

Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting

Held on Monday 5 February 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:			
Elena Wolf	EW		Former Governor
Darren Heath	DH	04-02-2028	Associate Governor
Tim Ibbetson	TI		Asst Head Teacher
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 and accepted from JCA, BM and CSA. These were accepted.

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

None.

3. Governing board business

Membership

DK welcomed AE to the board as a new co-opted governor and KS as the new staff governor.

DK reported that following the review of the skills audit, a need had been identified for a governor with expertise in the area of marketing and promotion, to promote the school more effectively to prospective parents. CSA had agreed to stand as a co-opted governor. In her absence, CSA was elected to the board.

DH, whose term of office was due to expire, was re-appointed as an associate governor.

DK said that she was currently engaged with recruiting a new co-opted governor.

Link roles

Link governor roles had been circulated in advance of the meeting. DK asked all governors to conduct their link visits and to report back to the remaining 3 meetings for the year. She encouraged governors to contact the school to arrange visits as a priority.

Safeguarding link: NT to lead and DK and BM to shadow.

SEND: AE

Ofsted inspection working party. DK, NT, AE, MA, MM, RH

Governor training

Governors had received a bespoke training session on governance from the director of HEP.

Safeguarding training: all governors other than MA had completed their training on safeguarding.

Governor visits

BM had conducted a visit to discuss the Quality of Education. Her report was available on Gov Hub.

Visits to be a focus of the next agenda.

Website compliance

LC reported that some information on the school website was being updated.

He reported that there were a small number of items that required updating including governor diversity data and information on Sports Premium. The website would be compliant/up to date by the next meeting.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2023

Accuracy

All absences should have been noted as apologies. Subject to this, the minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

Actions

ACTION: LC and DK to review wording of the Co-opted Governor advert.

STATUS: Completed/closed

ACTION: LC to send Doodle Poll to Governors re: link roles

STATUS: Completed/closed

ACTION: LC to forward Scheme of Delegation to Haringey contact to ascertain what the financial accountability is for the Finance Officer.

STATUS: Completed/closed

ACTION: BF to send SEND SATs data to EWo in the week commencing 18 December 2023.

STATUS: Completed/closed

LC to send the attendance tracking Excel spreadsheet and Faulkner Consultancy report to Governors.

STATUS: Completed/closed

LC to upload compliance report to Governor Hub.

STATUS: Completed/closed

Matters Arising

None.

5. Chair's report

None.

6. 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.

Staff survey

A governor had asked about the findings from the staff survey. LC reported that there had been a 'Teacher TAPP' survey. The main concerns that he had identified from the survey had been in response to the question about how to raise governor visibility among the staff and a feeling among teachers of not being appreciated by governors. He invited governors to suggest how this may be addressed.

Q. MM asked how many staff were now at the school.

A. LC said that there were 33 teachers, and that the survey had involved 30 respondents.

TI said that his view was that most members of staff were unaware of governors and the role they played in the school. This was what accounted for the findings about not feeling appreciated.

MM suggested a meeting of governors and staff to discuss role and purpose of governors and to discuss the work of governors. She said that some governing bodies held regular meetings of governors with staff.

NT added that sharing feedback from governors' visits with staff would demonstrate the appreciation governors had of staff. MM suggested that a governor's noticeboard would also be a means of raising the profile of governors in the school.

Governors AGREED to attend an 'event' organised by the school to introduce staff and governors.

Q. A governor had asked how students were to be surveyed and how findings would be compared to insights from previous surveys.

A. LC said that the school held insights drawn from a range of sources of information. He said that the school could re-survey students using the PASS survey, but that the costs of around £2,500 were prohibitive, and that he was not clear this would be of value. He proposed instead to use existing information from a range of sources.

Q. MM asked what the school had learnt from the surveying of pupils.

A. LC said that it had gained the insight that children had positive attitudes both about the school and about learning (compared to national) and that in general they were doing well. The main area of concern was developing independence of learning and self-efficacy.

Behaviour

Q. A question had been asked about the correlation (if there was one) between behaviour incidents and lining up prior to lessons.

A. LC said that overall, he was pleased to see teachers using positive reinforcement rather than sanctioning as the method to promote good behaviour among pupils. He said that teachers were facing a growing concern related to low level disruptive behaviour, including pupils calling out and answering back. Such behaviour was difficult to manage and was a significant cause of stress for teachers and likely other pupils.

He said that low level disruption was not acceptable and that while there was a need to 'choose one's battles' there were times when such behaviour was just too much. TI said that the sanctions were in place and graded to remind children of the expected standards of behaviour before serious sanctions were imposed.

LC said that his concern as Headteacher was that this concern was being raised by teachers and that it was important to identify strategies to address low level disruptive behaviour.

He pointed out that one significant factor was the lack of adults around the school among both support staff and teachers.

Admissions

Q. A question had been asked about federation and what this meant.

A. LC explained the fact that some schools were part of a federation, which was a grouping of schools that were in the maintained sector (not academies).

Separately, he said that there was a plan to survey new parents from Y1 and Rec to ask about concerns at Coleridge. He said that school was aware of most concerns: the fact that it was a large school and the importance of assuring parents that their children would not be 'lost'. He said that a lot of work was done to promote the pastoral care provided by the school, the wrap around care, counselling service etc, and that many children reported seeing the school as a second home/family.

Q. A question had been asked about the decline in parents putting Coleridge as first place preference and had asked whether this was in line with the borough overall.

A. LC confirmed that it was. He went on to say that Coleridge enjoyed an element of protection relating to admissions, when compared with other schools in LB Haringey,

because of its geographical location on the border with LB Islington. He reported that around a third of applications were received from LB Islington. When LB Haringey came to make decisions about reducing PAN (pupil admission numbers) it would be more likely to reduce capacity in schools that did not admit such a high proportion of out of borough children. He said that there was a critical need to better understand the importance of Islington parents and their motivations/wishes for having their children attend Coleridge.

He said that the school had learnt lessons from a survey of parents conducted 2 years previously about the reasons for applying to Coleridge and the importance of word of mouth marketing. He said that this was why the school invested heavily in conducting tours of the school for prospective parents. These were now available on Eventbrite.

He added that the school was planning to establish its breakfast club. There was funding available, but only for food, not staff. His aspiration was to get this up and running asap to improve attendance of pupils. He said that this would be provided free of charge for disadvantaged pupils.

Behaviour

LC said that another important finding from the staff survey had been a request for more support, training and bodies to help with behaviour.

He said that he had recently attended a LB Haringey SEND meeting which had heard about a significant increase in complex behaviours. This was among both new pupils but also existing children post the Covid lockdown period. He said that schools were reporting increased concerns related to family pressures.

He said that at Coleridge the concern about behaviour was more evident in boys, and that the school was currently relatively top heavy with boys: 397 boys 316 girls.

He reported that the school was responding to the challenge of poor behaviour that was the result of complex needs through a range of measures including regular movement breaks, emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) and SLT availability for teachers.

Child on child sexual harassment

LC reported that there had been an increase on this item but that it was due to better recording and was not a real increase.

He said that the school was addressing matters relating to sexual harassment; in part by focusing on how to educate children about their use of language, how families speak about sexualised language at home. There had also been a question about the Tender Project. He reported that this had been of mixed success. Some elements had been excellent, but others had not. He said that this was due in part to the quality of the trainers involved.

TI added that the school had been working on discussing issues around gender/masculinity etc with groups of boys and girls (separately) and that these would continue.

All behaviour incidents – including bullying, homophobia and racism - were recorded on 'My Concern'. He pointed out that a single incident may be reported under several

categories and that in order to make sense of the data, SLT reviewed the reports and sought to identify patterns of behaviour which were then addressed, often in assemblies.

Reduced timetables

Q. A governor had asked about the use of reduced timetables.

A. TI reported that there were currently 4 students in the school and 1 in the nursery on a reduced timetable. In all of these cases the school worked with a range of relevant external agencies and aimed to work towards increasing the amount of time the child spent at school. Such work is often slow and gradual, because of the nature of the children's needs. He added that the number of children on a reduced timetable had increased since the pandemic, and that very often the reasons were nothing to do with the school, but were rather due to mental health concerns at home.

Curriculum

Q. A governor had asked about the term 'cold calling'.

A. TI explained that this was a teaching method that had been introduced to the school because of the evidence of its beneficial impact on learning. It involved teachers deliberately not asking only children who put their hand up to answer questions, but to 'cold call' and ask any child to give an answer throughout a learning session. The aim was to ensure that all children in the group remained engaged, rather than just a select few. He said that there had been a training session for staff on its use, and that he hoped to see more consistent use of the approach in the future, together with more confident teachers and improvements in attainment outcome data.

Q. A governor had asked whether the school's approach to writing was innovative.

A. LC confirmed that it was. He said that the school had established a reputation for its success in writing. It was an area that TI, who was a moderator on writing for the local authority, had led on.

LC said that there was a focus on improving the consistency of pedagogy across the school. Because it was a large school with 4 forms per year, ensuring consistency was important. He gave examples of the including modelling and shared writing.

Q. A governor had asked why music had been replaced on the curriculum with art in 2022.

A. LC said that the reason for the selection of subjects was informed by the school improvement advisor (SIA). A focus of the current Ofsted inspection framework was on children being able to know more remember more and that for a school of the Coleridge's size, there may be up to 5 subjects chosen for a 'deep dive'.

He added that the SIA had produced 3 reports and had noted marked improvement on how children articulate their learning.

Q. A governor had asked a question about the school's work on DEI/anti racism and other areas of concern under the DEI banner.

A. LC reported that the school continued to work on anti racism and on other areas of discrimination including actions on LGBTQ+. These were addressed in the equalities policy.

He reported that a focus of the work with the Leeds Beckett group was on ensuring governors were appropriately trained in the area of racial literacy He asked that the Leeds Beckett document be read by governors and training needs be identified.

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

MA asked about a pathway for parents to report any concerns and the need for a safe space for this.

LC said that information on how to report any concerns was provided in the newsletter to parents. NT recommended that this information be included in all written communication with parents. This was AGREED.

Uniform policy

LC thanked governors for their input on this matter. He said that the issue of uniform/clothing among both staff and pupils had arisen, because of the ongoing conflict in Gaza. He reported that there had been complaints from parents relating to a member of staff who had worn to work a badge with a pro-Palestine badge/message. A child had also attended school with a pro-Palestine sweatshirt. He said that the governing body should determine what type of messaging it felt was acceptable for pupils and staff to wear at school.

Governors debated the subject: DH suggested that there should be a complete ban on all political messaging on clothing among both staff and pupils while at school. Others questioned whether this would then prevent the wearing of generally accepted symbols/logos and words on clothing, and whether this was a too draconian a solution.

It was AGREED that LC would seek advice from other schools with a no-uniform policy and present options to the next meeting of the FGB.

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

He said that the Equalities policy was being refined and would be circulated to governors in advance of the next meeting.

7. SEND and Safeguarding

NT reported that she had recently reviewed the single central record and had found that everything was in order. Included in the most recent safeguarding audit had been an assessment of the filtering of online content. The actions from the audit were to be included in the safeguarding policy. Separately, views on safeguarding from the parents' and children's surveys were to be collated.

8. Financial Management

LC reported that the school was in a position where the cash flow (money in the bank) had now fallen below £140,000, a trigger for informing the local authority.

The advice from LB Haringey was that the school should apply for a one-year interest free loan of £100,000 to tide the school over the current period. This would be paid back at the rate of £8,000 per month. In the interim the school was waiting for an in-depth 'deep dive' into its finances. This work would be undertaken by Schools Resources Management Consultancy and was due in March 2024. He reported that all the evidence to date indicated that the school was managing its finances in as prudent a manner as was possible. It had cut back on expenditure wherever practicable; it was no longer replacing staff where it could afford to (natural attrition), it was seeking to increase its income from clubs and lettings, and it was out-sourcing its cleaning contract.

He said that the school was in a similar position to many other schools in the local authority and across London/England: the reason for the financial difficulties was due to the funding formula and the amount of funding the school received. The school's deficit was around 2-3% of its budget, which was in line with many other schools.

He said that a difficult decision that he would have to make was to reduce the funding of the counselling service by half to £30,000 for the coming year. He said that while wellbeing was central to the school, he was also aware that the staff group was reporting that the single most important difference relating to behaviour was adults in the school/ bodies in the classrooms, and not counsellors.

9. Estate Management and Health and Safety

DK reported that she had conducted a H+S walk with staff.

LC reported that discussion with the local authority were continuing over funding for the repairs to the roof. The local authority had reported that there was money in budget for 2024/25 for the roof, but LC said that the amount had not been reported and that he was sceptical that there would be sufficient funding made available, given the extent of the works required.

10. Policies

There were no policies to discuss in this meeting.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Dates of future meetings

Monday 25 March 2024

Monday 13 May 2024

Monday 1 July 2024

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

Action Table

Action
ACTION: Discussion of the Leeds Beckett document to be agenda item for next FGB.
ACTION: LC to investigate other schools' policies to political messaging on clothing and make recommendations for actions at the next meeting.