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By Brook Valley Academy Trust
(Company Registration Number 8020467)
Academy Board Meeting
Thursday 11th March 2021
Virtual Meeting in Accordance with
Covid 19 Guidance
and
Article 123 of the Articles of Association



Minutes

Present: Graham Pike (Head teacher) ("GP"), Keith Ernest (Chair and Member) ("KE"), Lisa Nicolson ("LN"), Carrie Davies ("CB"), Deborah Henshall ("DH"), David New ("DN"), Jaclyn Cross ("JC"), Lakmini Harkus ("LH"), Rosemary Jago ("RJ"), Beth Borthwick ("BeB") and (until 7.25pm) Anjali Kanagaratnam ("AK")

In Attendance: Michelle Hocking (Clerk) ("Clerk")

Apologies: Martin Lowe ("ML")

Item	Minute	Action
	Opening Prayer AK led the opening prayer	
1	Welcome and Apologies KE took the chair and opened the meeting at 6.38pm. Apologies were noted and accepted from ML. KE declared that a quorum was present and formally welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	Pecuniary and Business Interests Register It was noted that all present had completed the annual Related Parties Declaration of Interests forms and no interests were declared in the business of this meeting.	
3	Note/ratification of email approvals: (a) Policies: (i) Pupil Premium As per action from the last meeting, GP had discussed with colleagues and the operational team had agreed that a Pupil premium Policy was not required. (ii) Freedom of Information Circulated prior to the meeting in a form recommended by Finance, Premises & Staffing (F&P) Committee. (iii) Home Learning To be reviewed in detail by Curriculum, Teaching & Learning (C, T&L) Committee (iv) Attendance Circulated prior to the meeting in a form recommended by Foundation & Ethos (F&E) Committee.	Clerk to add Home Learning Policy to the next agenda.

	<p>(v) Complaints Circulated prior to the meeting in a form recommended by F&E Committee.</p> <p>(vi) EYFS Approved at the last meeting – no further changes required.</p> <p>(vii) Assessment To be reviewed in detail by C, T&L Committee.</p> <p>(b) Other documents:</p> <p>(i) Scheme of Delegation/Terms of Reference</p> <p>(ii) Minutes of last meeting (+ matters arising not covered elsewhere) (i) Scheme of Delegation/Terms of Reference</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed that approval of each of the Freedom of Information Policy, Attendance Policy, Complaints Procedure, Scheme of Delegation/Terms of Reference and last minutes be and is confirmed and ratified in the form circulate prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the above approval included agreement that the last minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting on 14th January 2021.</p>	<p>Clerk to add Assessment Policy to the next agenda.</p> <p>Clerk to file the approved policies as appropriate</p> <p>KE to electronically sign the last minutes, return them to MH, and MH to file the minutes as appropriate</p>
4	<p>Matters arising not covered elsewhere All matters complete, covered by this evening's agenda or superseded. AK confirmed as PSHE/Wellbeing Governor.</p>	
5	<p>Headteacher Update It was noted that GP's comprehensive Headteacher Report and Termly Monitoring Report had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was presumed all present had reviewed them.</p> <p>GP highlighted the following updates/further details to his Headteacher Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Lockdown & Remote Learning', paragraph 6: 20 devices obtained. • 'The Return to School': The atmosphere is really settled and calm, with children coming straight back in and generally buzzing! A couple of older children – who have been attending throughout lockdown (as Vulnerable/Key Worker Children) have struggled a little with the readjustment to larger groups. • Staffing: 1 member of the wraparound care team, pregnant and due to go on maternity leave, has resigned – the role will be advertised internally. • The School Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 new pupils joined on Monday (2 in Reception) ○ 1 family has shown an interest in their child joining – meeting being scheduled. ○ 1 child has left. ○ Current numbers and first choice applications for September are pleasing. 	

<p>Questions were invited.</p> <p>Governors noted that in the 'Lockdown & Remote Learning' section reference is made to some parents "demanding an approach not based on our school context, best practice or evidence." – further clarification of this was requested.</p> <p>GP explained that some parents had questioned why lots of live lessons were not delivered during lockdown – suggesting that most other schools were. He emphasised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst some secondary schools were offering a lot of live lessons, only a minority of primary schools had – with variable impact. • The school had focused on ensuring teachers (rather than TAs) were in school delivering to Vulnerable and Key Worker children – which made live lessons unworkable. • Some families welcomed the flexibility of not having live lessons – and there was lots of positive feedback about the school's provision. • Direct communications were made with individual children to support with any issues. • The school's approach conformed to government and Ofsted guidance. <p>Governors were reassured that the provision was in line with guidance, regular communication was maintained, and the majority were satisfied with the provision. It was acknowledged that there appeared to have been some confusion between the secondary and primary school approach.</p> <p>Governors queried whether a regular short live chat for the sake of children's wellbeing had been considered/may have proved beneficial.</p> <p>GP confirmed that staff had discussed implementing such sessions but based on experiences of other schools, discounted predominantly due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaotic experience of large group virtual sessions • Likely impact of group sessions – particularly for quieter or unsettled children – with individual telephone contact (regularly or on ad hoc/as needed basis as relevant) considered more beneficial. • Preference for parents to arrange virtual communications in smaller friendship groups to support social and emotional wellbeing. <p>Governors observed that they were reassured to see maintenance of broad and balanced curriculum.</p> <p>Governors queried how attendance figures were calculated at present – noting that they were impressively high.</p> <p>GP explained that if children have been unable to access work because they are ill – even during lockdown the expectation was that a call to school would be made in the usual manner. He emphasised that:</p>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current figures were in line with other terms and official coding was being used for reporting. • Straight away on wider re-opening the attendance has been very high. <p>Governors asked how the timetable changes – specifically the 30 minutes morning catch-up – are working. DH reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • these changes will be implemented next week – this week having been focused on settling in • staff are considering appropriate, less-emotive language to avoid using the term 'catch-up' with its potentially negative connotations. • the morning session will also be used to provide social support – overseen by SENDCo as well as to intensively pre-teach and catch-up. <p>Governors observed that the CPD detailed in the report circulated was impressive. It was noted that the majority had been conducted virtually – although the day's Paediatric First Aid Training was a socially distanced face-to-face session in school. Staff present reported that most of the sessions worked well remotely, although networking and exhibitions were challenging in a virtual environment. Staff also commented that Microsoft Teams CPD was key – proving to be of significant benefit to children and staff during lockdown.</p> <p>The changes to the office team were noted: (i) the recruitment of a new and very experienced Finance Officer and (ii) the contracts administration role being subsumed into the Office Manager/Finance Officer roles. RJ (as chair of F&P Committee) reported that the Office Manager had attended the last F&P meeting and will continue to provide all oversight reporting – including, with the help of the new Finance Officer, linking between contractual/tendering processes and finance/budgeting.</p> <p>Governors noted that there were currently two trainee teachers in the school and queried whether this might have a detrimental effect to the quality of teaching and learning – particularly following the major disruption of the Covid 19 pandemic.</p> <p>GP and other staff present robustly reassured governors that there was no detrimental effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one trainee is on a short-term initial placement only (working under the close supervision of DH conducting small group work under DH's direction, reading with children, conducting observations, etc) • the other trainee had been at the school throughout the school year, has been ably supporting lockdown learning (assisted in no small part to her knowledge of the children gained over the course of the year) and will be assisting CD in Yr6 after Easter. 	
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	<p>There were no further comments or queries on the Headteacher's Report (including termly monitoring report) and, on behalf of the governing board, KE thanked GP for his comprehensive reporting.</p>	
6	<p>SIAP Review</p> <p>GP highlighted that, due to lockdown, there had been a slight shift in focus towards completing training, best practice documentation and progressing plans for development of grounds until other aspects (such as monitoring and evaluation) were facilitated by wider re-opening.</p> <p>GP confirmed that the SIAP would be updated further for the next meeting with a full review taking place end of Term 5/beginning of Term 6.</p> <p>There were no comments or queries on the SIAP.</p>	
7	<p>Safeguarding Governor/Single Central Record Update</p> <p><i>Safeguarding</i></p> <p>LN reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • she and GP had been keeping in touch by email. • Impact Review had been conducted and (electronically) signed off in mid-January. • This term's catch-up was scheduled for next week. <p>GP confirmed that regular visits and meetings with vulnerable children had continued throughout lockdown – additional calls and support communications maintained and with one family personally visited by GP and DH to chase up expected attendance.</p> <p><i>Single Central Record (SCR)</i></p> <p>LN reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Manager had confirmed SCR up to date: with new recruits recorded and all governor checks now complete. • LN will meet with Office Manager to run through the SCR after Easter. 	
8	<p>Link Governors Update</p> <p>LN reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to lockdown, no visits have taken place this term. • Ongoing work with Visit Guidelines – latest draft circulated prior to the meeting with amendments based on governors' feedback shown in yellow – C, T&L Committee will be reviewing its section at that committee's meeting next week. • Core functions will be added. • No comments have been received on the latest version – which is quite comprehensive – every visit to include (as paramount point) a safeguarding aspect. • Two types of visit form: 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Visit: for which guidance points should be specifically considered. ○ Focused Visit: e.g., Safeguarding, SEND, PP/Meetings with Subject Leader <p>Governors noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As highlighted by F&E Committee, pre-visit planning was crucial – ensure clarity to maximise the impact of each visit. • It is proposed that there is a timetable of visits – split between each sub-committee and allocated based on availability and interests – to ensure all priority areas are covered, based on SIAP foci for the year, SIAM/Ofsted points, etc – to provide evidence of impact. • The importance of governor visits for the provision of supporting evidence and therefore the need to ensure they are targeted most effectively, including spending time at the start of the year to consider where they can provide the most value/support. • F&P Committee's foci are more challenging to direct visit reports to although there are some clear areas (e.g., Health & Safety) there are less obvious elements such as evidence of staff wellbeing gleaned through conversations with staff at the end of a visit. • All visits should be reported – quotes from children provide excellent evidence on a range of points. • Proposed move from year group to subject focus for governors – how exciting it is for reports to focus on curriculum links to supporting the SIAP and illustrate key areas (including noting that not all subjects can be prioritised every year). <p>AK left the meeting at 7.25pm</p>	
9	<p>Curriculum, Teaching & Learning Committee Update</p> <p>DN highlighted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday (15th March), but the minutes of the previous meeting (January) had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was presumed all present had reviewed them.</p> <p>There were no questions on the last minutes.</p>	
10	<p>Foundation & Ethos Committee Update</p> <p>It was noted that the F&E minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was presumed all present had reviewed them.</p> <p>JC highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee met last week – many thanks to BeB for completing the minutes so quickly. • Key discussion was on review of the school website: particularly Christian Ethos (based on Diocesan template) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She and GP were collating questions and comments. <p>It was noted that BeB had reiterated her intention to stand down as a governor at the end of the academic year and, on behalf of the governing board, RJ thanked BeB for all her hard work over the years of her governorship.</p> <p>There were no comments or queries on the F&E report.</p>	
11	<p>Finance, Premises, Staffing & HR Committee Update</p> <p>The minutes had been circulated prior to this meeting and it was presumed that all present had reviewed them.</p> <p>RJ highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing: Update received from GP, main point is the appointment of the new Finance Officer – this is very exciting as she had an excellent background, and together with the Officer Manager will provide oversight and link between contracts and budget • Scheme of Delegation (SoD): As noted above the SoD has been updated in line with the Academies Financial Handbook latest updates. • Estate Vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fixed asset register is being used to build a programme of maintenance which ties into both Health & Safety and budget ◦ Other exciting aspect is work with the Diocese to maximise the value of the school's extensive outside space – both the FOBBVS and Diocese to provide funding. ◦ Plans to publish wider estate strategy and vision on the school website – watch this space! <p>There were no comments or queries on the F&P report.</p>	
12	<p>Governor Training and Participation</p> <p>JC completed Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) training and reported that it was excellently pitched.</p> <p>Governors were directed to the information on File Manager and RightChoice.</p>	
13	<p>AOB</p> <p>DoBAC Undertakings Update</p> <p>Following on from previous discussions and correspondence with the Diocese, it was noted that a revised incoming Director Questionnaire and Trustee Declaration (Declaration) and a Certificate of Governor Recruitment processes</p>	


¹ In anticipation of leaving prior to this resolution, AK had confirmed her approval of the Declaration and Certificate by email to MH prior to the meeting.

² LH thanked all at the school who facilitated her son's attendance at 'lockdown school'

<p>(Certificate) had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the change to the Declaration was merely to add the text of the company's Object (there already previously having been reference to upholding the Object) and the Clerk assured governors that: (i) the Diocese did not require the amended Declaration to be signed by current governors – only new recruits from now onwards – and the Office Manager had approved the Certificate on the basis that the processes detailed within it were conducted as standard. GP thanked the Clerk for her work on this.</p> <p>Each of the Declaration and Certificate were unanimously approved in the form circulated prior to the meeting.¹</p> <p>DfE 2025 GP drew the board's attention to the Education Secretary's announcement regarding encouragement to join Multi-Academy Trusts: <u>Education Secretary speech to FED National Education Summit - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>. It was noted that considering future sustainability/maintaining a strong position for the school in the national context was crucial, including pursuing and evidencing school-to-school support, informal partnerships, etc and a standing agenda item of 'National Context/Collaborative Opportunities' should accordingly be re-added to board agendas.</p> <p>Shielding In response to a governor's question, GP confirmed that there were not any clinically extremely vulnerable children who were unable to return to school at present.²</p> <p>RJ's re-appointment It was noted that in the September meeting RJ's re-appointment at the end of her current term (15.03.21) had been pre-approved and the Clerk would update the records accordingly.</p> <p>Leavers/Recruitment BeB As noted above, BeB had confirmed her intention to stand down at the end of the academic year – thanks extended to her again. It was noted that the Foundation Governor recruitment process would be followed, and the process would be as open as possible – advertised on the school website and local parish publications.</p> <p>KE KE announced that, for personal reasons, he had reluctantly decided that he must stand down as a governor as soon as feasible. RJ assured all that she and LN (as Joint Vice Chair of Governors) would step up as required and were meeting with</p>	<p>Clerk to send the revised declaration and the Certificate (signed by the Office Manager) to the Diocese</p> <p>Clerk to add National Context/Collaborative Opportunities as a standing agenda item.</p> <p>Clerk to update the records to record RJ's re-appointment with effect from 16th March 2021 for another four-year term.</p> <p>Foundation Governor recruitment to be commenced</p>
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	<p>GP and the Clerk next week to work through processes and procedures for a replacement Chair of Governors as soon as possible.</p> <p>On behalf of all associated with the school, RJ thanked KE for his dedicated service to the By Brook Valley School community.</p>	
14	<p>How have we contributed to the vision of By Brook Valley C of E Primary School today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved robust policies. • Approved trustee paperwork - in line with Diocesan requirements. • Challenged leadership on lockdown/remote learning provision – to clarify and record key reasoning. • Reviewed attendance – to reassure on accuracy of data presented . • Reviewed link governors' documentation and processes – to ensure appropriate evolution to ensure maximum fit for purpose. • Obtained oversight of safeguarding/wellbeing of children during lockdown and moving forwards. 	N/A
14	<p>Date of next meeting: Thursday 20th May 2021 - via virtual conference facilities unless guidance advises otherwise.</p>	Note

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.54pm

Signed..........

Date.....19.05.21.....