

# MINUTES OF MEETING

**School:** Ash Lea School  
**Meeting title:** Autumn term meeting of the governing body  
**Date and time:** Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 at 5.30 pm  
**Location:** At the School

## Membership

'A' denotes absence

**A** Mr G Baker  
Mrs J Cooper  
Dr M Bailey (Chair)  
**A** Mr C Hankinson  
Miss H Maillet-Vioud – **until 6.25 pm**  
Mr G Monaghan (Vice Chair)  
Mr L Skillington  
Mrs J Wood  
Miss K Davies (Headteacher)

**In attendance** Mrs C Morrison (Assistant Headteacher)  
Mr S Northedge (Clerk to the governors)

### GB/47/22 Apologies for absence

**Action**

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Hankinson and Geoff Baker.

It was

**resolved**

that the governing body consent to these absences.

### GB/48/22 Declaration of interest

*Review and sign Register of Business Interest/Declaration of Eligibility*

All governors confirmed that they had reviewed and signed the Declaration of Interest form and eligibility form.

*Review and sign Governor Code of Conduct*

All governors confirmed that they would read and sign to show they had understood the school governors' code of conduct.

**Governor  
s**

There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for items of business on the agenda.

### GB/49/22 Review of membership and terms of office ending in the next 12 months

The clerk highlighted the following vacancies on the governing body:

2 x Co-opted Governors  
1 x Staff Governor

Governors agreed that staff governor vacancy would be filled by Luke Skillington from 01/12/2022 following a nomination process amongst staff.

The clerk brought to the attention of governors the following end of term of office:

Jane Cooper (Co-opted Governor) – 05/12/2022  
Dr Mags Bailey (Parent Governor) – 05/12/2022

Both governors had already informed the governing body that they won't be seeking another term of office from these dates, leaving 2 further vacancies.

The Headteacher will arrange and hold an election for the parent governor vacancy.

HT

Governors then discussed the three co-opted governor vacancies that the governing body will have from 05/12/22. Governors will explore links through local businesses as one possible option and the Chair suggested all governors should complete the skills audit via Governor Hub to help identify the skills the governing body required moving forward.

Governor  
s

The clerk suggested advertising in local publications as another possible option the school might wish to explore.

**GB/50/22 Determination of term of office for chair and vice-chair**

The governors agreed to continue with a one-year term of office for both chair and vice chair.

**GB/51/22 Election of chair**

There were no nominations for the position of chair.

It was resolved that Dr Mags Bailey would continue to act as chair of the governing body for this meeting and until the end of her term of office on 05/12/22.

Governors discussed in detail the lack of a Chair and the Headteacher agreed to follow this up with absent governors, while the Clerk agreed to contact Governor Services about the situation.

HT

Clerk

**GB/52/22 Election of vice-chair**

Gordon Monaghan and Jane Wood were proposed and seconded for the position of joint vice chairs. There were no other nominations.

After discussion it was resolved

that Gordon Monaghan and Jane Wood would be appointed as joint vice chairs of the governing body.

**GB/53/22 Approval of minutes of summer term meeting and any special governing body meetings**

The minutes of the summer term meeting held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 having been previously circulated were confirmed and will be signed by the chair.

*Review of actions – including approval of scheme of delegation  
GB/30/22 – KD to write 2022-23 School Improvement Plan*

Action completed.

*GB/31/22 – Governors to watch video of Marion Clay explaining LA MAT.*

The materials had been shared by the Headteacher and some governors had watched the clip. It was agreed the action was completed pending further information about this from the LA. A meeting with the Confederation of Schools Trust on 05/12/22 around academies was also highlighted for staff and governors to attend. Helene Maillet-Vioud agreed that she would attend on behalf of the school and feedback.

HMV

*GB/31/22 – KD and SLT to draw up a list of potential MATs.*

Agenda item later in this meeting.

*GB/31/22 – KD to speak to Behaviour Watch about the functionality of their reporting software.*

Action completed

*GB/31/22 – KD and CH to follow up replacement of Portakabin ramp.*

KD and CH have followed this up, as have other school staff but the ramp is still yet to be replaced, despite health and safety concerns being raised.

*GB/37/22 – GM to share a table of agreed GDPR documentation via Governor Hub.*

Gordon Monaghan explained that the change of DPO would lead to another suite of documents that would eventually need uploading for governors to see.

*GB/40/22 – KD to inform parents of INSET Days for 2022-23 and return proforma to LA.*

Action completed

*GB/41/22 – KD to update governor link roles on Governor Hub.*

Action completed

**GB/54/22 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties**

*Review of actions*

Both committees had met and the minutes from these were shared with governors via Governor Hub and there were no further questions arising from these.

### *Approval of Child Protection Policy*

Governors agreed and approved the Child Protection Policy.

### *Approval of Other Policies*

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Governors agreed and approved the Child on Child Abuse Policy.

Staff Pay Policy 2022

The staff pay policy was discussed by governors with a decision made not to pay staff any recruitment and retention allowances and an agreement that the TLR payments would sit at the minimum value permitted.

Governors then approved and agreed the Staff Pay Policy for 2022.

## **GB/55/22      **Overseeing Financial Performance – Financial reporting****

*Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) 2022/23*

Discussed at Finance Committee

*Year-end re-forecast*

Governors discussed this in detail along with the external audit at the Finance Committee Meeting. There were no further questions.

*Governors' Year End Financial Statement for 2021/22 (including the Committed Balances Return 2021/22) for information*

This was discussed and outlined in the Finance Committee meeting. There were no further questions.

## **GB/56/22      **Holding executive leaders to account: Summary of Headteacher's report and governors' questions and challenge****

The Headteacher had shared a detailed written report with governors ahead of the meeting. During the meeting the following areas were verbally summarised:-

### **Forest Schools**

The Headteacher gave details of the Forest School site, and the activities pupils take part in when there. Governors were encouraged to visit the area and see it in action.

### **Question – a governor asked about the exact location of the Forest School?**

Luke Skillington detailed to governors where the site was located and explained some of the facilities available to pupils.

**Question – a governor asked about school equipment being used at this location as the site wasn't owned by the school?**

The Headteacher confirmed there was no formal agreement or license in place, but it was suggested this should be addressed if the site was going to be used long term. Luke Skillington explained that the main costs so far to the school were for training and there was a minimal cost in any school equipment located there.

**Question – the chair asked if there were any insurance issues?**

Luke Skillington confirmed it was fully risk assessed and dealt with via EVOLVE, as with any other off-site visit. Details were then shared around the health and safety of some of the specific activities being undertaken by pupils and how these were being risk assessed.

The importance of how the site developed skills such as team building was also highlighted, as was the opportunity for pupils to explore their own interests and develop additional friendships.

Wet weather arrangements and transport were also set out by the Headteacher and other staff.

The Headteacher also explained how she was detailing the impact of this work on pupils learning to other staff and the wider community.

**Achievement and Progress**

Monitoring of Evidence for Learning shows that there has been an increase in the recording of accurate, good quality evidence to back up assessment in IEPs. Over 93% of IEP targets were rated developing, secure or exceeding which representing very good progress in IEPs.

Pupils in Post 16 have achieved a range of externally and internally accredited courses.

Most pupils are making good progress in other frameworks. Where progress hasn't been made, this can largely be attributed to attendance or other significant factors which have impacted on individual pupils

Progress on Ash Lea Steps is good but does require increased evidence-based assessment on Evidence for Learning.

The Headteacher explained that there were no groups who have performed significantly worse than others.

**IEPs**

93.5% of IEP targets set are being achieved or exceeded. An increase of 0.5% on last academic year.

Governor were given a breakdown of IEP targets that shows that of 280 IEP targets set:

30% were Communication and Interaction

34% were Cognition and Learning

22% were Social, Emotional and Mental Health

14% were Sensory or Physical needs

**Behaviour**

There have no bullying incidents this term. The Headteacher reported on one red behaviour incident in which two staff members were injured.

**Question – a governor asked about the table giving details of pupil behaviour incidents and why some incident figures had fallen significantly?**

Luke Skillington explained this related to two pupils. He then gave details of the impact of class changes and changes to the provision for these pupils, which had significantly reduced behaviour incidents they were involved in.

**Question – a governor asked what is classed as an incident?**

Luke Skillington explained that it tended to be if someone was hurt and that these were then classed as red, amber or yellow in terms of severity.

**Question – the chair asked why one pupil hadn't seen a reduction in incidents?**

Staff explained that lots of provision had been put in place, but it was yet to have an impact on the number of incidents.

The Headteacher explained that she felt that high class sizes also sometimes impacted on the number of behaviour incidents. She gave an example of classes only often having one safe space which on occasions were needed by more than one pupil at a time.

**Question – a governor asked about the progress of a possible purchase of land from Candleby Lane Primary School to help with the limited space at Ash Lea?**

The Headteacher explained that she had met with staff from Candleby Lane Primary School and that this initial meeting had ended with a verbal agreement that it could be passed to Ash Lea.

Governors felt this now needed to be in writing and required the involvement of Nottinghamshire County Council.

The Headteacher will now follow this up again with both Candleby Lane Primary School and the LA to get something formally written down and start to move the process forward.

KD

Governors then discussed the current numbers on roll and the Headteacher explained that the number of spaces was currently 99 but the calculations on the current site showed this was only big enough for 49 pupils.

A governor also highlighted that it was important to get this all finalised before any potential conversion to an academy took place.

**Admissions**

The Headteacher explained that the school had already consulted on pupils for more places than the school has available. It was also pointed out that visits to the school, consultations and visits to potential pupils in their school or home settings take a significant amount of time to be completed by senior leaders

**Attendance**

Attendance is marginally lower than the previous year by 1.7%. Authorised absence has increased by 1.68%. Unauthorised absence is much the same. There are 5 pupils who have significant amounts of unauthorised absence.

## **Staff Attendance and Wellbeing**

### **Question – a governor asked about the ability to refer parents to wellbeing support and if there was a cost involved?**

The Headteacher explained that this wasn't widely publicised but could be done through the service level agreement without any additional costs. The Headteacher confirmed there was a limit to the total number of referrals that the school could make.

### **Question – a governor asked if she had correctly understood that the Headteacher had restarted her professional qualification?**

The Headteacher confirmed that she had, as the whole programme had changed since she had first started it and that the new qualification will now take a further 18 months. She went on to explain this in more detail, as well as outlining other qualifications staff were undertaking.

There were no further questions from governors on the Headteacher's report.

**GB/57/22**

## **Update from Headteacher on MATs**

The Headteacher had spoken to Community Inclusion Trust (CIT) which is based in Lincolnshire but has a number of schools across the East Midlands that are based in clusters. This would mean Ash Lea would be in the cluster with the Leicestershire schools and one in Bingham if they chose to join this MAT. The Headteacher had visited one CIT school in Grantham and reported positively on the visit.

### **Question – a governor asked if the school visited was a Special School?**

The Headteacher confirmed that it was and outlined further details of the school site she visited and the staffing arrangements they had in place.

Governors discussed the fact that many MATs now wanted to see as much about the potential new school before taking them on, as well as Ash Lea needing to decide if the MAT was suitable for it.

### **Question – a governor asked what would happen to Ash Lea's current underspend?**

The Headteacher had discussed this with CIT who had confirmed it would go into the overall MAT funds.

It is planned that members of the CIT staff will visit Ash Lea in the new year.

The Headteacher has also been contacted by the Archway Trust and detailed the meeting that she had undertaken with the CEO of this trust. She explained this trust was currently mainly secondary schools and based mainly in Nottingham. There are 10 schools in the trust but no special schools at the minute. The Headteacher explained that the trust had an extremely inclusive approach in their current schools.

Staff and governors have now been asked to visit the Archway Trust – KD, LS and CH will undertake this visit on behalf of the school.

**KD, LS  
and CH**

The Headteacher is also exploring what the Evolve Trust, which is based in Derbyshire, might be able to offer Ash Lea. No approach is yet to be made to this trust, but the Headteacher agreed that she will now do this.

**KD**

White Hills Park Trust has also been suggested as a possible option that Ash Lea should look into. Details were shared around their approach to special schools and after discussion amongst governors, it was decided the Headteacher would investigate this trust further before making a decision on whether to contact them.

The Headteacher has also held initial discussions with the Equals Trust and shared details of their caring ethos.

After further discussion, governors felt that continuing to explore what the Evolve, Archway and Community Inclusion Trust could offer the school was important, as well as the Headteacher continuing to consider other potential options.

**Question – a governor asked about the deadline for schools joining a MAT?**

The Headteacher confirmed that the absolute deadline was 2030 but governors felt that Ash Lea needed to move much faster than this, as MATs would only be able to accommodate a set number of schools.

**Question – a governor asked what involvement and support the Headteacher might need from the governing body in this process?**

The Headteacher explained that she felt she was making good progress in exploring this currently and was unsure how to now involve governors.

Mr Monaghan said that he felt if good progress was being made in any of these discussions, then financial details needed setting out and that governors needed to be involved in this part of the process, once the list of potential MATs was reduced to a definite 2 or 3.

Governors agreed that this approach should now be followed.

**GB/58/22**

**Update on appraisal process for headteacher and staff including an update on the wellbeing of the headteacher and staff**

*Confirm external adviser*

Bob Hattersley is the external advisor for headteacher appraisal.

Governors also highlighted the recommendation that the external advisor should be changed at least every three years.

*Confirm/appoint appraisal governors – confirm appraisers have completed training*

Helene Maillet-Vioud and Jane Wood are the appraisal governors and have undergone appropriate training.

It was suggested that in future years it might support the appraisal process if the Headteacher appraisal was carried out before that for the rest of the staff. Governors discussed this and agreed to look into the feasibility of planning the cycle like this for the next academic year.

*Confirmation of the Quality Assurance arrangements*

Chris Hankinson will carry out any quality assurance required on the appraisal process.

**GB/59/22**

**Receive and scrutinise headteacher's annual report on whole school appraisal process including:**

*Review appraisal policy in line with recommended changes from HR Provider*



Governors had previously agreed and approved the appraisal policy

*Ensure effective appraisal arrangements for all staff are in place*

The Headteacher gave details the process that had taken place and governors had already met to agree any recommendations.

*Ensure timetable in place for termly review*

The Headteacher detailed to governors the process that will be followed this year and when termly reviews will take place. This was also discussed in detail at recent committee meetings.

*Confirm arrangements to consider/ratify headteacher pay recommendations for all staff in line with the scheme of delegation and the pay policy*

The recommendations were discussed and agreed at a recent Pay Committee, and these were agreed by all governors.

*Confirm arrangements to receive the appraisal governors pay recommendations for the Headteacher in line with the scheme of delegation and the pay policy*

Governors approved the headteacher pay recommendations made by the appraisal governors.

**GB/60/22      Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, set by governors**

*Review and embed the vision, ethos and strategy of the school – reflected in the school improvement plan*

This had been discussed in detail at the Strategic Committee.

Jane Wood and the Headteacher have met and have now produced a plan of how the governors will be involved in further developing the schools' values and ethos. A governor statement will be added to the current Ash Lea School Values. Governors agreed to this approach.

**JW and  
KD**

The Headteacher then went on to explain how this would link to and involve pupils.

*Approve (or confirm arrangements to approve) the School Improvement Plan as detailed in the scheme of delegation*

The School Improvement Plan had been previously agreed at the Strategic Committee.

**GB/61/22      Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action**

**Pupil Place Planning – report for information for School Governors**

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure that sufficient school places are available to meet the needs of their local school aged child population. Following the strategic school place planning workshops in April for schools, this report provides all governors with confirmation that **the birth rate continues to decline** and that many schools over the coming 5 years may need to plan for a reduction in their school population.

### **Action for governors**

Governors are school leaders and have a responsibility to fulfil their statutory duties to ensure that the strategic and financial planning for the school is carried out effectively. Bearing in mind the school place planning data supplied to the school, Governors are invited to:

1. Know and understand the strategic school place planning data for their school and district over the next 5 years. This is available via a dashboard on the School Performance Portal.  
<https://secure.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/SchoolPerformancePortal>
2. Establish that the headteacher has accessed your school's individual dashboard. This report outlines key projection data; it is updated annually and reflects demographic changes and housing delivery which must be included in the School Capacity (SCAP) return made annually to the DfE by the LA.
3. Ensure that future staffing and financial modelling is undertaken to address any significant changes in pupil numbers as evidenced at school and planning area level.
4. Ensure that consideration is given as to how any emerging surplus space might be used to meet the needs of small groups of children, possibly with SEND, or with the wider community.
5. Ensure that the headteacher and chair of governors engages with the LA's Strategic School Place Planning team to work in the best interests of the wider community.

### **HR UPDATES – Autumn term 2022 – Andy Wilson Senior HR Business Partner Schools**

#### **Action for governors – Summary**

- To read the letter issued to all schools on 6 September 2022, providing draft interim guidance on the (a) Teachers Pay Award 2022 and (b) continuing consultation on the pay award for school support staff.
- Once appraisal outcomes for 2021-22 are determined, head teachers may prepare and present a report to the governing body setting out the recommended incremental pay progression for teachers, where applicable, using Pay Policy 2021 Toolkit Appendices 8 and 9. Schools do not need to delay these decisions until the Pay Policy 2022 is published.
- To be aware of the proposed changes to staff pay (teachers and support staff) and assess the implications for the school budget.
- To make arrangements for the appropriate committee of the governing body to meet to approve all new policies, guidance documents and toolkits as they are published. Remember, head teachers and governors must make policies school specific where required.
- To ensure that all staff and governors have read the required elements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022 and Annex A as required.

- To ensure that the school policies and systems for undertaking the required safer recruitment checks for staff, governors, volunteers and contractors are robust.
- To ensure that a Section 128 check has been carried out for all governors
- To ensure that all appropriate HR policies and procedures have been adopted (Governor Policy Checklist, 2022), including the specific updates as described in this report.

**GB/62/22 Safeguarding information for consideration and action**

*Assurance of statutory safeguarding arrangements in Nottinghamshire Schools, colleges, and independent providers*

Governors confirmed that all statutory arrangements for safeguarding were in place.

*Safeguarding Children in Education: self-audit tool 2022/2023 plus supporting guidance*

Jane Cooper, Safeguarding Governor completed the self-audit with the Headteacher on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and this will now be submitted to the LA.

**KD**

A discussion also took place around how evidence can be collated from Governor Hub of who had signed documents. This was then demonstrated to those present.

Ensuring all governors have signed to say they have read and understood KCSiE and undertaken all appropriate safeguarding training including prevent was highlighted as a priority from the audit.

**All  
governors  
before  
Dec 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**GB/63/22 General Data Protection Regulations - Receive report from Data Protection Officer and Information Governance governor**

GDPR had been extensively discussed at the recent Finance Committee. The appointment of a new DPO was highlighted, along with the two visits to school by Gordon Monaghan to discuss and review this area.

There were no further updates.

**GB/64/22 Communication received and updates**

*From Chair*

No further communications and updates to report

*From Headteacher*

No further communications and updates to report

*From Clerk - Governor Newsletter two autumn term editions*

The clerk introduced the two Autumn Term governor newsletters and in particular highlighted the following areas:-

- Safeguarding updates re changes in KCSiE including governor training
- Updated declaration of interest and register of interest forms
- Updated complaints policy that governors are advised to adopt in full
- Admissions update
- Governor conference – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023
- Governor termly briefings – key information for subscribing schools now online and replaces former Heads and Chairs briefings
- Current staffing at Governor Services

HR update – including updates on support staff and teachers' pay awards

**GB/65/22 Report from training co-ordinator including a skills audit and review of governor training requirements (including safeguarding) for 2022/23**

The training coordinator was no longer present at the meeting. The Headteacher and Chair again highlighted the urgent need for governors to complete the safeguarding training mentioned earlier in the agenda.

Gordon Monaghan confirmed he had attended training on Governors Roles in HR Processes. This course was mainly focussed on appeals panels and had been arranged through Governor Services. Mr Monaghan felt it might also be valuable for other governors to attend. He will email the details to Rachel Day for distribution.

**GM**

The Headteacher asked governors to ensure any details of training completed is emailed to Rachel Day, as well as being put on Governor Hub.

**Governors**

**GB/66/22 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governing body**

The Chair highlighted the need for governors to be allocated to areas of the School Improvement Plan for monitoring. The Headteacher explained the areas that needed covering and a discussion took place around this with those present and governors were allocated as appropriate.

The Headteacher will share the document containing all the updated governor roles following the meeting.

**KD**

Jane Wood had completed a monitoring visit on the 25/11/22 and uploaded her report to Governor Hub on 1/12/22 in the Roles, Responsibilities and Visits file.

**GB/67/22 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account**

Review of governor visits and the allocation of monitoring roles based on the school improvement plan.

Questioning and challenge on the Headteacher's report.

Discussion around MATs and the suitability of possible trusts.

Financial update.

Review of governor training needs and reminders of what to complete, especially around safeguarding.  
Extensive discussion around governing body membership and the support and challenge it was providing to the school.  
Discussions around the governing bodies input into the school values and ethos.

**GB/68/22 Confirmation of dates for 2022/23**

The governing body

**agreed**

Spring term 2023 – Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March at 5.30 pm  
Summer term 2023 – Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July at 5.30 pm

**GB/69/22 Determination of confidentiality of business**

It was

**resolved**

that all papers and reports be made available as necessary.

**The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.**



Signed ..... (chair) Date .....28/03/23.....