

The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust

Governing Body Minutes

Date: Monday 14th September 2020 at 5.45 pm

Directors who took part via virtual Board meeting: Mr J Briggs, Dr L Bryant, Mrs E de la Motte, Mrs V Folkes, Mr M Fryer, Mrs R Hall, Mrs R Kershaw, Mrs C Marley, Mrs C Stow Smith and Mr P M Willson.

Also facilitating the Board meeting: Mrs L Hawksby (Clerk to the Governing Body) and Mrs C Hurworth.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSION</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
1.	<p>Election of Chair for the ensuing Academic Year</p> <p>The Clerk to the Governing Body opened the meeting in the absence of a Chair. Nominations were sought and received for the position of Chair for the ensuing Academic Year.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That Mrs E de la Motte be appointed Chair for the ensuing Academic Year.</p> <p><i>(Note: Mrs E de la Motte in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.)</i></p>	
2.	<p>Election of Vice-Chair for the ensuing Academic Year</p> <p>Nominations were sought and received for the position of Vice-Chair for the ensuing Academic Year.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That Mrs R Kershaw be appointed as Vice-Chair for the ensuing Academic Year.</p>	
3.	<p>Apologies for Absence and Format of Meeting</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted for Director Mr N Little. The remaining 10 Directors all participated in a virtual Board meeting due to current Covid 19 social distancing considerations.</p>	

<p>4.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>6.</p>	<p>Notification of Items of Other Business</p> <p>There were 4 items of other business (Please refer to the minute 27 below) :</p> <p>Holidays</p> <p>Internal Audit</p> <p>Financial Handbook (Please refer to Minute 11)</p> <p>HR Policies</p> <p>Declarations of Interests:</p> <p>Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the Agenda of the current meeting.</p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interests declared.</p> <p>Declaration of any updates for the Register of Business Interests.</p> <p>There were no updates for the Register of Business Interests</p> <p>Automatic Disqualification Declaration reminder for Charity Trustees.</p> <p>There were no updates reported by Charity Trustees.</p> <p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes – Thursday 2nd July 2020</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Thursday 2nd July 2020 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising –</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
-------------------------------	--	--

<p>7.</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 400px;">CQ</p> <p>8.</p>	<p>Coronavirus Head Teacher’s Update</p> <p>The Head Teacher provided an update report on key school issues, including Covid 19 issues.</p> <p>He advised that the school had opened for all children from September, with staff also back. There were a small number of families who were anxious about returning, whom the school was supporting. Breakfast Club and the After School Club had also restarted in line with Covid safety measures.</p> <p>It was noted that FSM (Free School Meals) vouchers were sent out over the summer holidays. A nurture group had started in September 2020 for SEND children to help support their needs at this time, which was proving successful.</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised that the school improvement priorities will remain similar to last year’s however there will be additions to support missed learning through COVID19. There will also be social and emotional support for members of the school community.</p> <p>A Covid risk assessment for the wider opening of schools was also attached for the Board’s considerations. This document had been shared with all staff, the school’s Health & Safety advisors and the Unions. Also attached was the master planning document. The Board questioned whether the staff were feeling confident? The Head Teacher advised yes the majority were and any concerns were being addressed by Senior Leadership.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that the CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) bid had been successful. All summer works were now completed and on budget.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the report be noted. b) That the wider opening of schools document and master planning document be approved by the Board. <p>Annual Report</p> <p>Further to Minute 4 (Governing Body 2nd July 2020) approval was sought to the Annual Report which had now been completed. It was noted that next year the annual report could perhaps be slightly less formal in order to make it more reader friendly and it would be useful for the Board to start looking at next year’s Annual Report in the Spring Term.</p>	
---	---	--

	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Annual Report be approved, be placed on the school web-site/ sent via Parentmail to all parents of the school and forwarded to Members for their information.</p> <p>9. Current Numbers on Roll</p> <p>The current numbers on roll for each year group was considered by the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>10. Overview of School Data</p> <p>The Head Teacher provided an overview of school data. He advised that no assessments were completed at the end of the Spring Term or in the Summer Term due to Covid. However Early Years, Year 2 and Year 6 had completed assessments prior to the Lockdown and this information has been able to be used. The Family Fischer Trust uploaded this data to their portal and this was presented to the Board for their consideration. The Board also were provided with headline data for 2019/20, although it was noted this was not moderated data.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><i>(Note: with the permission of the Chair the item below was moved forward on the Agenda for consideration and Mrs C.Hurworth joined the meeting at 6.30 pm)</i></p> <p>11. Management Accounts</p> <p>Mrs C Hurworth (Avec) provided an update on the July Management Accounts. Further to Minute 6 (Governing Body 6th July 2020) it was noted there was still a deficit of approximately £60,000, primarily due to the loss of income due to Covid. Income had been lost for example, due to the After School Club/Breakfast Club not being open at that time due to Covid and school lunches catering (although costs were down as no food at that time was being ordered.) The After School Club/Breakfast Club and school lunches had now recommenced so some money would be clawed back. The Department for Education had launched a fund to support schools which incurred specific additional costs as a result of the pandemic and a claim had been submitted by the school.</p> <p>A copy of Eileen Milner Chief Executive Education and Skills Funding Agency's letters to the accounting Officers for both July and August were discussed and considered by the Board.</p>	<i>Clerk</i>
--	--	--------------

	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the financial implications of Covid-19. b) Confirm receipt of the monthly management accounts, cash flow, balance sheet and aged debtors and creditors reports c) That the Accounting officer's letters for both July and August 2020 be noted. <p>Consideration was then given by the Board to one of the items of AOB- Academies Financial Handbook – which provided an update on the key changes relating to the Academies Financial Handbook 2020, how these affect the Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust and any actions that were needed to be implemented from these changes.</p> <p>It was noted that both the Accounting Officer (AO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) should be employees. The Trust must obtain the prior approval of the ESFA if, in exceptional circumstances, it is proposed to appoint to these roles any person or organisation who is not an employee of the Trust. In the Trust the Accounting Officer is an employee. However the Chief Financial Officer is a member and governor. The Trust would therefore need to apply to ESFA for approval to continue with the current CFO, or appoint an employee who is appropriately qualified/experienced. It was proposed that the Business Manager, Mrs Rochester, who is an employed person and appropriately qualified, be asked if she would be willing to undertake this role.</p> <p>It was also noted that In the Trust external audit is delivered by Clive Owen LLP and historically they had also delivered internal assurance. A procurement exercise was therefore to be undertaken in September/October for a new internal assurance provider to ensure these services are provided independently in 20/21 and reported back to the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All members, trustees, governors and employees with financial responsibility should be made aware of the requirements of the new Academies Financial Handbook. b) The trust will ensure that appropriate action is taken in order to assure compliance with the new Academies Financial Handbook requirements. c) Copies of minutes of Board meetings will be made available to all members. 	<p><i>HT/CH/Clerk</i></p> <p><i>HT/CH/Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Clerk</i></p>
--	---	---

	<p>d) The Trust will either obtain ESFA approval of a non-employee CFO, or appoint an employee with the relevant qualification/experience to this role.</p> <p>e) The Trust will ensure CPD is undertaken by the CFO.</p> <p>f) Termly budget monitoring reports will include updated pupil number projections, and the potential financial impact discussed.</p> <p>g) Trustees on the Audit and Finance committee will provide advice to the Board of Trustees in relation to the Risk Register.</p> <p>h) The Audit and Finance committee will report to the Board on the adequacy of the Trust's internal framework in terms of both financial and non-financial controls.</p> <p>i) The School Resource management self-assessment will be completed and submitted to the ESFA ahead of the annual specified deadline.</p> <p>j) The programme of internal scrutiny will be expanded to include non financial controls.</p> <p>k) Trustee consideration will be given to the use of specialist individuals /organisations where non-financial knowledge is required. Any findings and recommendations will be included in the annual report to the ESFA.</p> <p>l) An annual summary report of internal scrutiny activity will be submitted to the ESFA alongside the Trust's audited, annual statements.</p> <p>m) A procurement will be undertaken in September/October for a new internal assurance provider to ensure these services are provided independently in 20/21 and reported back to the Board.</p> <p>n) The Terms of reference of the audit and risk committee will be updated to include the latest requirements as set out in the 2020 edition of the Academies Financial Handbook.</p> <p><i>(Mrs C Hurworth left the meeting at approximately 6.41 pm.)</i></p>	<p>HT/CH</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT/CH</p> <p>A&F Cttee</p> <p>A&F Cttee</p> <p>HT/CH</p> <p>HT/ Directors</p> <p>HT/ Auditors/ Directors</p> <p>HT/ Auditors/ Directors</p> <p>HT/ CH</p> <p>Clerk/CH</p>
12.	<p>School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Self Evaluation Forms (SEFs) – focus for the year and allocation of Director monitoring</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised that the School Improvement Plan would be re-named the School Development Plan, in order to</p>	

	<p>better reflect the ethos of the document. The Plan was mainly the same as the previous academic year, however with more emphasis on health & wellbeing and emotional resilience. The Head Teacher also advised that Doug Lowes, external advisor, would also be assisting him with the SEF (Self Evaluation Forms).</p> <p>Director monitoring this academic Year would have to be approached differently due to the current Covid situation. It was suggested termly updates could be undertaken from subject leaders and some e-mail correspondence. This would be looked at in further detail later in the term.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Pupil Premium and P.E/Sports Funding Information – Review of previous year and plan for the next Academic Year.</p> <p>The Board considered the pupil premium statement for 2019/20, which also outlined continued focus for 2020/21. The Board also gave consideration to the document evidencing the impact of primary PE and sports premium 2019/20. It was noted that a lot of internal competitions would be carried out this year due to the current Covid situation.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the reports be noted.</p> <p><i>(Note: Mrs R Kershaw left the meeting at approximately 7.00 pm)</i></p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>The Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Folkes, provided a safeguarding update report. She advised that all staff have received Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021(KCSIE) Part One and a summary of the updates. The Child Protection Policy has been updated to reflect these changes and is available on the school website.</p> <p>Mental health has become a key focus within the KCSIE, with mental health being added to the definition of safeguarding. The definition of safeguarding now includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting children from maltreatment. • Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development. • Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. • Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. 	

	<p>Now that all children have returned to school there was a large emphasis on mental health, with any concerns that staff have been recorded on the safeguarding software CPOMS. This term all local authority safeguarding training sessions will be carried out virtually and new staff will complete online safeguarding training. The weekly communication to parents will continue to include support for mental health and wellbeing and online safety.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>15.</p>	<p>Admission Arrangements (for September 2022.)</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Admission Arrangements for September 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Admission Arrangements remain the same for 2022, with no amendments required.</p>	
<p>16.</p>	<p>Directors' Code of Conduct - review/approval</p> <p>The Directors' code of conduct was reviewed by the Board and approved for 2020/21.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Directors' Code of Conduct for 2020/21 be approved and adopted by all Directors.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Governor Business Interest Pro-formas - Clerk to confirm receipt and signatures from all Directors, Members and Senior Employees</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the majority of business and pecuniary interests had been received or 2020/21, with the remaining due to be received shortly. All were published on the school web-site.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	<p><i>Directors/ Clerk</i></p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>Skills Audit</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the results from their skills audit for 2020/21. The Skills Audit was important to help identify the skills needed by the Board having regard to the Department for Education's competency framework for governance that sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for effective governance.</p>	

19.	<p>The skills audit is also a useful way of assessing the needs of the governing board to inform recruitment, succession planning and the training that Directors require. It was used by the Board to identify skills that would be required in order to maintain a good balance of skills and knowledge on our Board when seeking to attract and help appoint the Parent Director vacancies (Please refer to Minute 19 below). It was noted that applications for the vacancies would particularly be welcome from parents with experience of marketing, media and public relations. Experience of being a trustee/governor in another school or being a board member in another sector, trusteeship or management of a complex organisation with multiple sites/subsidiaries would also be helpful but not essential.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>Structure of the Governing Body 2020/21 including consideration of increase in numbers of Parent Directors and potential parent elections process agreement.</p> <p>Further to Minute 23 (Governing Body 2nd July 2020) the Board gave consideration to increasing the number of Parent Directors and a potential Parent Director elections process. It was agreed that the Academy Trust would look to recruit two Parent Directors from parents/carers of children currently attending the school to compliment the expertise on the Board of Directors. If there were more candidates than vacancies an election via secret ballot would be arranged and every parent/carer of a child at school would be entitled to one vote per vacancy. A potential election process/timetable was considered and approved by the Board.</p> <p>It was also noted that in accordance with the Articles, and as they remained willing and eligible to do so, the following Directors wished to be re-appointed as their terms of office were due to expire on the 5th December 2020: Nigel Little, Rachel Kershaw and Catherine Stow Smith. Their re-appointments would be dealt with formally at the next meeting of the Board on the 18th November 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>a) That two new Parent Directors be recruited and appointed to the Academy Trust.</p> <p>b) Note that Directors Nigel Little, Rachel Kershaw and Catherine Stow Smith wished to be re-appointed in accordance with the Articles as their terms of office were due to expire on the 5th December 2020 and that this would be formally dealt with at the next meeting of the Board on the 18th November 2020.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Clerk</i></p>
-----	--	---

<p>20.</p>	<p>Committee Membership 2020/21</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Committee memberships for 2020/21.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Committee memberships remain the same and be considered again later in the academic year following the election and appointment of the new Parent Directors.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
<p>21.</p>	<p>Review of Standing Items and Terms of Reference for the Board</p> <p>It was noted that the standing items for the Board had previously been agreed and approved at the meeting of the Board held on the 2nd July 2020 (Minute 5 refers). It was agreed that consideration of the terms of reference be deferred until the next full meeting of the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That consideration of the terms of reference for the Board be deferred.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
<p>22.</p>	<p>Policy Review Table – overview</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Policy Table and it was noted that this would be updated following the Autumn Term meetings.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>23.</p>	<p>Special Educational Needs Policy</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Accessibility Plan, SEND information report and Special Educational Needs Policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Accessibility Plan, SEND information report and Special Educational Needs Policy be approved.</p>	

<p>24.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Child Protection Policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Child Protection Policy be approved.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
<p>25.</p>	<p>Pay and Appraisal Policies – to ratify following Pay Review sub-committee held on the 14th September 2020</p> <p>It was noted that both these policies had not yet been ratified and were due to be taken to the next Pay Review Sub-Committee scheduled for the 19th October 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That consideration of these policies be moved to later in the Autumn Term on the Policy Table.</p>	<p><i>Clerk/ Head Teacher</i></p>
<p>26.</p>	<p>Keeping Children Safe in Education</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Department for Education’s Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 and updates.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That it be noted and all Directors had received this documentation.</p>	
<p>27.</p>	<p>Items of Any Other Business:</p> <p>Further to Minute 4 above the following items of other business were considered:</p> <p>Holidays</p> <p>Consideration was given to draft 2022/23 Term dates received from Darlington Borough Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the 2022/23 Term Dates be approved.</p> <p>Internal Audit</p> <p>The Internal Assurance Audit Report for the Spring Term was circulated at the meeting and was considered by the Board. It was noted there were no recommendations for improvement relating to this audit.</p> <p>The Board also gave consideration and noted the Audit Strategy Plan 2020 from Clive Owen LLP.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Internal Assurance Audit Report and Audit Strategy Plan 2020 be noted.</p> <p>HR Policies</p> <p>The following HR Policies were considered by the Board:</p> <p>Family Friendly Policy Special Leave Policy and Procedures for School</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Family Friendly Policy and Special Leave Policy and Procedures be approved.</p> <p>Financial Handbook (Please refer to Minute 11 above)</p>	<p>Head Teacher</p>
28.	<p>Agenda Items for Next Meeting:</p> <p>Standing Items and Policies</p>	
29.	<p>Approval of Documents for Public Inspection</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Agenda, supporting documents and approved Minutes be made available for public inspection with the exception of any papers relating to Minute 11 above: Management Accounts due to their commercial sensitivity in accordance with article 125 c.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
30.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>That the next meeting of the Board be held on</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

	<p>Approved by the Governing Body</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature (Chair): _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	
--	---	--

Note: the **CQ** abbreviation stands for – Challenging Question by the Board.