

Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting

Held on Monday 25 March 2024 at 6.00pm

Membership

Name	Initials	Term Expiry Date	Governor Category
Leon Choueke	LC	N/A	Head Teacher, Ex-officio(1)
Debby Kuypers (Chair)	DK	09-11-2025	Co-opted Governors (7)
*Richard Holmes (Vice Chair)	RH	01-02-2026	
Eddie Webb	EWe	25-09-2026	
Jean-Michel Garcia-Alvarez	JGA	10-02-2025	
Becca Monahan	BM	17-11-2027	
Claudia Simms Abrahm	CSA	04-02-2028	
Andrena Emin	AE	04-02-2028	
Melian Mansfield	MM	19-01-2026	LA Governor (1)
Kirsten Schmidt	KS	04-02-2028	Staff (1)
Morinade Akinbobola	MA	05-11-2024	Parent Governor (2)
Nomi Tysman	NT	30-11-2024	
Also in attendance:			
Darren Heath	DH	04-02-2028	Associate Governor
Corinna Phillips	CP	N/A	SENDCO
Adam Crosier			Clerk

* Denotes absence

PART 1

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received RH. These were accepted.

2. Declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise in respect of Items on the agenda

None.

3. Governing board business

Membership

No change. DK said that there had been 2 x expressions of interest in Associate Governor vacancies.

Governor training

MM, NT and AE reported having undertaken training since the previous meeting. Details would be circulated via Gov Hub.

Governor visits

Behaviour: CSA reported that she had met with LC and CP and had discussed low level behaviour improvement. She said that there was a new whole school plan on expectations and a consistency of approach to the implementation of the behaviour

expectations. Parents had been informed about the focus on behaviour. There was a focus on calmness and respect and on the ability to be ready for learning. A staff survey was planned to assess impact together with some assessment from students.

Quality of education: BM reported that there were 3 visits throughout the year: these involved learning walks and there was a focus on improving consistency of teaching and learning.

Personal development: MA and AE attended the school's development board meeting. A report had been uploaded to Gov Hub. LC said that the board's current focus was on celebrating the cultures of Coleridge. There was also attention on the 'hidden curriculum' and doing this through an anti-racist lens. The school was also concerned to ensure that its recruitment practices could recruit a diverse and representative staff group. There would be a NLC Headteachers event in the summer for schools in Haringey, to which governors would be invited.

Leadership and management: DK and RH had met with LC and had reviewed the SDP. DK said that there was a need for improved meeting between staff members to avoid isolation. She said that none of the actions in the plan were teacher focused and this was now being addressed.

A. LC said that in relation to addressing staff wellbeing and morale, there had been a recent staff dinner held immediately after school: 64 members of staff attended and a 'traitors' style game was played, that raised the mood of staff. There had been a staff survey, and this had focused on morale: 89% were satisfied with relationships with colleagues. Asked what would make the biggest difference to their morale, the most frequent answers were 'money', 'workload', 'reform Ofsted', and 'more opportunities to learn and develop professionally'. Another survey on professional development was planned.

Q. CSA asked how the school communicated with all staff.

A. LC said that there was a weekly briefing for all staff. The whole staff group met twice per term. Other groups also met in smaller numbers using a cascade model for sharing information. He said he would look to find out how staff wanted to be communicated with.

SEND: AE and MM had visited the school on the day of the SEND audit by Judicium, the report from which had now been received. CP said that this was a new venture. The report had highlighted the school's focus on inclusion and the creation of a supportive environment for all children.

AE said that on the day of the visit, the auditor had said that the school should focus on interventions and evaluate the impact of these. Also, to focus on the marking policy as the auditor had been unable to see how progress was made from a review of books. There had also been a concern to focus on parent engagement, and also on the use of data. She said that the school was very strong on qualitative data but less

strong on the use of numerical data. There was a desire for better evidence of progress relating to the impact of interventions.

CP said that there had also been a report from the SIA that had focused on SEND.
Q. MA asked if this report included an action plan, including training for governors.
A. CP said that it did, and that she would circulate the report to governors.

ACTION 1: CP to circulate to governors the SEND audit report and action plan.

Safeguarding: NT said that there had been no update since the previous meeting. She said that there would be a parents' survey with safeguarding questions included. CP said that the SIA visit had focused on sexual harassment and violence and had asked how the school was certain that there had not been incidents, beyond the absence of reports in the reporting mechanisms.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2024

Accuracy

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

Actions

ACTION: Discussion of the Leeds Beckett document to be agenda item for next FGB.
STATUS: On agenda/Closed

ACTION: LC to investigate other schools' policies to political messaging on clothing and make recommendations for actions at the next meeting.

STATUS: LC reported he had a meeting with Weston Park (which proscribed football tops). He was planning on doing further research and would report back. Ongoing.

Matters Arising

None.

4. Chair's report

DK said that she had joined the local authority's Chairs forum. Key issues were admissions, pupil numbers, finance and deficit budgets. Most schools were suffering more than Coleridge in terms of pupil numbers and finance.

5. Headteacher's report

LC had circulated a written report in advance of the meeting. He addressed governors' questions which had also been submitted in advance of the meeting.

Low level behaviour

There had been a request for more information from the data. LC said that he would address this request in future reports.

Q. MM asked what constituted a behaviour concern and what evidence the school had that its approaches to tackling behaviour among those identified in the report were effective.

A. LC said that children were included in the report if/when they received a Stage 3 or Stage 4 behaviour sanction.

He said that the My Concern reporting system was used to track patterns of behaviour of individuals and groups.

CP said that many of these children had additional needs and that the aim of the data tracking was to assist with the provision of additional support for these children,

Q. MM asked whether the identified children were aware that they were on a list.

A. CP said that they were not. The records were for the staff.

Q. MM asked whether the system was able to produce evidence that the behaviour of identified children was improved by the actions put in place by the school.

A. LC said that sometimes a child's behaviour improved and sometimes it did not, but that this could be due to factors that were complex and related to the child's living circumstances.

KS said that there were some children whose single behaviour led to a My Concern report, who would never repeat this behaviour, while there were others who were likely to feature in the reports time and again, because of their individual circumstances.

LC added that the focus on low level behaviour would also assist with overall behaviour management.

Admissions

Q. A governor had asked about the risk matrix and the audit from the local authority.

A. LC said that he would share these documents with governors. He said that he felt the risk matrix was counter-intuitive: it assumed that a school with more children who were eligible for pupil premium and schools with a larger number of EHCPs was at a higher risk than the average school. He proposed reviewing the application of the risk matrix for Coleridge School with a subgroup of governors.

He said that he had met with CSA about communicating better with parents via the website, including addressing parents' concerns about the size of the school.

Q. BM asked about the school's position regarding wrap around care.

A. LC said that LB Haringey was encouraging all schools to offer wrap around care. Fair Play had secured a new site but were waiting for staff and Ofsted approval. All children who went to clubs and then to Fair Play would be enabled to do so. The school was developing a business plan to provide wrap around care for next year with more of the provision managed by the school rather than external suppliers. The school was also looking to provide a 5-week arts/drama club plus a sports camp over the summer.

Attendance

Q. A governor had asked whether there were reasons that accounted for the period when attendance had been at its lowest, and separately a question had been asked for a breakdown of the attendance data by key groups in the school.

A. LC said that he would share this latter information separately.

Attendance was currently at 95.8% v 94.6% nationally. He said that reasons for absence were varied, including sickness, anxiety, family bereavement, visits to family members abroad, and unauthorised holidays during term. LC said that the school tracked this latter item but to date, it did not fine parents.

Q. A governor had asked whether there was evidence of an association between poor attainment and poor attendance.

A. LC said that he had reviewed the attainment data of all Y6 children with <90% attendance. He said that there appeared to be no evidence of a correlation between low attendance and low attainment although it was not certain that these children would not have been able to achieve higher with better levels of attendance.

Finance

Q. A governor had asked about the SRMA.

A. LC said that the schools resource management audit was due to report in mid-April.

Parental engagement

LC said that Coleridge Families had appointed a new Chair and Treasurer.

Governors thanked LC for his report and said that they appreciated the format of reporting.

6. Leeds Becket document on racial literacy

LC said that he wanted to ask governors their views on the approach and the implications of the document.

DK said that she felt there should be training on this matter for governors. However, she was not convinced by training from HEP.

LC said that there were various online courses, with articles to read. While he acknowledged that face to face debates were better because they enabled discussion and development, the benefit of the online training was that it was more accessible. He said the cost of the online training was around £1,500.

DK said that for this sum, it would be better to have bespoke training for governors.

LC said that in his opinion governors were a step behind the staff in terms of their understanding of what it meant to be an anti-racist school. Beyond race, there were other protected characteristics to be considered and all of these should be the focus of challenge to the school by governors.

Governors agreed that they would like to have the same training as staff had.

ACTION 2: LC to organise a session for governors to mirror staff training during summer term and to establish a programme of training based on a review of training provided by HEP.

Governors also agreed that there was a need to review recruitment/succession planning of governors, to ensure that the board was inclusive and representative of the school community.

DK asked that all governors commit to completing and returning the diversity questionnaire.

ACTION 3: All governors to commit to completing the diversity questionnaire by next meeting.

7. Uniform policy proposals

Covered under item 4.

8. Financial Management

LC reported that he had circulated a document with a 3 year budget planning. The planning assumptions were that there would be a slight increase in the budget compared with the current year, but that this uplift would not be sufficient to cover the school's costs. He said that he was planning to review the 2024/25 budget over the next few weeks. Some staff were planning on leaving at the end of the school year. He said that he would look to employ early career teachers (ECTs) as a means of reducing costs. He added that an extraordinary meeting of the board would be required to approve the budget.

Q. CSA asked about the impact of losing experience of established staff, should the school move to replace them with ECTs.

A. LC said that there was a necessity to reduce costs, but that he was confident in the school's ability to train ECTs. He said that each year group was led by an experienced teacher and that ECTs valued the support from the 'family' of staff.

He acknowledged that there were pressures and stresses on staff, but that there were only so many things the school could do in response. He said that pressures were in the areas of finance, the loss of TAs who previously had taken up some of the strain, the increase in the number of children without funding attached, and also the pressure from parents, many of whom had very high expectations and some of whom seemed to place their woes at the school's door.

MA recommended that the school review the pressure on teachers by making better use of the PTA/CF, class reps, the website and LC himself as alternative ways of engaging with the school.

SFVS – to be submitted by 30 March 2024.

ACTION 4: LC to send the SFVS to governors by email for review and approval.

2024/25 budget

LC said that the end of year accounts and the budget for the coming year would be reviewed and approved at the next meeting of the FGB on 13 May.

Financing of the counselling service

LC reported that he proposed to include in the 2024/25 budget funds of £48,000 to run the counselling service and that this would be offset by a combination of grants and donations, leaving the school to pay a total of around £18,000 from its budget, which would amount to a saving of £30,000 on the current year. He added that the school would offer users of the service the opportunity to make a voluntary donation to the service, with no obligation.

Q. MM asked whether it was legal for the school to fund the service in this way.

A. LC reported that counselling staff were not salaried members of staff and that the school paid for the provision as a bought in service. He said that he would check the legal position but that he did not think there was a concern with the proposal.

Using space on school site for the room.

Governors discussed their support for the service and CSA pointed out that it was a unique selling point for the school for parents.

9. Estate Management and Health and Safety

DK said that she would be conducting a health and safety walk in the next few days.

10. Policies

SEND Policy and Equalities Policy were approved.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Dates of future meetings

Monday 13 May 2024

Monday 1 July 2024

Signed..... Date.....
Chair

Action Table

Action
ACTION: CP to circulate to governors the SEND audit report and action plan.
ACTION: LC to organise a session for governors to mirror staff training during summer term and to establish a programme of training based on a review of training provided by HEP.
ACTION: All governors to commit to completing the diversity questionnaire by next meeting.
ACTION: LC to send the SFVS to governors by email for review and approval.