

**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 23 MARCH 2022 AT 4 PM**

**Present:** Lucy Davey, Chair (LD)  
John Reilly, Principal (JR)  
Kemi Arogundade (KA)  
Jordana Berk (JB)  
Marta Nobre (MN)  
Janet Sherborne (JS)

**In attendance:** Anna Huzzey, Vice-Principal, Primary (AH)  
Susanne Wicks, Clerk (SW)

**1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

LD welcomed all present to the meeting.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Will Scott and Joe Shepherd (Deputy Headteacher).

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

**4 CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS**

Governors noted that there remains two parent governor vacancies. JR reported that he had invited all parents to express their interest in the role and received three positive responses. He suggested inviting all three parents into school to meet him and provide some background information on the role, which Governors agreed would be a positive way forward. SW offered assistance if required.

**Action: JR**

**5 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2021.

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

- i LD confirmed that a letter of thanks to staff was sent.
- ii JR reported that WS had not been able to carry out a portfolio meeting but outlined two HR related matters for the Governors' attention.  
  
JR confirmed that performance management of all staff had been completed and welcomed some oversight from WS to ensure that targets set were fair and consistent across the piece.

JR reported that the current management structure was not sustainable for the future, given the increase in pupils and staff to come and that he would like to discuss some ideas for the new structure with WS, the HR Business Partner and the Finance Business Partner.

iii MN was welcomed as the Staff Wellbeing Governor.

## **7 FINANCE AND FUNDING**

Governors received the accounts ahead of the meeting. KA confirmed that she met with Sharyn Purewal (OHCAT Finance Business Partner) on 9<sup>th</sup> March. Sharyn is supporting AVA until a permanent management accountant is assigned to the school, and is meeting JR on a regular basis.

KA undertook to share her written report with SW to share to GovernorHub, and set out matters discussed during the meeting. She confirmed that she was reassured that the school's procurement and finance procedures are compliant with Trust policy and the Academy Trust Handbook and that she was satisfied of good financial probity and robust financial management.

### **Action: KA**

In terms of the budget, KA confirmed that she and Sharyn looked at the budget, based on 80 pupils on roll and discussed any variances, which were all explained. She flagged that staffing costs are slightly over budget due to agency spend but that has been partially offset by in-year savings.

Governors acknowledged that the increase in energy costs will impact on the school and KA advised that the school are yet to receive their first bills. However, Sharyn confirmed that sufficient budget has been allocated to cover those invoices and, once received, the cost will be factored into future budgets.

Report received.

## **8 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

At the invitation of the Chair, the Principal presented his report and associated documents which were circulated prior to the meeting. Matters discussed are detailed below.

JR described the impact of high levels of Covid-19 infections on the school this term, particularly on staff, and advised that last week there were 18 member of staff off sick. Following advice from Public Health, the school has remained open, despite all the challenges. He reported that the school has had no option but to engage agency staff, who bring differing levels of skills and experience and are not familiar with the children. JR thanked all staff for supporting him to keep the school open but noted the impact on them.

### What Went Well

Governors noted the high levels of interest in the SEN Teacher vacancies and were pleased to hear that four new teachers have been appointed to start in September. JR relayed just some of the positive feedback he heard from them in terms of the school's reputation.

JR confirmed that the wellbeing initiatives for staff put in place have been well received and set out some of the activities on offer. Governors noted that this is helping to relieve some of the impact of the high levels of sickness absence.

JR advised that both LB Croydon and LB Sutton would like the school to take an additional class and, whilst acknowledging that it's positive that places are in such high demand, he advised that it would not be possible to increase numbers available within the current building. He also noted that dealing with consultations is very time-consuming. He explained that the school faces increased pressure to admit children with very complex needs, which would require 1:1 support, which means that additional space is required. JR has suggested that the school take over the community centre next door, which LB Croydon may be open to discussing that option, but the local community may object. JR advised that the school has started to make links with groups using the centre and the school hopes to support the food bank which is very much in demand in the area, and would like to offer a free hot meal once a month in school.

JR confirmed that TES performance monitoring and lesson observations are well up and running and that any weaker practice identified has not been a surprise, mostly observed among non-qualified teachers. JR commended their efforts in stepping up when asked to do so, but advised that they were not successful in applying for the SEN Teacher vacancies, as they need to undertake teacher training, for which the school will support them.

JR described the huge amount of work which has been done on the curriculum, with the Evidence for Learning platform now in place, enabling teachers and families to upload evidence to support children's progress. JR advised that workshops were offered to parents/carers and the feedback was really positive. AH explained that the system is very child-centred with targets taken from each child's EHCP, each of which is assessed across four specific areas, and evidence uploaded by teachers to support their judgement, along with further evidence that parents add. She noted that the Equals curriculum is built into the system and highlighted how it is strengthening the home/school links. She added that there is still some work to do on the Equals curriculum to ensure that it is appropriate for this cohort with varying levels of ability.

JR outlined the discussion taking place currently with staff about behaviour, and particularly how it's defined, reported and recorded. He noted that for children in this school, their behaviour isn't a choice, but often is a way of communicating dysregulation. In order to consider this further, a staff group has been established who will be reporting back to JR and their focus will be on 'learning interruptions' rather than behaviour.

#### Even Better If

JR reported that the school has taken on board the experience of other schools that have had an Ofsted inspection and there is now a focus on Reading, with a whole-school reading strategy, with support from Steph Reed (ASD Consultant), who has shared useful resources from flagship special schools. AH added that the aim is to ensure that the appropriate approach to reading for each student will be in place for September.

JR reported that as the school year progresses, it has become evident that some parts of the school site are not suitable for the children, and works to address those areas will

be undertaken. In addition, quotes are being sought for a minibus, as the school currently relies on borrowing a minibus from other schools in the Trust.

JR set out plans to hold a Jubilee Party on 26<sup>th</sup> May, to which Governors would be invited.

JR welcomed questions and comments, as follows.

At LD's request, JR set out his thoughts for the future structure of the SLT, which would reduce the line management responsibilities of he and the two Deputy Headteachers and include some middle leaders. He advised that any restructure must be deliverable within budget and would be subject to consultation with HR and Finance colleagues within the Trust.

JR also expanded on previous comments made about the future expansion of the school being limited by the space available, and advised that if the school roll were to expand to 150 as planned, it would impact on the provision of education and the safety of the school community. He explained that the original planning was based on 15 classes with 10 children in each, which the size of the classrooms cannot accommodate, given the need for up to eight adults in each class as well. He confirmed that LB Croydon were aware of his concerns but have nevertheless asked him to admit bulge classes to accommodate further children. JR reiterated his previous comment, that he was willing to admit further pupils but that additional accommodation must be made available to do so.

JR gave further details around the fixed term exclusion of a child for three days in the autumn term.

Governors discussed the need to engage an occupational therapist and JR described the efforts made to recruit a therapist, which has proved extremely challenging, not only in this school but across the education sector. He advised that LB Croydon are unable to assist and that he contacts appropriate agencies regularly. He noted that due to the way the majority of EHCP are written, there is rarely any dedicated occupational therapy included but school staff are aware many children need it, even if they haven't been formally assessed.

JR advised that the school has bought in a SALT service due to the difficulty in recruiting speech and language therapists. He confirmed that the service is of high quality and the school wish to retain the current provider, but he has been told he must go through a procurement process as the cost meets the thresholds set out in OHCAT's finance regulations. JS suggested that a waiver request could be submitted and undertook to discuss this further with JR outside of the meeting.

**Action: JS/JR**

## **8B SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP)**

JR introduced the revised SIP, which Governors received ahead of the meeting. He confirmed that that it had been reviewed and the RAG ratings updated, and that he would add further commentary by the end of the academic year.

JR outlined his intention to draft a SEF which would be informed by work to be done by David Scott, OHCAT's external education consultant, in the summer term. JR undertook to share any reports emerging from that work, which would be helpful for the school in its preparations for an Ofsted inspection. LD welcomed the external scrutiny from David

Scott and his team.

**Action: JR**

## **8C DASHBOARD**

Governors received the dashboard ahead of the meeting and JR welcomed questions.

LD pointed to the decrease in behaviour incidents from autumn 1 to autumn 2 and JR explained that the drop was largely due to the children settling into school and staff getting to know them and how best to support them. He confirmed that behaviour plans are now in place. JR returned to previous comments made about the school's thinking around behaviour and how it applies to this cohort, for whom 'good' and 'naughty' are not useful or accurate descriptors. He confirmed that the school's behaviour policy would be reviewed and amended appropriately as it was written before the children joined the school. MN added that, as staff got to know the children, they began to learn more about what behaviour was 'expected' or 'unexpected' rather than 'good' or 'bad'. However, JR pointed out that it is important to record any injury to staff.

## **9 SAFEGUARDING**

Governors received the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer and the Spring Term Safeguarding Audit.

AH highlighted that she and Joe Shepherd are focussing on securing Early Help support for those families that may not have sought intervention from social care in the past, although noted that not all parents are willing to accept it.

JR advised that, whilst time consuming to complete, the Safeguarding Audit is very helpful and would be particularly useful in the event of an Ofsted inspection.

## **10 RSE CURRICULUM**

Governors agreed to postpone this item to the summer term meeting as Joe Shepherd was not present. However, if it were necessary to approve it prior to that meeting, JR would share via email.

**Action: JR/Clerk**

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

### **A PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

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

LC and JR undertook to meet before the end of term.

**Action: JR/LD**

#### **ii Teaching and Learning**

JB gave a detailed introduction to her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She commended the school's approach in setting high expectations for all children, which was evident in all of her meetings with staff and visits to school.

JB welcomed the update from MN about daily classroom meetings, noting their use for the teacher in managing the deployment of all staff in the class. She also expressed the view that the proposed leadership structure would be of benefit.

JS relayed a comment made by Joe Shepherd in their meeting, that for AVA's pupils, learning is a journey not a ladder and she noted how accurate a description this was. She emphasised how positive it is to have a digital platform available to upload evidence to demonstrate each child's progress and described the analysis tools which are also part of the system.

JB described how impressed she was with what she had seen and heard.

iii Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding

JS introduced her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She noted that the meeting took place virtually and described her intention to visit the school in person in the summer term, to look at the Single Central Record and to undertake a Health & Safety visit alongside Stephen Goodsell, the Trust's Head of H&S.

JS highlighted the positive comments made by Councillor Aisha Flemming recently about Addington Valley Academy.

iv Finance and Resources

KA had nothing to add to comments made earlier in the meeting but would share her report with the clerk for uploading to GovernorHub.

**Action: KA/Clerk**

v Staff Wellbeing

MN introduced her report which had been shared before the meeting and set out some of the team building ideas that she and Jack Lucas have devised. On behalf of all Governors, LD commended MN on her work in this area. Governors shared some ideas of other activities that could be offered to staff.

LD noted that Carew Academy has developed an Equality & Diversity Group and JR expressed the view that this would sit very well alongside a staff wellbeing group at this school, with its diverse workforce. He also noted that it would have some benefits in terms of parental engagement.

JR undertook to bring the results of the recent staff survey to the summer term LGB meeting. He set out plans to carry out a staff, parent and child survey each term over the course of an academic year, and confirmed he would ask parents to sign up to Ofsted's ParentView.

**Action: JR/Clerk**

**B OTHER VISIT REPORTS**

None.

**C TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

KA advised that she has undertaken some IOSH and H&S training.

**13 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board at their meeting on 10 December 2021, which are all available on [GovernorHub](#).

**14 OHC&AT GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION**

Governors noted the updated governance documentation which is available to view on [GovernorHub](#).

**15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**16 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

29 June 2022 at 4 pm.

**17 CONFIDENTIALITY**

No items were deemed confidential.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm.

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

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

**Summary of Actions**

<b>4</b>	JR to contact parent governor candidates.
<b>7</b>	KA to share her finance portfolio report with the clerk for uploading to GovernorhHub. COMPLETE.
<b>8A</b>	JR to invite Governors to the school's Jubilee Party on 26 <sup>th</sup> May.
<b>8A</b>	JR and JS to discuss the submission of a tender waiver request.
<b>8B</b>	JR to report to summer term meeting on feedback from David Scott and his team
<b>10</b>	Clerk to add 'RSE Curriculum' to the summer term meeting agenda.
<b>11A</b>	JR and LD to conduct a portfolio visit by the end of this term.
<b>11A</b>	JR to share the outcome of the staff survey with the LGB at the summer term meeting