



Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting

Monday 30 September 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	
Eddie Webb	EW	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 [via video]	MA	05-11-2024	Parent Governor (2)
Nomi Tysman	NT	30-11-2024	
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
*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

The chair opened the meeting at 6.05 pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from BM for reasons of work. The meeting was quorate.

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

None.

3. The Coleridge Curriculum

BS gave a presentation on the Coleridge Curriculum. He reported that in 2016 the so called 'Gove curriculum' had been introduced by the government, and that this had been designed to raise standards in education. He provided an example from the KS2 reading paper from 2016. An extract from 'The Lost Queen' by Signe Pike had been used as the reading paper for that test. BS outlined the professional debate that followed the 2016 test and the discussion relating to the use of that extract. He reported that nationally, results in reading fell in 2016 because this paper had been deemed to be too difficult. Prior to the introduction of the 'Gove

curriculum', many schools including Coleridge, had taught reading through an approach known as 'thematic learning'. This involved the teaching of a topic (for example chocolate) that would be taught across the curriculum in English, History, Geography, Science etc. The criticism of this approach was that it led to disjointed learning.

In 2016, most schools moved to the use of 'schema' theory. This held that when children learn words, they do not hold a dictionary definition of the word. Instead, the word is learnt through exposure to its use in a range of contexts. Inevitably, in the context of an extract like The Lost Queen, where there were relatively uncommon words, there would be more limited understanding and another consequence was that some children were more likely to have been exposed to specific types of vocabulary because of their socio-economic background (for example because their parents took them on trips and visits).

BS said that at Coleridge, all children were exposed to the use of relatively unusual terms (such as 'empire' and 'settlements') in a range of contexts. The same idea applied to the use of words in the teaching of maths and other subjects. The intention was that a 'knowledge rich curriculum' would address the gaps in attainment between advantaged and disadvantaged children. In this approach the sequencing of learning was very important and unfortunately, this had been severely impacted by the loss of schooling during the Covid pandemic.

The approach also focused on the teaching and learning of key vocabulary: it was important that all children had access to the same learning and the same knowledge. Previously, there had been an unintended consequence of differentiated learning that disadvantaged children had been denied access to the same level of learning as other children. Now, the approach was that children with SEND or EAL should be provided with additional support to achieve the same goals.

BS said that a result of this approach was that teachers were the experts in the room. In the old model, the teacher may have relied asking children about their understanding/ experiences as part of the teaching. This was now seen to benefit only a small minority of children and likely to exclude/switch off the majority.

BS said that he would produce a written summary of the presentation for governors.

Q. A governor asked how often the curriculum was updated

A. BS said that the curriculum was more or less fixed and that it was tweaked occasionally.

Q. MM asked whether the school used the HEP curriculum.

A. BS confirmed that it did, with some adaptations.

Q. MM asked how often the school undertook assessments to ensure that the learning was effective.

A. BS said that there were assessments at the end of every term and at the end of every unit. He added that the School Improvement Advisor (SIA) interviewed children and had been impressed by the knowledge reported by all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. He added that criticism of the approach was that it could be 'dry' and 'boring'. On the other hand, it was evident that children were now very knowledgeable on a range of subjects. He also discussed the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children and the work of Hart and Risley which had found that children from middle class backgrounds had

typically heard 45 million words by age 3, compared with just 13 million words among children of the same age from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Q. A governor asked whether the approach was borne out in results.

A. BS said that the school had excelled reading results at KS2 SATs.

4. **Safeguarding**

CP encouraged governors to complete their safeguarding training which was a legal requirement and part of KCSIE24, the guiding policy for safeguarding for schools. She also asked governors to confirm that they had read section 2 of KCSIE24 and to be aware of their responsibilities. She reported that annual safeguarding training was also provided to all staff.

Q. DK had asked about filtering and monitoring by the school of information on the internet.

A. CP said that this was a relatively recent obligation required of schools: to ensure that children and staff were not accessing illegal or inappropriate content. She reminded governors that Judicium was the school's safeguarding partner, and that it conducted routine audits. The school also produced a weekly report showing what firewalls were filtering. This provided information about the time, device etc, enabling follow up if required.

Q. DK asked what would lead the school to make a referral to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) or to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

A. CP reported that the LADO dealt with any safeguarding allegations against staff, while the MASH was for children's safeguarding concerns. If anyone made an allegation against a member of staff, that must be actioned by the headteacher. If an allegation were made against the headteacher, that would go to the Chair of Governors and the LADO. She said that the MASH was also a confidential service available to schools for advice of safeguarding matters. If a referral were made to social services, the MASH would provide support with the referral.

Q. A governor had asked about initiation violence and what this involved.

A. CP said that this related to initiation into gangs.

Q. A governor had asked about 'low level' concerns and what thresholds were used and who assessed these.

A. CP said that there was some professional judgement in determining what was low level concern. She said that typically it would include the use of inappropriate language, 'banter' and 'jokey' language, where there was the potential for harm. Similarly, such matters as teachers being perceived to have 'favourite' pupils in class would be a low-level concern and in both scenarios, the teacher would be spoken with. An allegation on the other hand might involve a teacher contacting a child via social media.

Q. A governor asked about safer recruitment processes at the school.

A. CP reported that at least 1 member of staff on a recruitment process would have had safer recruitment training. As part of the process of safer recruitment, the school

would ensure that it received 2 references, undertook social media scrutiny, reviewed gaps in employment and conducted overseas checks, if relev

5. Governing board business

Election of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors

DK was nominated by MM and EW for the position of Chair. There were no other nominations and DK was duly elected unanimously on a show of hands.

RH was nominated by DK and NT for the position of Vice Chair. There were no other nominations and RH was duly elected unanimously on a show of hands.

Membership

DK reported that the terms of office of the 2 parent governors (NT and MA) were due to end shortly. LC to arrange parent elections.

Membership/dates of Pay Committee and HT Appraisal

JGA, EW, RH and DK

Finance Working Group

MA, BS, LC, RH, JGA, BM and Harry Eden

Governing board statement and action plan

DK to circulate dates for a strategy planning half day.

Governor link roles

All link roles were AGREED to remain unchanged from the previous year.

Governor visits

LC proposed that governor visits be scheduled to follow the review by the SLT of the SDP at key points in the year, and that governors report to FGB meetings the findings of their monitoring visits at subsequent meetings. This would mean that governors visits be scheduled in a 3-week window in December, March and June respectively. This was AGREED. Governors were reminded that they should arrange to visit the school once per term.

Governor training

In addition to safeguarding training (a requirement of all governors), governors were reminded of the importance of undertaking routine training to enable them to be effective. The school paid into the HEP training programme and governors should make use of the wide range of opportunities available.

Compliance

Governors were reminded to confirm on Gov Hub that that they abided by the

- Code of conduct
- Had read KCSIE24
- Had completed the annual declaration of pecuniary interests

TOR Finance Working Party and Pay Committee and HT Appraisal
To be confirmed and uploaded.

6. Minutes of 1 July 2024

Accuracy

The minutes were confirmed to be an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

Actions

ACTION: All governors to send bio/photo to DK as a matter of urgency for use on the school's website.

STATUS: Ongoing.

ACTION: LC to ensure the School Bus is available to governors.

STATUS: Ongoing

ACTION: LC to arrange Ofsted preparation meeting for new school year.

STATUS: Closed.

Matters arising

None.

7. Headteacher's report

LC had circulated a written report in advance of the meeting.

He responded to written questions sent in advance of the meeting.

Q. what were the destination schools of children from Coleridge.

A. Highgate Wood was the preferred destination.

Q. Update on admissions.

A. Currently 23 children lower than at the same point in the previous year. He said that there were more children with special needs in the new cohort. He described the case of one child. The school was having to accept a child with very complex needs. The local authority had agreed to pay the school £16,000 to cover additional costs for this child, but there remained a gap of £14,000 to pay for staff to support this child. The local authority had dismissed the school's appeal on this matter.

Q. Marketing and encouraging parents for in-year transitions.

A. The school was reviewing the website: booking tours via Eventbrite, conducting regular tours. Also aiming to develop the school's social media presence with testimonials, values of the school.

Reception: in the past the school had been chosen in first place by 200 parents of children due to enter Reception class. This had fallen in the past few years to 183, 167, and now 130. The Reception class was still full but the same trend was being seen in year transition.

He reported that the school's catchment was wide and the school accepted children who had been unhappy at their previous school. These children and parents sometimes brought their distress/issues to the school.

Disruption can be a cause of concern within a class and year group.

8. Finance update

LC reported that the school had submitted its licenced deficit plan to the local authority in May but had yet to receive a response. He said that the proportion of schools in deficit in LB Haringey was now 50% (up from 30% a year previously) and the fact that there had been no response from the local authority was likely to be because many other schools were in a worse position than Coleridge. He said that the school was suffering from cash flow problems but that he expected a new tranche of funding to be released soon, which would ease the difficulties.

Q. NT asked whether there was scope to grow wrap around care and income.

A. LC said that this area was a challenge: mainly because of the difficulty in finding good quality staff who were willing to work the hours, which were disjointed and unsociable. There were also concerns with finding space for wrap around care. He said that the school was currently providing the service for around 200 children across the week but that to make the service sustainable, it needed 500. Next step: LC to write to parents about the service.

LC reported that the counselling service team budget had been reduced but so too had the service. Overall, he said that it felt that the school was making headway with the financial situation, but equally that it felt that the school was swimming against the tide.

9. Health and Safety and premises

DK reported that information on spend, checklist with dates (tests etc), compliance certificates, contracts/costs etc was all available to governors via Gov Hub. She reported that in her role as Chair she met with the premises officer once every 6 weeks to review the premises. DK said that the management of premises matters was clear and that DK monitored this routinely.

10. Staffing

LC reported that there were 3 new members of staff, all of whom were 'fabulous'. Two members of staff were due to leave, including the road crossing person.

11. Safeguarding

NT reported that the safeguarding team was waiting for a report from Judicium, due on 15 October. The single central record had been reviewed and was found to be in order. There were no outstanding concerns.

12. Coleridge Voluntary Fund

LC said that in the past there had been a voluntary fund but that this had not functioned for some time. He said that parents were interested in contributing to such a fund but wanted to see specifically where their money went. A 'Just Giving'

web page would be set up to enable parents to contribute both as a regular option and for specific items. A message from LC would accompany this to explain the reasons for having to seek parents and the school community to help contribute to the school's finances in this way.

JMG said that there may be challenges relating to accounting and specifically concerns about restrictions on how the monies raised could be spent.

Separately, LC said that he had attended a fundraising meeting to consider whether/how the school could raise additional funds. MW had also attended. He reported that the goal was to raise a large sum through 'matched funding' to enable the school to purchase and let a building on the site that would be accessible to the community and not require the school to have to provide premises officer time. This would be both a benefit to the school community, the local community and would raise lettings income for the school.

He said that he had obtained initial quotation of £200,000 to build a resource using converted freight containers. He said that he would hope to establish a committee, including governors, to oversee the project.

Q. MM asked if LC thought the money would be raised and whether this was the correct use of the school's resources at this time.

A. LC said that it was too early to know if the project would be successful, but that he was hopeful. He acknowledged that it was ambitious, but that the school needed to attempt such an approach if it were not to stagnate or decline. He said that there was a small upfront financial commitment from the school to pay for the fundraiser expert's support, but that as a result of this, the school would learn about how best to apply for grants in the future. He said that he would update governors at the next meeting.

13. Policies

None.

14. Any other business

MA reported that she had been approached by The Guardian in relation to the school's adoption of a policy to limit the use of smart phones by children at the school.

15. Date of next meeting

18 November 2024 at 6.00 pm

16. Confidential items

None.

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