

LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

Minutes of the

GOVERNING BOARD OF AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hybrid meeting held on Thursday, 13 October 2022 at 7pm

Present:	Abu Abdullah	Co-opted
	Shahanara Ali	Staff (virtually)
	Benedicta Asare	Co-opted
	Iqbal Hussain	Parent
	Sayesta Miah	Parent
	Hafise Nazif	Headteacher
	Soyeb Patel	Parent
	Nisha Ramanathan	Co-opted
	Denis Shea	Local Authority
	Neha Shivhare	Associate Member
Iqbal Singh	Co-opted	

In attendance:	Julie Ammi	Clerk, The Education Space
	Manpreet Chhabra	Deputy Headteacher
	Lee Franklin-Lewis	Deputy Headteacher

The meeting commenced at 7pm.

392. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed everyone to this hybrid meeting.

Geetha Unnithan had sent apologies, which were condoned.

Sara Wilson was absent.

393. Declaration of interest

All governors confirmed that they had completed their register of interest form and the headteacher advised the register would be placed on the school's website the following day.

The headteacher advised that an agenda item later on in the meeting would discuss the reorganisation and school structure and it would be up to governors whether they felt there was an interest and staff members should leave the meeting whilst this was discussed. However, it was about proposals and general process.

Constitutional items

394. Membership of Governing Board

Governors noted the board membership – Appointments/Resignations/Expiration of term of office

Neha Shivhare, associate member term of office due to expire 13.10.2022.

Ms Shivhare contributed her financial knowledge to the governing board and was happy to continue as an associate governor. It was proposed and seconded that Ms Shivhare be reelected as an associate governor.

Decision: The governing board elected Neha Shivhare as an associate governor with immediate effect.

Soyeb Patel, parent governor term of office due to expire on 03.12.2022.

Mr Patel had made a valuable contribution to the governing board and had useful links with the community. The board wished for Mr Patel to continue as a governor therefore after discussion it was proposed and seconded that Mr Patel would become an associate governor with immediate effect.

Decision: The governing board elected Soyeb Patel as an associate governor with immediate effect.

b. Appointment of Co-opted Governors

There were no vacancies.

c. Election of Parent Governor

Due to the removal of Sara Wilson for non-attendance and the expiry of Soyeb Patel's term of office there were 2 parent governor vacancies.

Action: The school to follow the procedure for parent governor nominations.

d. Election of Staff Governor

There were no vacancies.

e. Appointment of Authority Governor

There were no vacancies.

f. Removal for non-attendance

The Education Space had written to Sara Wilson to ask whether she wished to continue on the governing board as she had not attended a full meeting for at least 6 months. Ms Wilson had replied that she wished to continue but was not at this meeting.

Decision: The governing board agreed to remove Sara Wilson for non-attendance with immediate effect.

g. Nomination/re-nomination of Governor Forum Representative

It was agreed that Denis Shea would continue as the governor forum representative.

h. Nomination/re-nomination of NPW Authorised Representative and Delegated Attendee

It was agreed that Denis Shea would continue as the NPS authorised representative.

395. Election of Chair/Vice Chair

Nominations can be received in advance, or at the meeting

a.Election of chair

Denis Shea (chair until 13.10.2022). This item was led by the clerk.

Geetha Unnithan had nominated herself to be put forward as chair in advance of the meeting.

Denis Shea had been chair of the governing board for 16 years. It was felt that it would be good succession planning for Geetha Unnithan to become chair and bring a new perspective but also to benefit from Denis' experience if he wished to nominate himself as vice-chair.

It was proposed and seconded that Geetha Unnithan become chair.

Governors sincerely thanked Denis Shea for his time as chair of the governing board.

Action: The clerk to inform The Education Space that Geetha Unnithan has been elected as chair.

b.Election of vice-chair

Soyeb Patel (vice chair until 13.10.2022)

Soyeb Patel was thanked for his time as vice-chair.

It was proposed and seconded that Denis Shea be elected as vice chair.

Action: The clerk to inform The Education Space that Soyeb Patel has been elected as vice-chair.

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

396. a. Approval of minutes of the last board meeting held on 14th July

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed and agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.

b. Matters Arising

The agenda would have hyperlinks to the documents going forward.

The action register was reviewed.

Headteacher and Governing Board items

397. Review of committee membership and terms of reference

There are 3 committees: Human resources, finance and resources, and quality of education. Governors moved around slightly to ensure committees were evenly balanced.

It was agreed that Nisha Ramanathan, Benedicta Asare and Denis Shea would be on the performance management panel and they had completed the training. Any governors interested in being on next year's panel should complete the training.

Action: The terms of reference would be agreed at the relevant committees and brought back to the full governing board meeting for approval.

398. Nomination of Link Governors

a. To include representatives on the governor forums: -

- Inclusion and SEND - Benedicta Asare
- Safeguarding Culture - Geetha Unnithan
- Curriculum and Assessment - Iqbal Hussain
- Safety - Iqbal Hussain
- Wellbeing and Mental Health - Abu Abdullah
- Children in Care (CIC) - Denis Shea
- Attendance - Sayesta Miah

Governor's question: What is the commitment for these roles?

Ideally one per term which consists of a meeting with the lead person for up to one hour.

b. Nomination of representative(s) to attend the Newham Annual Governors' and Trustees' Conference on Thursday 24 November 2022

Any governor that wishes to attend can do so.

Action: Denis Shea to email the timings of the Newham annual governors' Trustees' conference so governors can see whether they are able to attend.

399. Reports from committees

There was a finance and premises committee meeting the previous week and minutes would follow in due course. Period 6 budget monitoring was reviewed at that meeting.

400. Headteacher presentation to the governing board (reflections/ vision and moving forward.

The headteacher gave a detailed presentation which included the following areas:

- A reflection on the year and looking forward
- A reminder of school aims which have been reviewed and are still current
- Next steps news
- Website review including governance page
- Short, medium and long term goals
- Governor visits - meet with head boy and girl
- Measuring governor effectiveness
- To become a 3fe school
- Succession planning and structure
- Ofsted - sustaining good or better
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats - analysis work with governors

Action 1: A governors' paragraph for the newsletter to be written.

Action 2: The headteacher to create a governors WhatsApp group for communication.

a. Pupil outcomes

This year for the first time reception tests will be carried right through to year 6 and this will be the measure.

Governor's question: When looking at EYFS baseline assessment - if a new student with no previous assessment or if a child comes from abroad what happens?

They have missing data so attainment will be measured but progress will not. They are expected to achieve at national levels. A lot of children may not have been with us from year 2 to 6 so reception to year 6 will be a far smaller number.

- **End of year 2 provisional data**

The school did extremely well compared to national. RWM combined school 80% and national 59%. Greater depth in maths was particularly good.

This was the covid recovery year and teachers along with Manpreet Chhabra are to be congratulated.

Governor's question: The only slight discrepancy is in science- are you doing an analysis or review of this?

Science was difficult to teach during covid. The way our curriculum was at that time was without weekly science lessons but now this is in place we are hopeful it will show impact. When everyone did science online it was not the same. we have had an

overhaul of our curriculum and that will refocus. We are doing a science deep dive part way through the year. Working scientifically as an assessment strand is difficult remotely.

Writing is not in line with reading and maths, but is not low.

- **Year 4 multiplication check**

This area is not yet a measure. It is a score out of 25. 93% scored 20+ and 88% scored 22 +. Parents were really involved in this and can really help with this. The year 4 teachers also did a lot of work. It was really important not to lose that momentum. There is no national data as yet.

- **Year 2**

The KS1 successes needed celebrating as they had a very disruptive 2 years and children and teachers worked very hard. 66% combined is a very good start to year 3. Greater depth was also significant.

- **Phonics**

2022 is 84% and national is 75%. The school started a new phonics programme which it was hoping was going to improve reading as well as phonics. The school was above Newham for one of the first times this year.

- **EYFS**

The school scored 78.1% for a good level of development GLD which was above Newham.

- **Year 6**

Year 6 received a monitoring visit on the first day of KS2 SATs.

- **Reviewing the vision 2022 - 2023 and school improvement priorities**

Every day is a new start. There are challenges to overcome such as finance which was facing unprecedented challenges and underfunded SEND needs.

Governor's question: Are we carrying on with food vouchers?

We signpost families to foodbanks. If a child comes into school without breakfast we will always find food. We do what we can for families with the limited resources we have. We continue with vouchers during holiday times. Children do not pay for school meals here. The money is put into the budget and taken out but it is free for the children. Many problems we are facing all schools are facing. For example the water bill is 3 times the previous amount. The next bill at the end of October will be another £5,000. Energy bills are excruciatingly high. The finance committee talked about £100,000 since last March spent on the maintenance of our building. It is an old building and daily things go wrong. If we continue at this rate we will go over by about £50,000.

Governor's question: When do we think we are going to be inspected?

We are due an Ofsted every 3 years. We were last inspected in January 2017. We have got to be ready for February 2023.

Governor's question: If we were to be inspected now where do we personally think we are?

We are definitely good. If inspected now this is a good school that continues to make improvements.

Governor's question: What is our aspiration? Are we going to look to get outstanding?

There are elements of the school which are outstanding. Our attendance is 94% with 15-16% persistent absence so it is not outstanding. We have the systems but need 98% to be outstanding. Our curriculum is relatively new and we have to show our curriculum is catching up with outcomes.

Governor's question: Is it worth looking at attendance as an indicator and what is the work we need to do to improve attendance?

It is one of our key issues from our last Ofsted. During the last visit they acknowledged the school had all the systems in place. There are a lot of children that the school will be taking off roll even though they have left, as we wait for confirmation they have started a new school, because we want to know children are safe. A lot of children are late to school and there are a lot of visits abroad. Even if we do not authorise the request, they still go. Until now we always had a request for leave form and we are now going to remove the form and make it a far more rigorous process by requesting a formal letter and a meeting with a deputy headteacher.

Governor's question: Normally if you have unauthorised absence and a penalty charge notice does that money go back to the school?

We do fine the parents but no the money goes to the Local Authority. Almost all the fines we request are approved. We only do it with good reason. Attendance comes under personal development and can prevent an overall rating.

Governor's question: Can you see the attendance target as being achievable?

It is about chipping away and looking at individual families. Some families have already booked tickets before requesting approval. The odd days we are tackling and putting measures in place.

Governor's question: Do you offer rewards for good attendance?

We do offer some. We do not want to penalise children or a class for parents actions.

Governor's question: When is the last time we sent communications out specifically in attendance?

It is about each individual child. If you send a blanket statement out we do all the time. If a person is contacted individually and spoke to that works more than sending out communications. We do send them at periodic times e.g. under 95% at the point of half a term, that is 2 or 3 days absence. We target parents and invite them to surgeries.

Governor's question: With regards to Ofsted now we are going to 3fe are there any different processes involved?

It is no different on the size of the school. We have to go through the process of pupil reduction admissions numbers.

401. School reorganisation (pupil numbers) and change management

The headteacher led on this item which was about processes it was agreed that no pecuniary interest was involved for staff governors and members at the meeting.

The possible restructure of staff had been spoken about. It is known that pupil numbers are falling and the budget is decreasing if the school continued to be careful and monitor well it was in a better position than it was thought it would be. Restructuring this year was spoken about previously and starting September 2023 with a new staffing structure. On reflection for the last few years because pupil numbers have decreased management have not recruited like for like when a teacher has left. Temporary contracts have been given.

For teachers although there is still a large management team there was not too much concern that next year there would be 5 or 6 teachers surplus to need. There are so many temporary teachers that they could be released as needed. For support staff there are a very large number but equally a large number of children with complex needs. At the moment they just about manage. Taking that into consideration this year there is no school business manager (SBM) as she is on maternity leave and the headteacher has had to take on a lot of those issues that the SBM does diligently and well. It is having a real strain on the headteacher's workload. There is a new part-time PA for 3 days a week for one year which is again having an impact. A bursar has to come in and oversee. The current PA is not able to carry out the organisational aspects of school.

The headteacher recommended that the restructure does not proceed this year especially with the impending Ofsted inspection. Staff morale would take a dip with the consultation and unions again would take up leadership time. Governors needed to make a decision on what was more important; to keep teaching and learning on track and look at restructuring the year after needed because each year there is natural wastage.

Governor's question: What is the timescale we are looking at for a restructure?

We need at least 6 months from start to finish. We have done one before so if we started in January it would be in place for September.

Governor's question: When does this restructure have to be in place?

We do not have to do it. It is a lot of change we are going to 3fe. Do we really want to make staffing changes with an impending Ofsted.

Governor's question: So there is not a date set in stone?

No, what prompted this was the 3 year budget. It indicated a deficit budget in year 3. We need to look at it as soon as we can.

Governor's question: What are our immediate priorities that we need to focus on at this point in time?

Monitoring the budget which we do with the bursar once a month. If people leave and there is someone leaving at christmas we would not recruit like for like and recruitment would be on a temporary basis. The priority is ensuring the child gets the best deal as always, being really careful with spending and walk through the year not ignoring the fact work with what a 3fe structure would look like needs to be done. We need to let the staff who are going to go go and not recruit but still ensure those children are looked after. We need to let things settle and see how it goes before we settle into a restructure. The risk is we could find ourselves in a deficit budget.

Governor's question: If we did go into a deficit what would it be?

We will not this year. It is difficult to know exactly how much but preliminary plans show if we did nothing it would be thousands. With forecasting if you do nothing you walk into a storm but if you do something you do not.

Governor's question: Where does the union come in for these kinds of conversation? Could there be a small committee or does it get spoken about in a finance committee?

It is a full governing board decision. If you say yes go ahead then the unions and staff would be contacted and the unions would want voluntary rather than enforced redundancies. NPW would come in and work out the costs. Some costs would be taken by the LA and the school the rest. The consultation timelines are laid down by law.

Governor's question: What is the trigger point if we decide not to go ahead today? How long do we decide to put it off for?

Things could fall into place and we might never need a restructure.

Decision: Governors agreed to hold off on restructuring for now. The budget will continue to be closely monitored and natural wastage will be used to offset any potential costs. This academic year can be used to embed the curriculum and time to be ready for Ofsted to see how a 3fe sch looks. School reorganisation and change management will still be an agenda item.

Having looked at the budget the chair of the finance committee was not overly concerned at the moment with the decision reached today. The school had spent wisely and the budget does not scare as much as anticipated in the last meeting.

A lot of cost centres were in favourable positions. The 2 deputies have kept the agency staff down to zero. The worst area was buildings which was discussed earlier. The learning resources were the priority. Staffing costs needed to be kept down as they were still within 90% but the forecast shows a carry forward at the moment £712,000.

The figures governors were given last week were fabulous there were savings everywhere. It is good to see that wherever there was control savings were made. Something not within control is not possible to cut.

Governor's question: What is the worst case scenario if we went into a deficit?

Technically the school would have to stop. If we make an overspend we would have to in the next budget say how we would pay back that overspend. Governors are liable for setting deficit budgets. Sometimes there are loan systems and a recovery plan has to be in place and approved by the local authority.

Governor's question: Have we stopped progress on the bus?

No it is all complete. We have not had the official opening yet. There are 20 Icelandic headteachers coming next week.

403. Compliance calendar items and policies

The compliance calendar has not been sent through yet. All relevant policies that require updating have been brought to governors meetings.

404. Safeguarding (including update on Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE))

The section 11 annual safeguarding report to the local authority has been sent to all governors. The quality of education committee will go through it and it will be sent to the local authority tomorrow.

The annual safeguarding training to all staff had been completed and the policy updated as far as possible in line with the Newham model policy which has some errors in the school's view. It has outdated terminology and refers to KCSiE 2021. Once tweaked it will be issued to all staff too.

Geetha Unnithan did a link governor visit this half term and will share a report at the next meeting. It is on GovernorHub.

405. Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

There were no items.

406. Governor Education and Training

a. Governors to report any training attended

There were no reports.

b. Governors Training required

This item was addressed in the headteacher's report.

c. Link Governors Report Governors Visit Reports

There were no further items. Governors to visit and write up their reports.

407. School Term and Holiday Dates 2023/24

The school followed Newham's recommended dates but they had not been received yet. The school did not close for Eid or Guru Nanek but did honour them for staff.

408. Mental Health and Wellbeing

This item was touched upon in the headteacher's report.

There was an action plan which we will share with the learning improvement plan.

Future meeting arrangements and Any Other Business

409. a. Governing Board meeting dates 2022/23

Autumn:

Thursday 8th December 2022

Spring:

Thursday 2nd February 2023

Thursday 23rd March 2023

Summer:

Thursday 18th May 2023

Thursday 13th July 2023

All meetings to commence at 6.30pm and to be hybrid unless agreed otherwise.

b. Any Other Business

Agenda items for the next meeting

There were no items.

The chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.34pm.

Action register:

Minute	Action	Action allocated to	Update	Action completed/date
394	The school to follow the procedure for parent governor nominations.			
395 a	The clerk to inform The Education Space that Geetha Unnithan has been elected as chair.			
395 b	The clerk to inform The Education Space that Soyeb Patel has been elected as vice-chair.			
397	The terms of reference would be agreed at the relevant committees and brought back to the full governing board meeting for approval.			
398	Denis Shea to email the timings of the			

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