Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting

Monday 10 February 2025 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)** via link	RH	01-02-2026	
Nomi Tysman	NT	01-12-2028	
*Jean-Michel Garcia-Alvarez	JGA	10-02-2025	
*Becca Monahan	BM	17-11-2027	
Michael Wang	CW	01-07-2028	
Andrena Emin	AE	04-02-2028	
Melian Mansfield	MM	19-01-2026	LA Governor (1)
*Kirsten Schmidt	KS	04-02-2028	Staff (1)
Sarah Boffey	SB	05-01-2029	Parent Governors (2)
*Ian Chapman	IC	05-01-2029	
Also in attendance:			
*Tim Ibbotson	TI	N/A	Asst HT
*Ben Strange	BS	N/A	Deputy HT
Ben Miller	BMi	01-07-2028	Associate Governor
*Eddie Webb	EW	01-12-2028	Associate Governor
Morinade Akinbobola via link	MA	01-12-2028	Associate Governor
*Claudia Simms Abrahm	CSA	04-02-2028	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 JGA, IC and KS (Governors) and from EW and CSA (Associate Governors)
The meeting was quorate.

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

None.

3. Headteacher's report

Finance: deep dive

LC explained that the purpose of the session was to review the school's financial position in depth. He explained that this would involve consideration of the national and local picture relating to the financing of schools, and how the school was funded currently. It would also consider the pressures on the school's budget and how the school planned to address these over the short and medium terms.

National picture
In common with many schools across the country, Coleridge was facing a deficit budget. This was more common among primary schools than secondary schools. The reasons were due in part to the mechanism of pupil funding between the two types of school that favoured secondary schools and also to the decline in pupil numbers that was yet to impact the secondary school age cohort.

Local picture
LB Haringey was facing a financial crisis that was impacting many areas, with its housing and social services affected most significantly. The local authority had recently applied to central government for a bail out of £30 million related to its housing deficits.

The number of schools with a licensed deficit had risen significantly since 2009, with ever more primary schools reporting deficit budgets.
LC said that at the end of Q2 (September 2024), there had been many schools in LB Haringey that, like Coleridge, only a few years previously had held significant reserves but were now in deficit. He reported that just before the Covid pandemic, the school had sought permission from the local authority to implement a redundancy plan, but that this had been rejected at that time because the school had held reserves. Instead, the school had relied on natural attrition to manage a decline in staff numbers.

He said that unlike some schools, Coleridge had not received much support from the local authority. He reminded governors that the school had submitted a deficit budget in May 2024, and that it taken months to hear back from the local authority.

Earlier in February 2025, Cllr Brabazon, the Lead for Children, Schools and Families at LB Haringey, had visited the school. LC said that Cllr Brabazon had been shocked to learn, and had found it difficult to comprehend, that the school had a deficit budget. LC said that his feeling was that for the local authority, the east of the borough was the area of concern, and that schools in the west were assumed to be managing. This was not the case.

Q. DK said that part of the problem was that the school had held reserves but had experienced several years of in-year deficits that had drained these. While the school had shown a positive balance sheet, it had not come to the attention of the local authority.

LC reported that as of January 2025 the school was forecasting an in-year deficit of £370,000 to 31 March 2025, up from the £253,000 it had predicted at the start of the financial year.

<u>Funding sources</u>
He enumerated the various sources of income the school received. The most important of these was the income received from the local authority, which was based on the number of pupils on roll. Each pupil attracted income of almost £5,000 per year. At the last census (October 2024), the school had 17 vacancies across the years, which amounted to some £85,000.

Income based on pupils on roll was around £4,269,000
Additional funding streams:
Nursery: £197,000
Pupil Premium funding: £131,000
Lettings: £153,000
Other 'pots' included: catering, Sports Premium, Donations and Wrap Around Care (both of the latter items were discussed more fully later).

<u>Schools Resource Management Advisor report, from LB Haringey.</u>
The school had been the subject of in-depth review of its finances by an independent DfE appointed body. This had made recommendations based on comparisons with other schools.

<u>Teachers and support staff</u>
The SRMA report had concluded that the school had too many teachers. It found that spending on teaching staff should be between 45-49% of income. At Coleridge the figure was 53% (not a huge difference). The report said that based on the calculation that an average teacher cost around £70,000 per year, a reduction of 3 x teachers would save the school around £213,000 per year.

LC explained that while the sums appeared simple, the reality was more complex. He explained how the school's teaching force was deployed:

- 26 FT teachers
- Teacher in Nursery
- Teacher in Rainbow am only
- 9 x PT teachers (roughly 6 FTE).

He explained that all teachers were accounted for and that there was no spare capacity. He further explained that teachers were entitled to time away from the class for preparation, planning and assessment (PPA) (10% of contracted hours) and that early careers teachers (ECTs) were entitled to a further 10% and 5% out of the class in their first and second years respectively.

He said that there was scope to make adjustments to the hours and pay of the small number teaching. However, such measures would save the school at most £10,000 per year and would likely lead to significant resentment and concerns with staff morale.

Governors agreed that there should be a pragmatic approach taken to this area and that the anticipated pain would not justify the relatively small savings.

LC explained further that there could be cuts made to the teaching of art, whereby the school could have the subject taught and by class teachers. However, the school's reputation was built in part on its high-quality teaching of art, which was one of its key USPs. Nonetheless, LC said that this was precisely the kind of action the local authority expected the school to take to address the deficit.

SEND provision

LC reported that there was the potential for savings in this area, but that it would be complicated to achieve, and again that the savings would not be substantial.
He reported that the SMRA report had concluded that there were too many support staff at the school and that with appropriate cuts to this area, the school could save £130,000.

However, LC reported that over the past 2 years the school had overseen the loss of 8 x TAs in line with the SMRA report's recommendations, but had been forced to appoint additional support staff, because of the needs of the children who had joined the school in the summer. These staff had been recruited via an agency, meaning that the school was not responsible for sickness or holiday pay. The staff were only paid for their work during term time.

He added that the SMRA report had not taken account of the context of the school. Having 2 sites required more adults to run it safely. He said that the school had some children with very high needs children.

He said that SEND was a drain in terms of funding because schools were always expected to foot a substantial part of the bill for children with SEND. He added that there was a well-documented national trend in the increase in number of children with SEND, notably of conditions such as ADHD, Dyslexia and Dyscalculia.

Q. BM asked what the reason for this increase was due to and what level of funding the school received for children with SEND.

A. LC said that the answer was complicated but likely to be due to a combination of better diagnosis, greater awareness as well as an increase in numbers of children with these conditions. He said that in his opinion, there was another element that impacted which children were successful in being awarded EHCPs: this was due to the advocacy power of parents.

He reported that LB Haringey had done a lot of work to band children according to need. There was a range of payments from £8,000 to £22,000. Coleridge currently had 22 children who were in receipt of an EHCP (with 2 pending). 1 child was in receipt of the maximum payment. This child required full time one to one care, which cost the school £32,000, meaning there was a loss of £10,000 per year. For any appointment of staff related to an EHCP the school was required to pay for the first £6,000 of the award. In short, schools do not get fully funded for children with SEND.

<u>Opportunity to review SEND team</u>
The current SENCO, CP was a member of the senior leadership team and remunerated at senior level pay. She was due to leave the school at the end of the current school year. LC said that the school would review the composition of the SEND team. Governors discussed the importance of having the SENCO remain on the senior leadership team but also the possibility of sharing a SENCO with another school and appointing SEND assistants. There were 102 children on the SEN register. He said that the school received £130,000 for SEND but spent an additional £132,000 (£262,000 in total) on this area, each year.

<u>Admin staff</u>
The school had also reduced the headcount of office staff by one: the remaining members of the admin team had absorbed 1.5 days and the school had employed the finance consultant for an additional day.

<u>Capital works</u>
LC reminded governors of the pressures on capital expenditure that were the result of having a school based on 2 sites, with 2 kitchens etc. He said that the formula used by LB Haringey to award schools a capital works budget was unfair and disadvantageous for split site schools. The school received just £13,000 capital funding from the local authority. He said that the income for capital works never covered the costs.
He reported that there may be room for small savings at the end of the year when the current Site Team officer would be leaving.

<u>Cleaning</u>
This cost the school £232,000 per year. The school was in the midst of a tendering process, and it was likely that this would yield savings of around £23,000 in the first year of the new contract.

Q. MM asked whether the cleaning contract tender could be shared with other schools.

A. LC said that he had looked at this possibility, but that no other schools were looking to tender at the same time as Coleridge.

Wrap Around Care (WAC): income generation
Coleridge Youth Club currently served 70 children and produced a £29,000 profit per year (30 spaces were taken and 20 were vacant). If all 110 places were taken, he estimated that the Youth Club could make £150,000 profit per year, with staffing costs included.

Looking at WAC, he reported that the projections were as follows:
In first year: with 50 children per day: profit: £22,000
In second year: with 100 children per day: profit: £61,000
In third year: with 160 children per day: profit: £134,000
In fourth year: with 300 children per day: profit: £304,000

LC said that he had researched providers of WAC including a company JAG that worked with Rokesly and St Aidens. JAG had reported that it would be able to provide a profit the school of £64,000. The current provider, Fair Play (with 120 children per day) provided the school with £30,000.

He said that it appeared clear that a business plan over 4 years would be the most obvious and best plan for the school. However, it would entail a lot of work.
He added that there was high demand.

Coleridge Voluntary Fund (CVF)
LC reported that he proposed to re-launch the CVF. In the past this had raised as much as £86,000. In the current year, this had fallen to a much smaller figure.
He discussed the detailed information he proposed to share with parents.

DK supported this proposal and said that it should be actioned as a priority. She said that the school had been procrastinating on this matter for 5 years and that during this time it had missed the opportunity to raise funds.

MW said that there was a need for a target and a clear means for how to pay.
He felt that the level of information LC was proposing to include was likely to turn off potential contributors.

Governors discussed their preference to attach money raised from donations to tangible items, but LC said that this would conflict with Coleridge Families work.

MW said that there was a need for a 'crisis case', to say that there were 2 schools closing in LB Haringey and that donations were needed to help the school to survive.

AE suggested a video would be a better way of communicating with parents and governors agreed.
DK proposed a dial/graphic showing progress towards a numerical target.

MW suggested a fundraising scheme that would link the fund raising to a key date/event of the school. He said that the branding and messaging was critical to the success of the scheme and discussed his experience with his own school in Canada that had raised funds based on the school's opening date of 1861.

MM said that asking parents to contribute was not where the board wanted to be and that there was a need to ensure that the call for donations did not conflict with the values of the school.

LC said that he would shortly hold a conversation with a professional fundraiser. He said that he would like to consider whether funds could be used to create a space for the school from the site manager's house, when it was vacated in the summer.

LC said again that there needed to be clarity and distinction between the respective roles of about the Coleridge Families v Coleridge Voluntary Fund.

Q. BM said that it would be important to demonstrate to contributors how their donations had been used, especially if the case for the call for donations was that the school was in financial crisis.

MW agreed to review and re-draft LC's written statement to parents.
SB suggested identifying famous former pupils as a 'hook' for the fund-raising.

4. Any other business
   None.

5. Date of next meeting
   17 March 2025 at 6.00 pm

6. Confidential items
   None.

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