**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board of**

**Mosaic Jewish Primary School**

**held via Teams on Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 6.30pm**

**PRESENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Diana Muallem (DM) (Chair)  Nerissa Bear (NB) (Headteacher)  Steve Bower (SB)  Jo Dallal (JD)  Laurence Dare (LD)  David Gold (DG) | Judith Ish-Horowicz (JIH)  Shirley Lee (SL)  Sarah Luke (SLu)  Andrew Lodge (AL)  Vicky Williams (VW). |

**In attendance**

Steve Cleary (SC) (Clerk)

Nicolette Hartell (NH) (Associate Member)

Liz Garbrah (LG) (Assistant Headteacher)

Lisa Tidey (LT)

**The features of effective governance from the competency framework: -**

*Strategic Leadership, Accountability, People, Structures, Compliance, Evaluation.*

**PART 1**

| **Item** | **Topic/purpose** | **Action/by whom** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | **GOVERNANCE**  The meeting began at 6.35pm and was deemed to be quorate.  No apologies were received.  In accordance with the Education (School Government) Regulations, the Chair reminded Governors of the need to declare any interests for items on the agenda. There were no further declarations of interest from governors on any items on the agenda.  Governors **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the full governing board held on 24 September 2020 as a true and accurate record and the Chair undertook to sign these.  The Chair reported that it was not possible to hold the AGM and examine the accounts as these were still being prepared. A date will be advised for this meeting to be held in January and governors noted that because of Covid, extra time has been allowed for schools to approve accounts.  The Chair reported that the ESFA has assigned new contacts whose mission it is to ensure that Mosaic join a MAT by September 2021, although no particular MATs are being suggested. A list of local MATs has been received and the Chair proposed that a small working group be established to examine options and governors were invited to join. Governors noted a meeting which had been held to discuss the school’s future vision and ethos as it moves forward and were thanked for the open and frank views which had been expressed. Further discussions are required on items which governors consider to be negotiable or non-negotiable in moving the school forward and bearing in mind the current stage of the school’s development. A further meeting was proposed for the first week in January to consider areas of negotiation and how to take consultation forward.  The Headteacher reported that the school has had a governance audit undertaken by the ESFA. The audit has revealed the need to split members and trustees by the end of the spring term and identify further members up to a total of five. Members would be people who have been with the school as part of the original vision, or who have some sort of commitment to ensure that the vision is carried out, and effectively hold the chair of governors and the head teacher to account to ensure that that vision is delivered. Further discussion is required on means by which the ESFA’s recommendations might be delivered and trustees were encouraged to discuss becoming a member with the Chair. Governors noted that the articles of association would need to be amended in accordance with this change. |  |
| **2** | **RESOURCES**  **Financial update**  The Chair reported that it is likely that the school will obtain additional pupil funding from March 2021 although the ESFA was not able to guarantee that it would be obtained for the three years. One consequence of this will be that the ESFA would need to take positive action over making the school more marketable to a MAT.  DG reported that the management accounts for November 2020 had been circulated (copy on file) and the following initial points were made:   * Whilst the last academic year had ended well, the historical debt to the ESFA had been paid and the deficit reduced, further difficulties have arisen even taking into account that the school has an extra class, albeit with less funding; * Cash flow will need to be monitored carefully; * The appointment of an interim finance officer[[1]](#footnote-1) to cover maternity leave did not bring the expected results and there have been ongoing issues around the availability of accurate financial information such that the accounts presented did not appear to be financially literate; * Issues arose over the flow of management information to the auditors and accounts showed significant errors in a number of places as a result of sub-standard financial information at the school; * Strictly has been into the school to review outstanding invoices and produce the November management accounts; * The ESFA are aware of the financial position of the school and are supportive of the approach taken. * The current forecast deficit stands at around £100,000 which represents a regression on previous reported figures, although further projected funding from the ESFA would enable this figure to reduce to around £20,000 to £30,000; * As part of the recovery process, it is planned to try to get suppliers to be content with accepting payment on sixty day terms rather than thirty day terms; * The audit is ongoing and a further meeting is planned in January to review the accounts and analysis report so that a final confirmation of figures can be given and the school will be aware of its actual deficit position at the end of last year as well as adjustments that might need to be made; * The lack of income from lettings as well as impact of increased security and Covid costs for which additional reimbursement is being sought has also been highlighted to the ESFA.   A governor comment was made that if the impact of Covid were taken out of the accounts, the figures are running within an expected range, given that a significant amount of income and expenditure is predictable. There is a more significant problem in terms of cash flow however which is tight and cannot be alleviated by the use of capital income to cover works around the school. The school has a significant creditor listing and suppliers who require payment.  In response to a governor question (**Q**) regarding the additional income to be received from the ESFA, the school commented that it is not a loan but results from the additional children reported at the October census. As a result of discussions with the ESFA, funding will be obtained in March rather than delayed until next September. Governors expressed the view that it might be beneficial to invite a member of staff from the ESFA into the school at the first opportunity.  The Headteacher commented that a key issue is that the school is moving away from predicted funding to a funding basis which goes from census to census. Previous staff at the ESFA have been more familiar with the position of the school and changes in personnel means that there is a need to update new staff and develop new relationships on an ongoing basis.  Governors raised the following questions:   * *What is the current position in respect of school meals not being paid on time? Has this issue been resolved?* Yes, with the introduction of new arrangements regarding the debt policy, procedures are now in place such that every Monday parents who are £10 or more in debt are sent a letter and given forty-eight hours to pay that debt. If the debt is not paid, children are placed onto light lunches and parents are made aware that if they still don’t continue to pay, they will have to collect their child for lunch until the debt is paid; * *Why is trips income negative?* No trips are currently being undertaken and no income is involved. It is possible that the figure is negative because of an accrual from previous years; * *What is the current position with voluntary funds?* A team is still working on issues around this and raising money externally. This is very difficult at the moment although businesses are still been approached for donations and grants have been applied for. A team has been working on a plan for raising money for the playground and phase three through JustGiving and activities are ongoing in relation to the Covid letter seeking funding from parents. The school is to determine the response from the Covid letter and will adjust the strategy followed in response to work on the vision and ethos;   and it was **RESOLVED** to set up a meeting towards the end of January 2021 once the audit had been completed. DG offered to share further information on cash flow issues with governors through an email thread  **Catering**  The Chair reported that the catering contract is up for tendering and there is a need to ensure that a broad range of companies tender as well as involve governors and parents in the assessment process. Because of Covid, a large number of parents across the local authority have opted for not having hot dinners in their schools and schools are providing more packed lunches. The catering company have come under significant pressure as a result as a result and are practicing flexi furloughing whereby members of staff are furloughed on a cycle. As a result, lunch provision can be variable in quality, particularly since the school’s kitchen is set up for a family style lunch and a tray service is not working as effectively. Children are complaining about the temperature and quality of the food. Alternative caterers are being sought although there are cost implications as kosher catering is generally more expensive. Families are being surveyed as part of the retendering process. One of the key obstacles to changing contractors centres upon catering companies not providing their own staff as well as the costs involved if arrangements were to be bought in house. Governors expressed the view that flexi furlough was not appropriate for the school and that the contractor needed to be aware of this since the monies outlined in the contract was being provided. Furthermore, whether catering arrangements were to be transferred to another external provider, or in-house, TUPE would apply. |  |
| **3** | **HEADTEACHER’S REPORT**  Governors confirmed that they had received and read the Headteacher’s report (copy on file) and were appraised of changes to staffing. Governors noted that the report had gaps for data, as during the pandemic, no national data has been collected. The school has significantly adjusted operations during the last few months in response to the national lockdown and changed arrangements for schools. This has had an impact on school not only in terms of the educational provision but also in the inability to run the family service.  Lena Rosenberg is continuing to support the school in terms of school improvement. Governors noted that the format of the report had been altered to align with the Ofsted criteria against which the school judges itself as being at least good with elements of outstanding. The school is clear about areas for development.  The following areas of contextual data were highlighted by the Headteacher:   * Whilst the school has capacity for 420 pupils, it is currently at 257 of which a significant amount is SEN, particularly when benchmarked against other schools in the local area; * In 2014 guidance was released that effectively meant that parents could choose to defer entry for their children should they wish to if they were summer born. This effectively means that if their child is born from April to August, they can defer entry. All through the school with the exception of year three, there is a high volume of children who are out of year group. This can have a considerable impact on progress data; * The number of Jewish families who are from the area is limited compared to other religions across the school and there is a need to specifically target Jewish families in order to fulfil the vision that is currently being discussed and reviewed; * The existence of a high number of SEN and EAL children means that budget planning needs to cater for SEN needs not just EHCP pupils.   Further areas from the report were highlighted as below:   * Whilst the school is doing as much as it can from a curriculum perspective, pastoral activities, personal education and the emotional curriculum has taken priority because of a range of issues around low level classroom misbehaviour and challenges to concentration and learning for a number of children. The Inset day in January will examine zones of regulation and how these can be implemented within the classroom so that teachers have skills to de escalate situations quickly. * Expectations remain high within the school and staff are good at making sure that they are clear with their expectations for behaviour. * A recent fire test revealed that some external visitors are unsure of fire procedures, although children were well behaved. * The school currently has a Y3 and Y4 bubble closed due to external contamination. Parents have been informed accordingly. * The website is compliant, policies have all been uploaded and the school is using the Key for School Leaders website compliance tracker. * A significant number of children across the school have speech and language and occupational therapy needs. The current waiting time is six months for a speech and language assessment, and eight to 10 months for an occupational therapy assessment, despite the school being under a legal obligation to make sure that it is within 12 weeks. Alternatives are being looked at to commission a separate Speech Language therapist and an OT for the school and a couple of quotes have been obtained with headline figures around £7000 for the next two terms to cover one session every two weeks. The therapists will be working with 34 pupils who have been identified across the school. Governors **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure in these areas; * The overall quality of teaching within the school is good with a small number of teachers who are outstanding. Work is underway with a number of teachers who are currently requiring improvement to ensure that they are meeting their teacher standards. In some cases, capability measures might be followed, although the emphasis is upon ,a supportive process for staff. * At present, the school does not have any contextual data in terms of comparison data for KS1 and KS2. The Y2 phonics stands at 88 per cent and phonics training is being rolled out across the school as part of the reading element of the school development plan. * One of the biggest issues for the school at the moment is SEND pupil progress and attainment. At present across the school, 0 per cent of SEN pupils have made progress. This is a significant concern, bearing in mind the high proportion of SEN pupils. If the school were to have an Ofsted inspection in the next few weeks, it would fall to Requires Improvement for that reason alone. The school is aware of the way forward and the SEN consultant is working with teachers on the ground to ensure that things change. Progress is not COVID related but centres on classroom provision and making sure that differentiation is targeted. The issue will be a focus for the spring term in monitoring. * Early learning goals are changing from September 2021 and subject leaders are preparing expectations in relation to this development through appropriate CPD.   The following governor questions were raised:   * *What is the position of children who have special needs, because of their higher ability?* These are included in the SEN figures, although it is acknowledged that the school finds it to be challenging in meeting every child needs as a result of having limited capacity in terms of staffing, particularly under the Covid regime. Governors also need to be aware that the national curriculum, which the school does not have to follow but chooses to do so, is very clear in making sure that children are not just skipping ahead in terms of year groups but are deepening their understanding and current expectations. The school is seeking to balance its resources with the pupil gaps that have arisen because of Covid. Training has been undertaken in respect of challenges within the classroom and setting expectations, particularly within maths, although it has proved difficult to give support for lower achievers across the board. * *How was the invac managed in the context of bubble restrictions?* The children effectively followed the same rules and it was just about checking that everyone was doing what they should have been doing and knew the procedure for the allclear. The school is to undertake a what if scenario using a blackout in the spring term, to see how teachers respond to contingency plans. Fire and invac take precedence over any Covid bubble. If there is a threat to the school, Covid is subsumed to the school’s duty of care and pupil / staff safety. * *Given the importance of professional development for teachers in supporting children with special needs and tight finances, is there scope for any reciprocal opportunities with other schools where Mosaic can lead on some CPD perhaps for teachers and other schools in another area in exchange for support on SEN?* At present, schools are quite reluctant to mix and cross over. The school is signed up to a local authority head teacher programme, which is all about developing SEN with teachers and helping to ensure that a school is inclusive. The external SEN consultant was commissioned because of his experience and expertise, as well as ability to model good practice in the classroom. The parents perception of SEN is changing to a more positive one and the school is confident the children will make progress, although this may take some time. Teachers are fully aware of the appraisal system that if the needs of the whole class are not being met, in effect the teacher is not meeting appropriate standards and all staff have an expectation. In terms of support staff, guidance and mentoring is in place and the school is seeking means by which good practice can be spread even more.   **Term dates**  The Headteacher circulated a set of proposed terms dates which had sought to take into account sensitivities and different practices around Jewish High Holy days and their impact on families and learning, working arrangements for families, issues around afterschool or wraparound care on these days for those families who aren't able to take those days off[[2]](#footnote-2), the desire to reflect the inclusive nature of the school and the overall school cycle. Governors noted that the school would close on Yom Kippur, but not the previous day, and that the term would finish a week later than other Wandsworth schools in April. The school has traditionally had six inset days, five of which were focused on teacher training and one was always reserve for a Jewish learning focus. The 2021-22 academic year will revert to having five inset days as per the expectation, although these have been staggered across the year to enable further schooling in September. The Headteacher agreed to circulate proposed dates to governors for further comment prior to publication on the school website by January. An initial comment was made that Sukkot stands out where nearly a whole week is off, followed by half-term just two weeks later. The Headteacher added that because Mosaic would be finishing later than other Wandsworth schools in April, special arrangements would be made to approve holiday if Mosaic children have siblings in other Wandsworth schools so as not to negatively impact upon attendance. In addition, the school has a policy for approving holidays taken for religious reasons which is already in place.  Governors **RESOLVED** to approve the publication of the headline term dates without a breakdown and further examine the specific timetable at a meeting in January with a potential survey of parents around the dates. |  |
| **4** | **CLOSING BUSINESS**  Governors **RESOLVED** to thank staff for their work during a long and challenging term.  Dates of future meetings: (both at 6.30pm)  Resources: 11 March, 29 June  Full governing board: 18 March, 14 July |  |

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

Governors noted that all actions had been completed and were up to date.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Print Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

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

1. Since departed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Which would be run as a holiday club by an external provider for those families who don't want to take the festival days off [↑](#footnote-ref-2)