



Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting

Monday 2 December 2024 at 6.00 pm

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	
Nomi Tysman	NT	01-12-2028	
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 via video	MM	19-01-2026	LA Governor (1)
Kirsten Schmidt	KS	04-02-2028	Staff (1)
Vacancy			Parent Governor (2)
Vacancy			
Also in attendance:			
*Tim Ibbotson	TI	N/A	Asst HT
*Ben Strange	BS	N/A	Deputy HT
*Darren Heath	DH	04-02-2028	Associate Governor
*Ben Miller	BMi	01-07-2028	Associate Governor
*Eddie Webb	EW	01-12-2028	Associate Governor
*Morinade Akinbobola	MA	01-12-2028	Associate Governor
Michael Wang	CW	01-07-2028	Associate Governor
Corrina Phillips	CP	N/A	Asst HT and SENCO
Louise Foulkes	LF	N/A	Deputy HT
Adam Crosier			Clerk

* Denotes absence

PART 1

1. **Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence**
DK opened the meeting at 6.05 pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from DH for reasons of a family emergency and from RH, MA and EW. The meeting was quorate.
2. **Declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise in respect of items on the agenda**
None.
3. **Governing board business**
 - Membership
The terms of office of NT and MA (both Parent Governors) had expired. Governors AGREED that NT become a Co-opted Governor. MA and EW were made Associate Governors.

Parent Governor vacancies: DK reported that there had been 7 x applications for the 2 positions of Parent Governor. The election would be held before the Christmas break.

- Governor visits

Quality of education: BM reported that she had met with BS. They had discussed the need to make marking and moderation clearer across the school and BS had been tasked to address this. This was in the context of improving the consistency of teaching approaches and this matter was to be addressed by training of staff and learning walks. As discussed at the previous FGB, all children were expected to learn and know the same information. Whole class reading had also been discussed.

Maths and home learning: BM reported that the meeting had heard that too much time was spent in class on arithmetic (doing times tables etc) and not enough on problem solving. From the school's point of view there was a need to ask parents to support learning at home.

Q. CSA pointed out that this was a different from the message, 'there is no homework at Coleridge', something that the school is known for.

A. LC said that there were reminders to parents about expectations re reading and maths. He agreed that making expectations for parents around homework should be clarified.

ACTION 1: LC to update/re-write the rationale for home learning and expectations of parents and children to be clarified, including time to be spent on reading and maths.

Behaviour and attitudes: CSA reported that she had met with LC and that a lot of work had been done on behaviour management that linked to the school's core values. There was a commitment to working with parents to ensure that there was a shared understanding on behaviour.

LC added that he had sent to parents information on behaviour in the newsletter. There was a plan to monitor feedback from children in a more consistent way.

CSA added that there had been discussion of the 'smart phone free' session. The parents' handbook would include expectations on this subject. There was also a 'citizens project' that aimed to embed Coleridge as a caring school: staff were working to make this come to life for the children.

SEND: AE reported that her visit had involved an EYFS learning walk. She said that the visit had been inspiring and that it had demonstrated how what the EY Lead Laura, had reported at the previous FGB meeting on EYFS was implemented on a daily basis. There was clear evidence of strong and trusted relationships between children and staff and of the positive interaction/guidance/questioning by staff. It had been good to see how Laura was recognised by children in Reception (having worked with them in Nursery). Staff were able to show AE how children had improved in their learning at the school and how children played together. She gave an example of one child who was non-verbal playing with another (verbal) child. She pointed out that the TA's role had been crucial in nurturing this relationship. She said that Laura and the staff team clearly understood the children and their needs. Laura also had strong links externally and was able to help parents to make connections outside the school setting. The deep dive had been very helpful and she had now seen in practice what had been reported at the meeting. There had been a very positive atmosphere.

Personal development

LC reported that the racial equity board had met earlier in the day. It had reviewed the action plan and membership. He reported changes to the membership of the board.

Leadership and management

DK reported that she had met with LC and that they had reviewed the SDP and the 5 headings. She said that it was important for governors to retain a focus on the strategic vision. She pointed out that surveys were helpful in this respect, as they could be used to show how areas of concern were changing and that they enabled the school to report back to various audiences (staff, parents).

She said that she had also discussed staff training and development with LC, and the need to ensure professional development even at a time of financial constraint. They had agreed that costs and efficiency were part of the choices relating to professional development.

Safeguarding

NT reported that she had met with CP and that there had been a safeguarding audit since the last FGB. There had also been a Brook traffic light training on sex education. A survey of pupils had been conducted by Judicium, with a very positive 93% reporting they could identify a trusted adult. Following this, the school had promoted 'worry boxes' to ensure that all children felt able to report any concerns.

LGFL analysis of the data on the school's systems showed no concerns.

Governors who had not done so already were asked to confirm they had read and understood KCSIE24 (when they had done so) on Gov Hub.

CP to circulate the Judicium link for Governors to also confirm they read the KCSIE24 via this link so its recorded on the school record.

ACTION 2: Governors to confirm they had read and understood KCSIE24 via Gov Hub.

- Governor training
JMG reported that he had attended a safeguarding training session.
All governors were reported to be in date with safeguarding training.

4. Minutes of the meeting 30 September 2024 and 18 November 2024

- Accuracy

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

Governors thanked the school for organising the 'deep dive' session, which they found very helpful.

- Actions: None.
- Matters arising: None.

5. Chair's report

None.

6. Headteacher's report

LC had circulated a written report and invited comments. He highlighted the following areas.

Behaviour: LC said that there would always be behaviour incidents at any school and that the important point was how matters were addressed. He said that the current Y6 group was especially challenging. There were several children in the year group who were of special concern and the challenges were across several classes. The reasons for the behaviour concerns were related to SEN, emotional wellbeing, home life and arguably to what he described as 'too gentle parenting'. He said that this group had been a concern in the previous year as well.

He said that the situation was exacerbated by the fact that the school was still having to accept children in the Spring term of Y6: some of these were children who had been home schooled for years and found socialising challenging.

He said that there had been a review of behaviour management with staff that had involved a return to the basics of behaviour management. He said that it was a necessary part of the job to teach children to behave.

Q. JGA said that the number of behaviour concerns appeared to be high.

A. LC agreed that they were. He said that boundaries were important to enable children to stay safe. He added that Y6 set the tone for the school and that when fights in the playground occurred, as they had done on occasion, they had been used to enable children involved to understand the impact their behaviour had on making others, including younger children, feel unsafe.

Challenging conversations: LC said that some staff found it difficult to have conversations about behaviour with parents. Some staff procrastinated, hoping the matter would go away. He acknowledged that it was difficult for younger staff to engage with older parents. The training and discussion sessions had included models and strategies of how to manage this dynamic with parents. He said that the work was well received and reassuring for everyone. All staff needed to be clear that the focus was to build a relationship with parents.

Q. BM asked at what stage parents were involved in behaviour matters.

A. LC said that the school operated a '10 minute room' approach to behaviour management. This was where a child, who had been spoken to about their behaviour 3 times would be removed to a separate space for 10 minutes, to reflect on their behaviour. If a child had been in the 10 minute room 5 times, this triggered a call home and 10 times warranted a parent to be asked to attend the school.

Separately, LC said that the inset training session on anti-racism and misogyny had been very positive and well received. He said that as with behaviour concerns, the use of discriminatory language was something that schools had to manage. It was not

possible to eradicate discriminatory language. However, he said that generally, if children were challenged, they were likely to apologise. He said that the school needed to understand what led children to use this language and he pointed to online platforms including YouTube and TikTok. He said that the school was planning to hold an assembly to address discriminatory language and that this would involve various members of staff who had agreed to talk about their personal experiences of being subjected to discriminatory language because of their sexuality, race and religious/ethnic identity. The point was to show to children that language was hurtful and that everyone deserved respect.

Attendance: this was currently good: there had been meetings with parents and improvements in attendance. He reported that he was concerned about punctuality and that this would be a focus of attention.

Admissions: there were currently 19 vacancies. There was a lot of interest in tours of the school. Parents valued the personal touch. LC said that he wanted parents to meet school leaders. He reported that key concerns were the wrap around care provision and the size of the school. He said that the latter was generally resolved through the tour and discussion with himself and staff.

Wrap around care: there had been some progress, but this was not sufficient. The key finding from a survey of parents was that there was strong demand for more wrap around care, especially among parents of younger children. This demand was for more breakfast club places, more after school clubs and to have the care provided after school to 6.00 pm. In the holidays, parents wanted the school to remain open 8.30 to 5.30 pm.

He reported that Fair Play, the current provider of wrap around care, may not be able to embrace the potential increase in demand and that there was a need to consider all options.

BM reported that her understanding was that wrap around care provision was a reason for some parents choosing not to send their children to Coleridge.

LC said that his concern was about finding and keeping high quality staff who were prepared to work the hours required. He said that the wrap around care service could be financially advantageous to the school, but that there were several risks in pursuing this approach. ~~At the same time, the current provision was no longer meeting the needs of the school.~~

MW said that it appeared that other local primary schools had a competitive advantage over Coleridge, because of their better wrap around care, and that there was a ~~serious~~ need to consider a competitive tender.

BM agreed and said that the survival of the school was at stake, as well as the quality of the wrap around care service. LC said that before making any decision, he intended to do the due diligence on possible alternative wrap around care providers.

LC recommended that wrap around care be one of the deep dive topics for governors. Governors were asked to do some research themselves into the matter.

Repairs: LC reported that the local authority had refused to pay for repairs to the decking. Separately, he was in discussion with the local authority over the playground, which was a potential hazard for accidents where wet/ice accumulated, and where there were sharp edges to structures. He said that this matter had been ongoing for nearly 2 years.

Q. A governor asked how the school mitigated the risks of accidents.

A. LC reported that the area was closed off which was disappointing for the children.

Q. A governor asked where liability would lie, should there be an accident.

A. LC reported that this had already happened: a child had fallen on a rock and suffered an injury to their face. The matter was with the local authority.

Should the below be in a Part 2 set of minutes – ie not published?

Finance: LC had circulated the finance report to November 2024 in advance of the meeting. He reminded governors that the school had submitted a request for a licenced deficit in April. The local authority had finally responded, but only to request more information. The request related to the SRMA report and forecasts for the coming year, once the recommendations from that report were put in place. He said that prior to the next FGB the school would review the SRMA report and recommendations. He said that in the meantime, the school had made savings – when a member of staff had left on maternity leave, she had not been replaced. There were further examples of ‘natural attrition’, not replacing staff who left, although in some cases, the school had been obliged to employ new staff to support children with complex needs.

LC said that the supply budget was overspent and that he proposed to ask parents for donations.

Governors supported this proposal and discussed how and when it would be best to make a request for financial support from parents.

It was agreed that the Christmas play was the best occasion to announce the request. In addition to a request for money, parents would be asked if they would like to volunteer their time.

LC said that communication with the local authority finance team was ‘painful’ but acknowledged that the local authority was itself facing extreme financial pressure. He added that the school was still awaiting a date for an inspection by Ofsted.

7. Safeguarding

No concerns.

8. Policies

LC said that there were several policies that needed to be renewed/approved and this would be done at the next FGB meeting.

9. Any other business

None.

10. Date of next meeting

3 February 2025 at 6.00 pm

11. Confidential items

None.

Signed..... Date.....
Chair of Governors