**The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust**

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**Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting**

**5.30pm on Monday 3rd July 2023**

**PRESENT:**

Mrs E de la Motte (Chair), Mr J Briggs (Headteacher), Dr L Bryant, Mrs N McDowell, Mr N Little, Mrs C Stow-Smith, Mr M Fryer, Mrs A Gibbs, Mr A Philips and Mrs R Kershaw

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Steve Leigh – Clerk to the Governing Body

**Action**

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| **Procedural Business** | | |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**  The meeting opened at 5.30pm with all welcomed. A special welcome was extended to Mrs A Gibbs and Mr A Philips, newly appointed parent governors to the Federation of Abbey Schools (subject to satisfactory DBS clearances). All were invited to introduce themselves to the meeting.  At this point, Mrs R Kershaw joined the meeting tending apologies for a late arrival.  It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could move to business.  No apologies for absence had been received. |  |
| **2.** | **Notification of items of other business**  The following items of additional business were identified for discussion at item 24 of the agenda:   * Term of Office renewal for identified governors. |  |
| **3.** | **Declarations of Interest**  **3.1 Declarations of personal or pecuniary interest in items of the agenda**  All governors were reminded that any personal or pecuniary interest relating to items on the agenda should be declared. There were no declarations of interest made by any governor in relation to items on the agenda.  **3.2 Declaration of any updates for the Register of Business Interests**  Governors were reminded of the requirement to maintain a register of business interests and for this to be updated on a regular basis. All governors present confirmed that their registers were up to date at the time of reporting. |  |
| **4.** | **Minutes and matters arising**   1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2023**   ***Governors RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2023 be approved for signature by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting with a signed copy to be provided for the school file.***   1. **Matters arising from the minutes**   **Governor Monitoring Visits** – noted that Mrs R Kershaw would arrange a monitoring visit before the end of term. Mrs N McDowell was also scheduled to undertake governor monitoring which would be undertaken within the next week or so.  There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not already covered elsewhere on the agenda for the meeting. It was confirmed that all actions noted at the previous meeting had been completed. | **Chair / Headteacher**  **RK / NMc** |
| **Reports** | | |
| **5.** | **Reports of Committees**   1. **Audit & Finance Committee 15th June 2023**   Governors received for information a copy of the minutes of the Audit & Finance Committee held on 15th June 2023. Headlines from the meeting were highlighted as follows:   * 3-year budget forecast – suggests that pupil numbers are projected to be slightly below capacity of 630 leading to an overall budget deficit in 2025. Additional funding levels from MSAG and other grants had now been confirmed and built into the budget. Provision had also been made for unfunded pay awards (4%) for the coming year. * Initial budget preparations suggested that the Federation would be faced with an in-year deficit position of circa £200k. This was being addressed with a reduction in budget provision and increased income generation where this could be achieved bringing the deficit down to circa £17k for the year. Further work continued to try and reduce this deficit further with reserves to be used to cover off any remaining deficit before the year end. Governors recognised that a lot would depend on the outcome of nationally agreed staff pay awards and whether any financial contributions would be received from government to cover this. * Capital items committed to within the budget will be completed over the summer   Governors commended the work that had been undertaken in producing the budget information presented, noting that the financial position of the Federation continues to be closely monitored and well managed. ***Questioning where further income generation could be secured for the Federation,*** *governors* were informed that lettings charges would be subject to review, being careful not to over price compared with alternative provision in other establishments, thus reducing usage. The price of the school meal had also been subject to review for the coming year. Further information relating to these reviews would be presented later in the meeting as part of governor consideration to the budget for the coming financial year.  ***Governors RESOLVED to receive and note for information the draft minutes of the Audit & Finance Committee held on 15th June 2023.*** | **All to note** |
| **6.** | **Chair’s Report**  There was no report to present to governors on this occasion. |  |
| **7.** | **Head Teacher’s Report**  Attention was drawn to the Headteacher’s Report and supporting documents which had been prepared for the meeting. Key points from the report were highlighted as follows:  **Admissions information –** governors acknowledged that a confirmed 90 pupils would be joining Reception in September 2023 with a total number on roll in the region of 616 pupils.  **Pupil Premium** – noted that the number of Pupil Premium children was slightly up on the previous year.  **SEND provision** – governors were provided with details of the SEND provision that was currently being maintained by both schools with numbers of pupils being provided for summarised as follows:   * 55 children on the SEND register (expected to increase in September) * 16 EHCP children, one under assessment with 3 more to apply for by the end of Summer term. * 6 children with a One Plan and 33 with a SEND plan * Currently 8 children accessing ELSA support and 5 on the waiting list. * 8 children currently accessing ‘Purple Matters’ therapy and 6 children on ‘drawing and talking’. * 16 children accessing Lego based therapy. * Two confirmed EHCP children joining the school in September with potential for a last-minute consultation.   ***Questioning the provision of Purple Matters therapy***, governors were informed that this provision was ending as of the end of term (at a cost of £10k per annum) with alternative therapy arrangements being put into place.  **Self-evaluation** – governors were informed that no further changes had been made to the schools’ self-evaluation judgements but this would be updated and reported to governors at their first Autumn term meeting. ***Questioning whether any further feedback had been received from the recent Ofsted inspection***, it was highlighted that the experience had been a positive one but no formal report had been received at the time of reporting.  **Curriculum** – CPD and Peer Review activities noted as presented in the report. Highlighted that support to CPD activities and resulting impacts came out strong in the recent Ofsted inspection.  **Staffing** – leavers and new appointments noted. Governors acknowledged that as part of required budget savings for the coming academic year, some fixed term temporary contracts ending would not be renewed.  **Leadership & Management** – the following points of note were headlined:   * The Headteacher would continue to attend secondary school network meetings with good value being gained from this representation. * Staff access to a range of CPD opportunities continues to be well received with all gaining value from the quality and variety of provision offered. * Staff accessed challenging behaviour training and are training other staff. Pupil Voice input to the recent Ofsted inspection did not highlight any issues of behaviour concerns. * Collaborative working with other schools still in play with all benefiting from this sharing of experience and expertise. * Staff PD session with a focus on wellbeing had been greatly valued with a high level of positive feedback being received from staff. * Noted that as from September, the Federation would no longer be part of the Swaledale Alliance, but instead, would access its CPD/school to school support from a MAT arrangement. * Safeguarding and staff wellbeing would be a continued focus over the coming academic year.   **School Development Plan 2022/2023** – governors were provided with an updated copy of the School Development Plan for 2022/2023, noting the progress and achievements that had been secured over the year against the priorities that had been worked to.  **Pupil Attendance** – governors acknowledged that attendance levels for the year amounted to circa 95.65% for the Infant School and 95.95% for the Junior School. ***Questioning the reasons for absence***, governors were informed that family holidays during term time and various bouts of sickness continued to be the predominant reasons for absence. A few more fines had been levied for unauthorised absence holidays.  There being no further questions, the Headteacher was thanked for a very comprehensive report.  ***Governors RESOLVED to receive and note the Headteacher’s Report as presented.*** | **All to note** |
| **8.** | **Safeguarding**  Attention was drawn to the Headteacher’s Safeguarding Report which had been circulated for prior reading.  Governors were provided with details of the Mental Health Awareness Week earlier in the Summer term and the school activities in support of this event. The theme was anxiety and how it affects mental health and what we can do to manage anxiety and support those around us. Governors were provided with access to a video which highlighted how everyone in school has a part to play in supporting our children’s mental health and wellbeing.  ***Questioning the school’s position on internet safety***, governors were informed that information continues to be sent to parents about new apps that pupils might be using. Over the course of the term, staff had been asked to check their Facebook (and other social media) settings to ensure that they are set on private, a measure to protect themselves and school from possible complaints.  ***Questioning if there were any behavioural issues being experienced***, governors were informed that a number of parents of Year 1 pupils had to be contacted on a regular basis regarding behaviour issues relating to their children. In Year 6, there were some issues of anxiety that required support. These predominantly related to girls and their transition to Year 7 secondary provision. ***Questioning if the support mechanisms were in place to provide needed support to pupils (particularly with the loss of Purple Matters),*** the Headteacher reassured governors that appropriate levels of support were in place with staff providing great support where needed.  ***Questioning the school arrangements for transition support into secondary provision,*** governors were provided with details of the support that pupils received in preparation for their transition to secondary schools. To further support transition, ***governors suggested if it would be possible for former Year 6 pupils to be invited back into school during their Year 7 as part of transition discussions with pupils***. This practice had been in place pre-Covid with a suggestion that this be reinstated. This would be pursued by the Headteacher.  Noting the information provided by the CPOMs system as presented in the report, it was agreed that the Headteacher would produce and circulate a report from CPOMs, providing details of reported social & emotional issues as captured onto the system (20 pupils at the time of reporting). This report to feature in future Headteacher reporting. | **Headteacher**  **Headteacher** |
| **9.** | **Management Accounts April 2023 and MTFP 2023/2024**  Attention was drawn the management accounts, budget setting report and support information which had been previously circulated.   1. **Management Accounts April 2023**   ***Governors RESOLVED to receive and note the Management Accounts for April 2023 as presented.***   1. **2023/2024 Budget & Medium-Term Plan**   As discussed earlier in the meeting, budget preparation work for the coming year currently identified an in-year deficit position for 2023/2024 of circa £17k with further work being pursued to realise a balanced budget plan for submission to the ESFA. Governors again acknowledged that the eventual pay award settlement and any monies coming from central government in support of this would have an impact.  Noting the efforts that were being made to make further reductions in spend over the coming year, ***governors questioned if it would be appropriate to review the Federation’s Service Level Agreements with a view to generating further savings***. It was highlighted that this would be linked to the discussion on joining another MAT arrangement which would review current SLAs in the context of those arrangements.  Governors were informed that in an attempt to generate additional income over the coming year whilst ensuring costs of provision were being covered, a review of fees and charges for 2023/2024 had been undertaken with the following increases proposed:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Service/Activity** | **Current Price** | **Proposed Price September 2023** | | School Meals – Pupils | £2.20 | £2.35 | | School Meals – Adults | £2.65 | £2.82 | |  |  |  | | Lettings |  |  | | Hideaway | £11,700 Annual | Further work to be carried out | | Dance | £25 per session | | Ward Surgery | £25 per session | | Lingotots | £15 per session | | TSC | £35 per session | | Sporting Futures | £75 per day | |  |  |  | | Breakfast Club | £5.00 | £5.50 | | Breakfast Club – siblings | £3.75 | £4.15 | | After School Club – single session | £5.00 | £5.50 | | After School Club – single session sibling | £3.75 | £4.15 | | After School Club – Double session | £10.00 | £11.00 | | After School Club – Double Session Sibling | £7.50 | £8.30 |   As referenced earlier in the meeting, governors aired caution for price increases not to adversely impact on levels of take up.  Noting the benchmarking paper that had also been prepared for the meeting, governors commented on the quality of the information presented. There were no significant issues to highlight that were not explained in the content of the report.  ***Governors RESOLVED to the following actions:***   * ***to approve the 2023/2024 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan up to 2025/2026 as presented. Agreed that further actions be considered to address the small deficit that had been identified for the year with further efficiencies to be explored that would address future year projections.*** * ***to approve the increase in school meals, breakfast club and after school club pricing as presented. Governors also requested that further exploration be given to price increases in relation to school lettings.*** | **All to note**  **Headteacher**  **Headteacher**  **Headteacher** |
| **Items to arrange / consider** | | |
| **10.** | **School Improvement Plan**  Governors had been provided with a copy of the Trust’s latest version of its School Development Plan for 2022/2023. As referenced earlier in the meeting, this had been subject to review and update to reflect progress made over the year.  Looking ahead to the coming academic year, strategic priorities were being finalised (to be informed with KS data outcomes) and would be reported early in the new academic year. Governor monitoring for the year would be aligned to these priorities. | **Headteacher** |
| **11.** | **Numbers on Roll**  This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting under the Headteacher’s Report. |  |
| **12.** | **Annual Report**  It was agreed that the Chair / RK would use the narrative from the Headteacher’s half termly reporting as the basis for completing the Annual Report. |  |
| **13.** | **Governor’s Monitoring Visits**  The Chair agreed to pick up rescheduled monitoring early in the Autumn term (focussing on Behaviour, Personal Development, Pupil Voice, Playground activities.  Mrs N McDowell agreed to arrange a monitoring visit within the next week focussing on Pupil Attendance. | **Chair**  **NMc** |
| **14.** | **Training Feedback & Skills Audit/Darlington Borough Council Training Offer 2023/24**  Governors were provided with details of the Darlington Governor Training Programme for 2023/2024.  ***Governors RESOLVED that the Trust subscribe to the Darlington Governor Training Programme for 2023/2024. It was also agreed that the Headteacher explore the National College offering.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **15.** | **Scheme of Delegation**  ***Governors RESOLVED to receive the Trust’s Scheme of Delegation as presented with no updates identified for the year on this occasion.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **16.** | **Staffing Update**  This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting under the Headteacher’s Report and discussions concerning the budget position for the coming academic year. There were no further issues to raise at this point. |  |
| **17.** | **Health & Safety Accident Statistics**  Governors were provided with a schedule detailing reported on-site accidents over the Summer term period.  Noting the incident involving the caretaker and an intruder to the school site, governors were provided with an account of the incident that took place. To minimise future risks, the door locking mechanism at the reception area would be inspected to make sure it was operating correctly.  Noting the incident that involved a pupil hitting a member of staff, it was reported that intervention support was now in place for the pupil concerned and was more settled in their placement at school as a result of this.  ***Governors RESOLVED to receive the Health & Safety Accident Statistics for the Summer term 2023 as presented.*** | **All to note** |
| **18.** | **Meeting Dates and Times 2023/2024**  ***Governors RESOLVED to approve the suggested meetings for the Governing Body and Audit & Finance Committee for the 2023/2024 academic year.*** | **All to note** |
| **19.** | **Director Reports**  **Premises Management** – the Chair informed governors of a recent visit she had made to the school with a focus on the condition of the building, health & safety issues, staff responsibilities and planned capital spend. The visit offered the opportunity for a good level of discussion over these areas. Noting the drainage issue to the school field, the Headteacher reported that he was investigating a needed solution with a number of contractors. It was anticipated that it would not be a significant or costly piece of work to complete.  The Chair agreed to produce written report form her visit for circulation.  **Register of Pupil Attendance** – as noted earlier in the meeting, Mrs McDowell agreed to arrange visit over the coming week with report to follow from that. | **Chair**  **NMc** |
| **20.** | **School Information published on website**  Governors received a copy of the website compliance checklist report that had been completed by Azets as part of internal assurance. There were no issues to raise from the report with the website being fully compliant in its information.  ***Governors RESOLVED to receive for information the completed website compliance checklist as presented.*** | **All to note** |
| **Policies** | | |
| **21.** | **School Prevent Duty Risk Assessment and Action Plan**  ***Governors RESOLVED to receive and approve the Prevent Duty Risk Assessment & Action Plan as presented for adoption with immediate effect.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **22.** | **Home School Agreement**  ***Governors RESOLVED to receive and approve the Home School Agreement as presented for adoption with immediate effect. All references to parents in this and other policy / procedure documents to include carers.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **23.** | **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**  ***Governors RESOLVED to approve the reviewed Early Years Foundation Stage Policy for adoption with immediate effect.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **24.** | **Attendance Policy**  ***Governors RESOLVED to approve the reviewed Attendance Policy for adoption with immediate effect.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **25.** | **Early Careers Teaching Policy**  ***Governors RESOLVED to approve the reviewed Early Careers Teaching Policy for adoption with immediate effect. Reference to “responsible body” to be checked and amended as appropriate.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **Concluding Items** | | |
| **26.** | **Any Other Business**  **Governing Body Membership**  ***Governors RESOLVED to approve the re-appointment of the following governors to a 4-year term of office:***   * Mrs E de la Motte – 4-year term with effect from 13th July 2023 * Dr L Bryant - 4-year term with effect from 31st July 2023 * Mr M Fryer - 4-year term with effect from 13th July 2023   Mrs R Kershaw announced that with regret, she would be stepping down from her role as a governor with effect from 31st July 2023 due primarily to work commitments. RK agreed to provide a formal note of resignation to Headteacher. Governors appreciated Mrs Kershaw’s position, extending their thanks and appreciation for all of the work, support and commitment that she has given to the school and its governing body in her time as a governor.  School website and DfE’s Get Information About Schools website to be updated in their governance information as appropriate. | **Clerk to Board / Headteacher**  **RK**  **School Admin** |
| **27.** | **Agenda items for the next meeting**  Agreed that items for the next meeting to be confirmed between Headteacher, Chair and Clerk to Board. | **Headteacher/**  **Chair/**  **Clerk** |
| **28.** | **Approval of documents for inspection**  ***Governors RESOLVED that the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting and all supporting papers circulated for this meeting be approved for inspection.*** Papers exempt or to be redacted in their information:   * Management Accounts and Budget Report * Health & Safety accident reporting | **Headteacher** |
| **29.** | **Date and Time of Next Meeting**  Governors noted date and time of next meeting of the Governing Body as follows:   * Thursday 21st September 2023 at 5.30pm   Governors were thanked for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.  At this point, the Clerk to the Board left the meeting, declaring an interest in the discussion item that would follow. | **All to note** |
| **30.** | **Consideration to join another Multi Academy Trust**  **Jonathan … please insert here appropriate wording capturing the Board’s consideration of joining another MAT with resolutions to:**  **Join Melrose Learning Trust**  **To dissolve the Federation of Abbey Schools following that transfer to MLT.**  There being no further business, the meeting was closed at ??pm. |  |

Chair…………………………………………………………………

Signed……………………………………………………………….

Date………………………………………………………………….