. Denis Shea was nominated as chair. This was proposed by Mr Abdullah and seconded by Mr Patel.

b. Board to elect a vice-chair for a period of one year. Nominations to be received at the meeting.

Soyeb Patel was nominated as chair. This was proposed by Mr Shea and seconded by Mr Abdullah.

287. Minutes of last Governing Board meeting

a. Approval of minutes of the governing board meeting held on 25 July 2021

The meeting was agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

b. Matters arising

Minute 270b: This action was complete.

Minute 258ii: Pupil numbers and capping LA policy

Initially Reception or Year 1 were not capped. During the summer there was concern about going just over the year 1 number and this would mean having to open another class. The headteacher contacted pupil services regarding Year 1 and this has now been capped at 90. There are 3 Reception classes so additional children can join.

2-year-old provision

There had been no development. The local authority is not looking to progress this with all schools at the moment.

288. Governing Board Committees

a. Review committee membership and terms of reference

Due to the addition of 6 new governors to allocate at the next meeting, this item was deferred.

b. Minutes/reports of committee meetings held since the last board meeting.

The finance and premises committee met last week. Minutes were not yet available.

A brief overview of the meeting was given. This was mainly budget monitoring. Also looking ahead to the fall in roles, due to the reduced birth rate in Newham. This would cause concern financially for the school.

289. School budget monitoring

The budget was monitored at the previous week's committee meeting.

It was brought to governors' attention that the supply budget was high due to daily sickness absences.

Governor's question: Has there been an analysis of the reasons why so many staff are away? Are they all Covid related?

staff absence was highlighted in the headteacher's presentation. It is Covid related to the extent that due to hospital appointments coming through after lockdown, many people are on long term leave after being invited to procedures and then recovery from these. Staff absences are always high at this time of year, but it is particularly high at the moment.

290. Headteacher's report

Governors had received the headteacher's report in advance of the meeting. The Autumn 1 meeting was used to provide governors with some strategic thinking time. It covered from 1 September to 8 October. The report included:

- A year in the life of Avenue...October 2020
- Fast forward to September 2021 (proud of, challenges)
- Our priorities have been...
- Reviewing priorities and direction: (focused priorities 2021-2022, additional priorities)
- **Priority 2 point 3...All governors understand the strategic responsibilities of the role and implement this effectively.**
- Ofsted 2023
- Moving onward...moving forward...

Governor's question: For pupils' attendance - is it intermittent or long term absences? Is it stabilizing now?

There are multiple reasons e.g., self-isolation, complex reasons, children missing in education. The numbers are coming down. Census was recently so there has been a lot of movement. Parents' attendance workshops are set up for next week.

Governor's question: The question who looks after the senior leadership team – could you expand on that a little bit more?

As governors we have been through two years of absolute turmoil and as leaders we have done our duty to school as we are expected to. We continued working. We have looked after staff. We have completed multiple risk assessments. We have taken on a lot of health and safety areas that we have not been familiar with and we have to get the school back on track.

As leaders we are accountable and I cannot change the pressure we are working under as we have to get these things done. With SLT we talk about things we do with staff and we make adaptations. Staff have time to come and talk to us. With SLT I am the point of contact. We need to consider the workload of the SLT as well. Working at this level for the last 2 years is having and will continue to have an impact on our mental health.

Governors recognised this and mental health matters. Governors discussed and proposed that when setting performance management targets for the headteacher they could look at targets in light of what is being said and set these to support the headteacher. The head would then roll this down to SLT as she deemed appropriate.

Governor's question: The presentation mentions a challenge with no funding for SEN provisions. How can we improve practices and support for children with SEN if we do not have funding coming in?

SEN funding is complicated. Sometimes children will come into school and parents might not be aware that actually their child has some learning need or some complex need in relation to a child of their chronological age. It is our job to assess and put in the provision that is required. We then go to the LA and highlight that a child is in need of top up funding because the child cannot be supported in class without an assistant. It requires a lot of paperwork evidence and answering of questions.

A panel hears this request, and it can take up to 2 years for this to happen. In our Reception this year we have had 6 children who have unidentified needs and it is our duty to identify those needs. My inclusion team have to ensure the child's needs are being met but that the rest of the children in the class are learning. The process is very long and complicated. There are presently 12 EHCPs, but 25 applications are

pending with the LA. You have to spend the money to justify the funding in 2 years' time.

Governor's question: Do you find extra pressure from the parents?

Because we are already supporting the children the document does not make much difference to the provision already put in place.

The chair thanked the HT for her report.

291. Setting attainment targets

This is not a statutory requirement but the school sets aspirational attainment targets at appraisal. This would not be as a numerical target but rather as a rigorous quality of education with combined maths and English targets set.

The SLT would provide aspirational targets for the end of the year, at the December board meeting.

292. School self-evaluation update

The headteacher informed the board that as there was no summative data to base the evaluation on, the SEF would be updated with next steps at the end of the Autumn term. The SEF along with the school improvement plan would be brought to governors at the February meeting.

293. Safeguarding

The section 11 annual safeguarding report has been completed and forwarded to the local authority for 2020 – 2021. This along with the child protection and safeguarding policy would be taken to the human resources committee for approval. It would also be scrutinised in more detail by the safeguarding link governor.

Support staff have received safeguarding refresher training. Teachers would be receiving the same in their next CPD session.

294. Relationship, Sex and Health Education

The headteacher reported that the RSHE policy was in full force and the year groups were implementing this.

Governors were thanked for their contributions to the RSHE policy.

295. Compliance calendar items/school policies for review

The headteacher reviews the compliance calendar regularly. It would be reviewed again in time for the next meeting and any statutory policies be brought to the relevant meeting.

a. Pay policy 2021 – 2022 (LA draft)

The governing board had received the draft pay policy which comes to the school from The Education Space after it had been consulted on with unions and agreed with the local authority. The main change to this year's policy was the removal of half points on the teachers' main pay scale. However, this did not impact the school as it has never used half points.

Teachers' performance management meetings would be held before 31st October 2021. The headteacher requested that the policy be approved by governors in principle, in line with the commencement of these meetings. Although this was a draft policy, the process would not change. After discussion, this was agreed.

Decision: Governors approved the draft Pay Policy 2021 – 2022.

Action: The final version of the Pay Policy 2021- 2022 to be circulated to governors once it is received by the school.

Action 2: The headteacher to attach the draft Pay Policy 2021 – 2022 to this week's staff communication to state that this is the policy governors are looking to adopt.

b. Appraisal and capability policy

This policy was received in draft form and governors agreed to it in principle, until the final version could be circulated.

Decision: Governors agreed the Appraisal and capability policy in draft form.

Governor's question: Can you confirm the teachers' appraisals are to be completed by the end of this month?

The senior team are required to complete all of last year's final review appraisals by 31st October. After this I (headteacher) need to give a report on the pay progression of staff as a school. Our HR committee met on 11th November. By then we would have completed all of our recommendations for pay and that goes into payroll. Staff would receive any pay progressions in their salary which is backdated to September 2021.

296. Governance review

The headteacher pointed out that since she had joined the school 8 years ago there had never been a governance review. This item had already been deferred. After discussion it was agreed that there should be one.

Action: The chair to request a governance review in 2022.

297. School term and holiday dates 2022 - 2023

The dates for 2022 – 2023 have been set in line with the LA.

Decision: Governors agreed the school term and holiday dates for 2022 – 2023.

298. Mental health and well-being

There would be more on this item in the December meeting. Governors noted that there was a well-being working party which was open to all staff to attend. There was also a mental health practitioner for children and two assistant psychologists which was very positive.

299. Governor education and training

a. Governors to report any training attended

Geetha Unnithan had attended the RSHE training and reported that in the training it was recommended that governing boards have a link governor for RSHE. Governors agreed to accept this recommendation. See minute 285e.

b. Governors' training required

New governors would be sign posted towards the training.

c. Link governors' reports and visits.

The school would be receiving a health and safety audit soon and it would be prudent for a governor to carry out a health and safety audit ahead of this.

d. Governor visit reports

There were no items to report.

e. Governor training offered at The Education Space

There are currently a number of online training opportunities available for governors and GovernorHub is also available.

300. Dates of future meetings 2021-2022

Autumn Term

9 December 2021

Spring Term

3 February 2022

24 March 2022

Summer Term

19 May 2022

14 July 2022

All virtual meetings commence at 6pm unless otherwise stated.

Restrictions permitting the next full governing board meeting would be held at the school with a 6.30pm start.

301. Any other business

a. Health and safety report

The headteacher reported that there had been a power cut on Tuesday 12th October which was serious enough to close the school for the day. A power cable running under one of the car parks had split and started giving off black smoke which cut the electricity off. This also affected the water and gas.

The headteacher reassured governors that the school's contingency plan for this unexpected emergency had been put in motion with a risk assessment alongside school support taking place.

The children and staff were back at school the following day, after health and safety checks had deemed the school safe. There were no additional financial implications for this.

The children received remote learning for the duration of the emergency closure day.

The chair had been kept fully informed of the situation.

302. Agenda items for the next meeting

There were no additional items.

The chair thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm.