

## The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust

### Governing Body Minutes

**Date:** Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 5.30 pm

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

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

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSION</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence and Format of Meeting</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted for Director Mr M Fryer and Mr N Little. The remaining Directors all participated in a virtual Board meeting due to current Covid 19 social distancing considerations.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Notification of Items of Other Business</b></p> <p>There were 2 items of other business (Please refer to Minute 22 below) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Whistleblowing Policy</b></li><li>• <b>Checklist – School Resource Management Self-Assessment 2020</b></li></ul>	
3.	<p><b>Declarations of Interests:</b></p> <p><b>Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the Agenda of the current meeting.</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interests declared.</p> <p><b>Declaration of any updates for the Register of Business Interests.</b></p> <p>There were no updates for the Register of Business Interests</p>	

<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Minutes</b></p> <p><b>a) Approval of Minutes – Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.</p> <p><b>b) Matters Arising –</b></p> <p>The Board noted that with reference to Minute 5 Mrs C Hurworth had reported back on the Director’s cashflow query via email and the two main reasons for the difference in the November and December cashflow were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The creditor payments estimate has been reduced from £40k to £35k each month. This was done on the basis that fewer purchases were being made in the current lockdown.</li><li>2. The Schools Forum published provisional GAG (General Annual Grant) allocations at the beginning of January which showed a monthly increase in GAG of approximately £20k.</li></ol> <p><b>Reports of Committees:</b></p> <p><b>Teaching &amp; Learning Committee - Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Teaching &amp; Learning Committee reported on the issues and key recommendations from the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to note that, even with the Covid related disruptions, the content/curriculum coverage was the same as in the long term plan. Teachers would be assessing any gaps on the full return for all pupils to school.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the issues and key recommendations from the Teaching &amp; Learning Committee meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 be noted.</p> <p><b>Audit &amp; Finance Committee – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Audit &amp; Finance Committee reported on the issues and key recommendations from the meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021.</p>	
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	<p>The Board noted that from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 pupil premium allocations would be based upon the number of eligible pupils in the October census rather than the January 2021 census, with a resulting decrease in income for the Academy due to a number of pupils becoming eligible between the two census dates. Priority would be given to registering pupil premium as early as possible in the next Academic Year to help negate this change in census dates.</p> <p>The Board also noted that in relation to the internal assurance report provided by the Trust’s internal auditors Azets, there had been no issues or recommendations of major concern, with the recommendations relating to opportunities to implement a good or better practice, to improve efficiency or further reduce risk. All recommended changes were in the process or had already been implemented.</p> <p>The Board requested that in relation to the school staffing structure (at Minute 17 of these Audit &amp; Finance Committee Minutes) that the names of all staff be added next to the organisational structure of the Governors’ Learning Platform.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the issues and key recommendations from the Audit &amp; Finance Committee meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be noted.</p> <p><b>6. Chair’s Report</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that a letter from the Chair had been sent on behalf of the Board to all staff thanking them for their hard work and commitment during the latest lockdown.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Chair’s report be noted.</p> <p><b>7. Head Teacher’s Report</b></p> <p>The Head Teacher provided an update report on key school issues and safeguarding. The report also included information about the re-opening of the school to all pupils/risk assessments and operational plans.</p> <p>It was noted that all children would be back into school from the 8<sup>th</sup> March, with a few vulnerable children on different timetables. The focus when all children returned is on establishing routines and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic), with pupil wellbeing a priority.</p> <p>An online course (from Public Health England) was currently available to staff on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people affected by emergencies or crises. The Board enquired about the staff take up for this</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Clerk</b></p>
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<p><b>CQ</b></p>	<p>course? The Deputy Head Teacher (Mrs V Folkes) advised yes there had been some good take up but that the course was voluntary.</p> <p>In relation to school improvement priorities the Board noted that the Senior Leadership would be monitoring progress in the classes and that Directors would also be monitoring the curriculum with subject leader questions and action plans ready to be allocated to Directors (Please refer to minute 12 below.)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That the report be noted.</li> <li>b) That the Covid risk assessments and re-opening operational plans be approved.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>It was noted that safeguarding updates had been included and reported upon in the Head Teacher's report.</p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Current Pupil Numbers on Roll</b></p> <p>The current numbers on roll for each year group was considered by the Board. The Board noted that numbers on roll had been slowly rising and that it was important to keep monitoring pupil numbers. Keeping a good media presence and a good modern web-site were important for the promotion of the school.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Management Accounts</b></p> <p>The Board noted the latest management accounts and spring term report. They also reviewed the minutes and recommendations of the Audit &amp; Finance Committee in relation to these management accounts.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Considered and noted the monthly management accounts, cash flow, balance sheet and aged debtors and creditors reports.</li> <li>b) Considered and noted the 2020/21 revenue budget forecast position.</li> <li>c) Considered and noted the 2020/21 capital position.</li> </ul>	

	<p>d) Considered and noted the reserves position.</p> <p>e) Considered and noted the cash flow projection.</p> <p>f) Considered and noted the school meals trading account projection.</p> <p>g) Considered and noted the School Resource Management Self-Assessment dashboard.</p> <p>h) Considered and noted the Medium Term Financial position.</p> <p><b>11. School Development Plan</b></p> <p>Further to Minute 10 (Full Governing Body meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021) the Head Teacher advised there had been no further updates.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><b>12. Governors' Learning Day/Link Governors to curriculum areas</b></p> <p>Further to Minute 8 (Teaching &amp; Learning Committee 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021) the Directors' discussed and agreed their links to the curriculum. The following links were approved:</p> <p>Maths – G.Buchanan          English – E. de la Motte and S.Howe          Science – G. Buchan and R.Hall          Computing – L.Bryant          History – N.Little          Geography – P.Willson and R.Kershaw          RE – M.Fryer          PE – C.Marley and S.Howe          DT – N.Little          Art – R.Kershaw          Music – E. de la Motte          PSHE – C. Stow Smith and R.Hall          MFL – M. Fryer</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised that he would place the current curriculum action plans and Governors' Ofsted related questions for school subject leaders with regard to the curriculum, on the Governors' Learning Platform. It was hoped that sometime in the Summer Term there would be a Governors' Learning Day (possibly virtually) when Directors would be able to speak to subject leaders, however in the meantime Directors were asked</p>	
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	<p>to consider any additional questions they may have in relation to their curriculum subject link.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>a) That the Governor curriculum links be approved.</p> <p>b) That Directors consider any additional questions they may have in relation to their curriculum subject link arising from their review of their action plans and subject leader answers to Ofsted related questions for their subject area.</p> <p><b>13. Training Feedback</b></p> <p>The Clerk reported on the latest Governor Training undertaken which was as follows:</p> <p>Induction for new Governors – the basics - S.Howe and G,Buchanan.</p> <p>Four easy steps to effective Governance – G.Buchanan</p> <p>It was noted that all Governors were currently completing their latest safeguarding and Prevent training online.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><b>14. Summer Term Meeting Dates</b></p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Summer Term meeting dates.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Summer Term meeting Dates be approved and that the meetings remain for the present time via Zoom due to Covid related considerations.</p> <p><b>15. Health &amp; Safety Accident Statistics</b></p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Health &amp; Safety accident statistics.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	<p><b>Directors</b></p>
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16.	<p><b>Admissions – permission for the Local Authority to allocate and refuse places accordingly</b></p> <p>Permission was sought to allow Darlington Borough Council to allocate or refuse places on the Academy Trusts’ behalf with regard to admissions. This item is a standing item at this time of the academic year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That permission be given.</p>	
17.	<p><b>Directors’ Terms of Office – re-appointments</b></p> <p>The Clerk advised the Board of Director’s whose terms of office were due to expire during the Summer Term. The relevant Directors were asked to contact the Clerk to advise if they wished to continue in their role in order to help facilitate planning for the structure of the Board and ensure compliance with the Articles.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Directors’ whose terms of office whose terms of office were due to expire during the Summer Term contact the Clerk to advise if they wished to continue in their current roles, subject to remaining eligible to do so.</p>	<i>Clerk</i>
18.	<p><b>Commence discussing the Board’s Annual Report</b></p> <p>The Board commenced discussions on their Annual Report. They considered how accessible it was to the intended readership and agreed this would be looked at further by the Chair &amp; Vice Chair of the Board. It was also discussed how generally the Governors’ profile/better understanding of the work undertaken by the Governing Body could be increased.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That the Chair &amp; Vice-Chair look at the Annual Report structure in relation to making it more accessible and report back to the next meeting of the Board on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.</li> <li>b) That a parent/carer questionnaire regarding Governors be developed which helps identify how the Governors’ profile can be improved and role better understood.</li> <li>c) That Director R.Hall contact J.Scott (Business Team) to explore how to raise the Governors’ profile and effectively communicate with Parents/Carers, including discussing the school web-site.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair/ Vice Chair</i></p> <p><i>Deputy Head Teacher (VF)</i></p> <p><i>Director R.Hall</i></p>

	d) That the Pen Portraits be re-instated on the School's web-site to aid in the parents' and communities understanding of who the Directors are.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>19.</b>	<p><b>Governor Visits Procedure</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Governor Visits Procedure for when they were undertaking their monitoring role.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Governor Visits Procedure be revisited and deferred until after the latest round of monitoring had been completed by Directors' later in the summer term, in order to help identify any required changes to the procedure.</p>	<b>Directors/ Clerk</b>
<b>20.</b>	<p><b>Business Contingency Procedures and Plan</b></p> <p>The Board noted this item would be deferred until the Summer Term following the induction of the new Site Manager.</p>	
<b>21.</b>	<p><b>Directors' Report Backs:</b></p> <p>Director Mrs R.Kershaw reported verbally and provided written reports on the following Director report back areas she had recently monitored. Due to current Covid restrictions these monitoring visits had taken place over the phone with relevant staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes/Papers Board and Committees</li> <li>• Premises Management</li> <li>• Register of Pupil Admissions to School</li> <li>• Register of Pupils Attendance</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the reports be noted and recommendations approved.</p>	<b>Directors/ Head Teacher/Clerk</b>
<b>22.</b>	<p><b>Items of Any Other Business:</b></p> <p><b>Whistleblowing Policy</b></p> <p>The Board considered the Whistleblowing Policy which had been last considered and approved by the Board on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February Governing Body and was previously reviewed on a 3 year cycle. The internal auditors had recommended that it now be reviewed annually as a matter of good practice and it had therefore been brought back to this meeting of the Board.</p>	



	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Whistleblowing Policy be approved.</p> <p><b>Checklist – School Resource Management Self-Assessment 2020</b></p> <p>The Checklist – School Resources Management Self-Assessment was considered and approved by the Board. It was noted that the dashboard information was particularly useful for the Board’s information and highlighted for example the schools expenditure and outcomes when compared with similar schools.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the School Resource Management Self-Assessment be approved.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
<p><b>23.</b></p>	<p><b>Agenda Items for Next Meeting:</b></p> <p>Standing Items and Policies</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
<p><b>24.</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Documents for Public Inspection</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Agenda, supporting documents and approved Minutes be made available for public inspection with the exception of any papers relating to ‘Checklist – School Resource Management Self-Assessment 2020’ Minute 22 and ‘Management Accounts’ Minute 10 due to their commercial sensitivity in accordance with article 125 c.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
<p><b>25.</b></p>	<p><b>Date &amp; Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>That the next meeting of the Board be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>

	<p>Approved by the Governing Body</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature (Chair): _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	
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Note: the **CQ** abbreviation stands for – Challenging Question by the Board.