

The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust

Governing Body Minutes

Date: Monday 21st March 2022 at 5.45 pm

Present Governors: Mrs E de la Motte, Mr J Briggs, Dr L Bryant, Mr M Fryer, Mrs N McDowell, Mrs R Hall, Mrs R Kershaw, Mr N Little, Mrs C Stow Smith, Mrs S Howe and Mr G Buchanan.

Also facilitating the Board meeting: Mrs L Hawksby (Governance Professional) and Mrs C Hurworth (EPM).

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSION</u> <u>(Note meeting held in person: Junior Staff Room, Junior Building, The Federation of Abbey Schools.)</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
1.	<p><i>Note: Director Mrs R.Kershaw (Vice Chair) was in the Chair until the arrival of Mrs E de la Motte (Chair) at the meeting. The meeting commenced at 5.45 pm with the agreement of the Board after a Finance training session had overrun at which Directors had been present.</i></p> <p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p>Notification of Items of Other Business</p> <p>There were two items of any other business (Minute 5 below refers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photocopiers• HR- approval of EPM	
3.	<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>Director R.Kershaw declared a pecuniary interests at Minute 6 'HR – approval of EPM' and left the meeting, took no part in consideration/voting of that item.</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>4.</p>	<p><i>(Note: with the permission of the Vice-Chair (who was chairing the meeting) it was agreed to consider the following items (4,5 and 6 below) next from the Agenda.)</i></p> <p>Management Accounts</p> <p>Mrs Hurworth (EPM) reported on the January and February Management Accounts 2022 and provided a Spring Term 2022 Update Report.</p> <p>She advised that funding for the academic year 2022/23 will continue to be devolved to Local Authorities (LA's) based on the National Funding Formula (NFF) values published for 2022/23. The move towards a 'hard' NFF has been delayed meaning that for 2022/23 LA's will continue to set a local formula therefore determining the funding levels that schools will receive. For 2022/23 Darlington Borough Council have adopted the NFF values in full.</p> <p>The Board were advised that pupil premium funding rates for the financial year 2022 to 2023 were due to increase slightly, and the spring term budget has been updated to include the new per-pupil rates payable from 1st April 2022.</p> <p>Mrs Hurworth advised that the support staff pay award had now been approved and, as previously noted by the Board, had been factored into the budget. The Board also gave consideration to pupil number projections and actual pupil numbers on role and any resulting impact on the medium term financial plans.</p> <p>Details of any significant favourable and adverse variances between the budget and actual income and expenditure were also noted by the Board. Income variances were mainly due to significant increases in SEN, pupil premium and new ESFA grants (Covid Recovery Premium, School Led Tutor Funding and Supplementary Grant). Expenditure variances were mainly due to significant increases in staff, premises, food and energy costs.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Confirmed receipt of the monthly management accounts, cash flows, balance sheets and aged debtors and creditors reports b) Noted the 2021/22 revenue budget forecast position. c) Noted the 2021/22 capital position. d) Noted the reserves position e) Noted the cash flow projection f) Noted the School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool. 	
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5.	<p>g) Noted the various budget pressures which will have a negative effect on the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan)</p> <p>Company Business: Appointment of Auditors for the financial year ending August 2022.</p> <p>It was noted that Clive Owen were not reappointed as auditors for the financial year ending 31 August 2022 at the last AGM on 13th December 2021, as it was thought that the Academy Trust would appoint new auditors for the period. Further to Minute 12 (Full Governing Body 13th September 2021) a retendering exercise had duly been completed in accordance with the latest Academy Trust Handbook, as it had been over 5 years since a tendering exercise had been completed for the external audit contract.</p> <p>The retendering exercise once completed was reported to the Audit & Finance Committee on the 2nd March 2022 (Minute 9 refers) with that Committee's resulting recommendation now to the Board for Clive Owen LLP to remain as the Trust's external auditors for the Financial Year ending 31st August 2022. This was based upon 3 tenders from external auditor companies having been sought which were as follows:</p> <p>Armstrong Watson – who did not tender Tait Walker – who declined to tender Clive Owen LLP – who submitted a tender</p> <p>A pricing schedule from Clive Owen LLP for the last academic year and the next three academic years (3 year contract) was considered by Trustees along with details of Clive Owens' external auditing services. Due to the lack of tenders submitted a benchmarking exercise was also undertaken, by Mrs C Hurworth (EPM), with audit costs for similar size Trusts and from their audited financial statements. Following on from examination of the benchmarking information the Board agreed that the current quote from Clive Owen was appropriate to the current market.</p> <p>It was noted that, as Clive Owen had not resigned from office or been removed by the Members under the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 or deemed not re-appointed under the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, pursuant to section 487 of the Companies Act 2006, Clive Owen were deemed to be automatically re-appointed as auditors to the Company for the financial year ending 31 August 2022 and no further approval was required.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>a) That following a retendering and benchmarking exercise, Clive Owen LLP remain as the Trust's external auditors for the Financial Year ending 31st August 2022.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher/Mrs C Hurworth (EPM)</i></p>
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<p>7.</p>	<p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>a) Approval of Board Minutes – Monday 31st January 2022</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Monday 31st January 2022 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising –</p> <p>There were no matters arising from consideration of the above minutes.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Reports of Committees:</p> <p>a.) Teaching & Learning Committee – Wednesday 9th February 2022</p> <p>The Chair of the Teaching & Learning Committee reported on the issues and key recommendations from the meeting held on the Wednesday 9th February 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the issues and key recommendations from the Teaching & Learning Committee meeting held on the 9th February 2022 be noted.</p> <p>b.) Audit & Finance Committee – Thursday 2nd March 2022</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee reported on the issues and key recommendations from the meeting held on the 2nd March 2022.</p> <p>It was noted that retendering exercise had been carried out for the external auditor this academic year in line with the Academy Trusts Handbook latest recommendations (Minute 5 above refers).</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the issues and key recommendations from the Audit & Finance Committee meeting held on the 2nd March 2022 be noted.</p> <p><i>(Note: with the permission of the Vice-Chair (who was chairing the meeting) it was agreed to consider the following item 9 below next from the Agenda.)</i></p>	

<p>9.</p> <p>CQ</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11.</p>	<p>Head Teacher’s Report</p> <p>The Head Teacher provided an update report on key school issues. He advised that attendance meetings continued on a regular basis with Senior Leadership and the Business Team.</p> <p>With regard to the curriculum subject leaders have been able to complete more monitoring including: class swaps, book looks and ‘Pupil Voice’. Whole school book looks with subject leaders and follow up by year groups, had been completed at the February Professional Development Day. In addition ‘Pupil Voice’ meetings had been arranged for this half term and some leaders are visiting other schools to see good practice.</p> <p>The Board enquired if any external evaluations were being undertaken? The Head Teacher advised that Mr D.Lowes, External Advisor would be coming in the Summer Term.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><i>(The Chair arrived at the meeting at approximately 6.40 pm and was in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.)</i></p> <p>Chair’s Report</p> <p>The Chair verbally advised that one item of correspondence from a parent, had been received since her last report, which had been responded to.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Chair’s report be noted.</p> <p>Safeguarding</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported on the latest safeguarding updates. It was noted that with regard to pupil’s emotional wellbeing, Teachers have received resources supporting them to have conversations about the war in Ukraine. Childnet released a resource to help parents and carers engage in these discussions, which had been shared with parents on the weekly communications.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
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12.	<p>School Development Plan (SDP)</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the School Development Plan (SDP). The latest SDP updates/progress were reported on verbally by the Head Teacher.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted and hard copies of the SDP be circulated via email to the Directors after the meeting and any further questions be forwarded to the Head Teacher.</p>	<p><i>Governance Professional</i></p>
13.	<p>Governors' Learning</p> <p>The Head Teacher provided a verbal update on proposals for summer term monitoring. He advised that going forward it had been identified and agreed at the last Teaching & Learning Committee, held on the 9th February 2022 (Minute 8 refers), that Directors wished to focus on lower attainers through pupil's voice, books and lesson observations.</p> <p>It was noted that parents were due to come in for 'curriculum days' during the Summer Term and Directors could also be invited to attend if they were available.</p> <p>Director Mrs R.Hall's recent visit reports regarding Science Week and observation of PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) lessons during Children's Mental Health Awareness Week were also considered and noted by the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report and recent visit forms from Director Mrs R.Hall be noted.</p> <p><i>(Note: Director Mrs S.Howe left the meeting at approximately 7.15 pm.)</i></p>	
14.	<p>Training Feedback</p> <p>It was noted that since the last report on training attended, the following Directors had attended Darlington Borough Council training sessions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director R. Hall - Keeping Children Safe in Education on the 23rd November 2022. • Director Mrs E. de le Motte - 'Governor Visits to Schools' training course on the 10th February 2022. <p>RESOLVED:</p>	

<p>15.</p> <p>16.</p> <p>17.</p> <p>18.</p>	<p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>Health & Safety Accident Statistics</p> <p>The latest Health & Safety Accident statistics were noted by the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>Admissions – permission for the Local Authority to allocate and refuse places accordingly</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>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That permission be given.</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>Further to Minute 11 (Full Governing Body 31st January 2022) Director R.Kershaw advised that she was in the process of reviewing if further reference was necessary to pay and staff disciplinary issues within the scheme and would report back to the next meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Scheme of Delegation be brought back to the next meeting of the Board on the 16th May 2022.</p> <p>External Review /21 Questions internal review</p> <p>Further to Minute 18 (31st January 2022) the Governance Professional advised the Board that the working party had met on the 17th March 2022 to undertake the 21 Questions internal review of the Board’s effectiveness. They used the 21 questions developed by the NGA (National Governance Association) and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Education Governance to support multi academy trust (MAT) board self-review. It was also noted that other providers of external reviews continued to be identified.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p> <p><i>Director R Kershaw/ Governance Professional</i></p>
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	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the 21 Questions working party notes from the 17th March 2022, be brought back for the Board's considerations at their next meeting on the 16th May 2022.</p>	<p><i>Governance Professional</i></p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>Current Pupil Numbers on Roll</p> <p>The current numbers on Roll were considered and noted by the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the current numbers on roll were noted to be in a good position.</p>	
<p>20.</p>	<p>Governor Visits Procedure – updated Handbook references</p> <p>Further to Minute 16 (31st January 2022) the Chair advised that she had attended a Governor visits training session provided by Darlington Borough Council and was currently reviewing if any further information should be updated in the procedure.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Governor Visits Procedure be brought back to the next meeting of the Teaching & Learning Committee on the 25th May 2022 and then to the Board meeting scheduled for the 4th July 2022.</p>	<p><i>Director E.de la Mott/ Governance Professional</i></p>
<p>21.</p>	<p>Business Contingency Procedures</p> <p>It was noted that the Business Contingency Procedures would be brought back to the next meeting of the Board on the 16th May 2022.</p>	<p><i>Business Team</i></p>
<p>22.</p>	<p>Special Leave Policy & Procedures</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Special Leave Policy and Procedures.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Special Leave Policy & Procedures be approved.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>

23.	<p>Family Friendly Policy</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Family Friendly Policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Family Friendly Policy be approved.</p>	<i>Head Teacher</i>
24.	<p>Dependants Leave Policy</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Dependants Leave Policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Dependants Leave Policy be approved.</p>	<i>Head Teacher</i>
25.	<p>Directors' report backs</p> <p>It was noted that some Director report backs were shortly due and it was agreed that they would be completed by the following Directors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes/Papers Board and Committees – R.Kershaw • Premises Management – E.de la Motte • Register of Pupil Admissions to School – R.Kershaw/N.McDowell • Register of Pupils Attendance – R.Kershaw/N.McDowell <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the above Directors reports be brought back to the meeting of the Board scheduled for the 4th July 2022.</p>	<i>Directors/ Governance Professional</i>
26.	<p>Agenda Items for Next and Future Meetings:</p> <p>Governors' Visits Procedures, Scheme of Delegation, 21 Questions Working Group notes, Business Contingencies Procedures, standing items and policies.</p>	<i>Governance Professional</i>
27.	<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/reports relating to Minute 4 above: Management Accounts</p>	

<p>28.</p>	<p>and Autumn Term Budget Monitoring Report, Minute 5 above: Company Business Appointment of the Auditors for the Financial Year ending August 2022 and Minute 6: Photocopiers (comparison costs of the current and other companies) due to their commercial sensitivity in accordance with article 125 c. In addition that papers/reports also be excluded relating to Minute 15 above: Health & Safety Accident Statistics due to the possibility of identifying a person due to the nature of the accident and therefore should be formally excluded from public inspection in accordance with Article 125 c.</p> <p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>That the next meeting of the Board be held on 16th May at 5.30 pm.</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 7.45pm</p> <p>Approved by the Governing Body</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature (Chair): _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p><i>Governance Professional</i></p> <p><i>Governance Professional</i></p>
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Note: the **CQ** abbreviation stands for – Challenging Question by the Board.