

**Our Vision:**  
*Achievement, Wellbeing, Communication and Independence.*

**Our Engagement Values:** *Exploration, Realisation,  
Anticipation, Persistence and Initiation*



**MINUTES**  
**ADDINGTON VALLEY ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2021 AT 4 PM**  
**HELD VIRTUALLY**

**Present:** Lucy Davey, Chair (LD)  
John Reilly, Principal (JR)  
Jordana Berk (JB)  
Kemi Arogundade (KA)  
Will Scott (WS)  
Janet Sherborne (JS)

**In attendance:** Joe Shepherd, Senior Teacher (JSh)  
Brenda Scott, Head of Financial Projects and Management  
Accountant (BS)  
Susanne Wicks, Clerk (SW)

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

LD welcomed all present to the meeting and wished everyone a happy new year.

BS introduced herself as Head of Financial Projects and Management Accountant for Addington Valley Academy.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

**4. CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS**

- i Governors recommended the appointment of Lucy Davey as Chair for the remainder of this academic year.
- ii Governors recommended the appointment of Kemi Arogundade as Vice-Chair for the remainder of this academic year.

**5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

- i Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020.
- ii Governros approved the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2020.

**6. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

There were no matters arising.

**7. FINANCE AND FUNDING**

BS summarised the school's financial position as detailed in the management accounts report for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. There is an actual surplus of £80K with a projected year-end surplus of £76K. BS explained that the budget was built around 20 students on roll, each with £27K top-up funding. However, there are currently 23 students on roll, one of whom is double funded. The Principal has secured £75K transitional funding from LB Croydon to reflect one to one support needs.

KA asked if there were any concerns following LB Croydon's Section 144 notice and BS advised that they are undertaking an SEN banding review which could lead to a drop in levels of top-up funding. She confirmed that LB Croydon have given some reassurances around pupil numbers and that the school and Trust have been clear that the top-up funding must remain at a minimum of £22K per pupil. She explained that the higher level of funding (£27K) would only apply the first year of the school.

LD asked if the projected number of roll for this school is appropriate and BS replied that LB Croydon have commissioned 80 places for the next academic year, and the Principal continues to work with them about the cohort being placed in the school, which is proving to be more complex than anticipated, which is impacting on all resources, but particularly staffing.

BS confirmed that the forecast spend on staffing is 64% which is quite low, and JR noted that the average spend is around 75%, which is viewed as sustainable, with anything over 80% presenting cause for concern.

JR explained that the original staffing structure was built around one teacher and two teaching assistants for each group of eight children which equates to a 3:1 ratio. However, the pupils joining the school have higher and more complex levels of need, with some presenting challenging behaviour. This has led to more needing 1:1 support than anticipated, which puts pressure on the school's budget. This is likely to become more of a challenge as the roll increases to 80 then 150. JR reiterated the need to ensure the school has a balanced intake, and to work with LB Croydon to manage their expectations, as they seek to move children from out of borough placements into Addington Valley. LD asked if this was likely to be an ongoing battle, and JR advised that the school must develop its own ethos and values and may need to refuse entry where appropriate.

WS asked if school is obligated to accept all children proposed by LB Croydon and BS confirmed that the decision to admit is the Principal's, based on the school's ability to meet a child's needs. There is regular dialogue with colleagues in LB Croydon and relationships have improved, as has their understanding of how an Academy works as opposed to a maintained school.

Governors welcomed the positive feedback in the report from LB Croydon's School Improvement Partner. LD noted that once Governors are able to come into school, they will observe the high levels of need among some of the children and the pressure that puts on the resources.

Report received.

## 8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

At the invitation of the Chair, the Principal presented his report and associated documents which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

JR sought feedback from Governors on the format of the report and feedback was very positive. Governors welcomed the colour coding and suggested that where anything in the EBI section is not Green, that a short narrative be added to give some detail about that. It was also suggested that the table fit to one page to be more easily read.

**Action: Principal to format his report appropriately.**

By way of setting the context, JR advised that schools were not expecting the January lockdown. Special Schools were told that they must remain open for those children whose parents want them to come into school, and Addington Valley was able to engage very early with families to establish their preference. He reported that all parents were telephoned on New Year's Eve, followed by a staff meeting to plan appropriately. Where families want their children to come into school, that has been accommodated and there have been six out of 21 coming in.

JR described the very high-quality online offer for students, which is a particular achievement given the cohort. The school are offering a range of online personalised timetables for the children which have been very well received by parents. The online offer is supplemented with work packs which are hand-delivered to homes by a member of staff over the weekend. Governors noted the levels of commitment of staff and LD undertook to write to thank the staff member who has been carrying out those deliveries on his bicycle.

**Action: JR to give LD contact details for staff member.**

JR described the school's aspiration for all children to return to school after half-term, even if on a week in/week out arrangement. However, this will depend on the outcome of a full risk assessment, taking into account the wellbeing of everyone in the school community.

LD asked about Covid vaccines and JR reported that the whole school will be vaccinated, which has been confirmed by the Regional Lead for Covid for SW London earlier in the day. JR advised that he had been vaccinated all the rest of the staff will receive theirs over the course of the week.

JS asked if all staff were asked to consent for their details to be shared as part of the vaccination programme and JR confirmed that they were although some staff did not give consent. He advised that lateral flow testing for staff is available in school, but the decision was made not to test children, due to the potential impact it may have on them and their relationships with staff. Staff are being tested twice a week, in line with Government guidelines.

KA asked about implications for those staff who decline to have the Covid vaccine and/or have refused testing. JR confirmed he had sought advice from OHCAT's HR Team and had been told that he can ask a staff member to work from home if they refuse a test, which works for now, but may present an issue when all children return to school. He noted the need to ensure that the environment is as safe as

possible, for both staff and pupils, which must be a top priority. JR was not aware of any repercussions for those staff who refuse the vaccine.

JR described plans for staff recruitment, including a Deputy Headteacher and teaching and therapy staff. The aim is to have two Deputies: one for the primary and one for the secondary phase. The new recruit will ideally have a primary school background.

**Action: JR to invite Governors to participate in interviews for a senior teacher.**

WS asked when new staff would join the school and JR advised that it was hoped the Deputy Headteacher would start in the summer term. He noted that up to ten new teachers will be needed, recruitment of whom will be a challenge. KA asked if there had been any resignations and JR confirmed that all recruitment was for new posts needed due to the increased roll.

JR reported that the new building is on target to open on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021, although work is currently delayed by a week, which the contractors are planning to make up. However, the unknown quantity is the impact of Covid on progress, particularly as work moves indoors and social distancing requirements may lead to restrictions on numbers. He undertook to share further details on progress as they emerge.

Governors were very pleased to note the highly positive feedback given by two external sources (DfE and LB Croydon) and the scale of this achievement in the current context. JR noted the positive impact on staff of this validation of the progress they had made and described their enormous resilience and hard work during the first term. On behalf of the entire LGB, the Chair asked that thanks to all staff be minuted, and asked JR to pass on thanks to staff for their hard work and endurance under extremely difficult circumstances.

Report received.

## **9. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)**

JR suggested that, at a convenient time in the future, Governors should meet to go through the SDP in detail and to get to grips with the vision and ethos of the school. He reassured Governors that the document has been subject to scrutiny and has been deemed to be robust.

JR suggested that a target should be added around community links and Governors agreed that this would be beneficial. It was agreed that a parent and staff Governor should be recruited in the summer term, and further thought should be given to recruiting a governor with the community links / new build portfolio.

**Action: Clerk to liaise with Principal and Chair about Governor recruitment.**

## **10. DASHBOARD**

JR presented the dashboard, flagging the need to view the data in the context of a very small cohort of children. Governors noted that attendance in the autumn term was higher than the national average.

JR reported that the low number of behaviour incidents has decreased further as staff get to know the children and introduce systems to support them and meet their needs.

Governors noted that staff absence is largely attributable to one instance of long-term sickness.

## **11. GOVERNOR VISITS, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

Discussion on this item was deferred to the next meeting.

## **12. PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

### **i Ethos, Vision and Strategy**

LD gave a brief verbal report on the meeting between she and the Principal. Matters discussed included:

Promoting the vision of school and dissemination to the school community, include the Governors. The speech therapists have developed user friendly visuals for the children, and postcards have been designed to be sent home as a reward when children do well. The school must be confident it is delivering the vision through the curriculum.

**Action: Clerk to add the vision and engagement values to all meeting documentation.**

JR went through the home learning provision and LD expressed how impressed she was with the range and individuality of the offer.

**Action: Chair to share written report via GovernorHub.**

### **ii Teaching and Learning**

JB presented her report, following the meeting with the Principal in November. Matters covered at the meeting included:

Pupil tracking: JR shared examples, which were very clear and colour-coded. The next meeting will involve further discussion on assessment for learning in the coming months, albeit with delays caused by the lockdown.

Arrangements for the RSE curriculum, coming online in September 2021.

Support for NQTs: JR confirmed that since he and JB met, a new online system has been implemented, the National Teacher Accreditation, which includes online mentoring and coaching, with a portfolio of evidence to be compiled by the NQT.

JB reported that she and JR will discuss plans for monitoring teaching and learning at their next meeting. JR reported that plans to implement the TES, used in schools across the Trust, were disrupted by school closures before and after Christmas. It will be implemented as soon as is appropriate, taking into account the need to support staff. JR reassured Governors that monitoring is in place, just not through the TES.

iii **Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding**

JS reported on her virtual visits on 10 and 11 November 2020 and reassured Governors that she found no cause for concern.

JR apprised Governors of a premises issue causing some concern which relates to LB Croydon's plans to install bollards in the driveway to prevent vehicles coming up to the school. This will present a serious risk to the health & safety of children and will impact on staff who need to ensure that children get into and out of school safely.

**Action: JS to write to LB Croydon on behalf of the LGB to set out their concerns.**

iv **Finance and resources**

KA presented her report of the meeting that took place on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020. She noted that things had moved on since that visit and a year-end surplus was now forecast, not a deficit.

KA asked if any costs to the school arising from the Covid pandemic would be recoverable and BS replied that there were strict criteria in place for claiming back costs, one of which is that the school's budget must be in deficit.

KA asked how many children in school are eligible for Free School Meals and JR confirmed that 70% are, which is high compared to the national average. He advised that the school are accessing the vouchers through the LB Croydon scheme.

**Action: BS to attend next finance portfolio meeting.**

v **HR and Organisational Development**

WS introduced his report, noting that many of the matters discussed had already been covered in the course of this meeting.

WS outlined his intention to continue to focus on staff wellbeing, particularly in the context of the pandemic on top of opening a new school. Governors welcomed this approach.

JR highlighted the fantastic job done by Joe Shepherd in covering his absence before Christmas and formally noted his thanks and appreciation, which were echoed by Governors.

LD thanked everyone for their visits and reports.

**13. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board at their meeting on 3 July 2020 which are all available on [GovernorHub](#).

**14. KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2020**

Governors noted that 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' has been updated with effect from September 2020. The latest version is available on [GovernorHub](#).

All relevant OHC&AT policies have been amended to reflect the changes.

[A summary of the changes](#) has been circulated to Safeguarding Portfolio governors.

**15. GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK OCTOBER 2020**

Governors noted that the Governance Handbook has been updated with effect from October 2020. The latest version is available on [GovernorHub](#).

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Action: JR to invite LD to a topping out ceremony in the new school building in late February.**

**17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

24 March, 19 May, 30 June 2021.

**18. CONFIDENTIALITY**

JS and BS left the meeting at this point. Matters discussed are contained within a confidential minute.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Lucy Davey, Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_