

**By Brook Valley Academy Trust**  
(Company Registration Number 8020467)  
**Academy Board Meeting**  
**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024**



**Minutes**

**Present:** Rosemary Jago (“**RJ**”), Deborah Henshall (Head teacher) (“**DH**”), Natasha Nicholas (“**NN**”), Jaclyn Cross (“**JC**”), Merope Sylvester (“**MS**”), Craig Parrott (“**CP**”) and (from 6.20pm) Elizabeth Gilbertson (“**EG**”)

**In Attendance:** Michelle Hocking (Clerk/Company Secretary) (“**MH**”)

**Apologies:** David New (“**DN**”), Martin Lowe (“**ML**”) and Sarah Wren (“**SW**”)

Item	Minute	Action
	<b>Opening Prayer</b> JC led the opening prayer	
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> RJ took the chair and opened the meeting at 6.03pm. Apologies were noted and accepted from DN, ML and SW. RJ declared that a quorum was present and formally welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly MS at her first meeting as a formally appointed governor.	
2.	<b>Pecuniary and Business Interests Register</b> 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. <sup>1</sup>	
3.	<b>Minutes of last meetings:</b> <b>AGM 27 November 2023:</b> <a href="#">BBV AGM Minutes 27.11.23</a> <b>The AGM minutes dated 27 November 2023 were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting. <u>ACTION:</u></b> <u>Clerk to circulate the approved AGM minutes to the members.</u>  <b>Board 27 November 2023</b> <a href="#">Board Minutes 27.11.23</a> <b>The minutes of 27 November 2023 were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting</b>  <b>Matters arising not covered elsewhere:</b> <a href="#">AGM Actions Log</a>	Clerk

<sup>1</sup> EG also confirmed this upon her arrival

	<a href="#">FGB Actions Log 2023 24.docx</a>	
5	<p><b>Headteacher Report</b> Termly Monitoring Report circulated.</p> <p>DH highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date when circulated</li> <li>• Term 3: 1 x fixed term suspension (for 1.5 days) this week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Child on reduced timetable supported by Education Welfare Officer (<b>EWO</b>) and Behaviour Support (parents are supportive)</li> <li>○ This is a sensitive, ongoing situation – the decision to suspend was not taken lightly but in the best interests of the child</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The board discussed, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued thanks to DH and the rest of the staff for the time and attention spent to support a significant number of emotional needs in the school</li> <li>• It is acknowledged that DH and the deputy headteacher are spending significant amounts of time supporting specific behavioural challenges</li> <li>• Additional resource and support are required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teaching Assistant (<b>TA</b>)/Midday Supervisory Assistant (<b>MDSA</b>) post – advertisement had been run twice with no applicants</li> <li>○ The existing staff are excellent – very flexible and supportive of the children and each other (including senior leaders)</li> <li>○ Staffing of nurture provision (particularly over lunchtime and in the afternoon) is needed</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>DH added that the costed School Improvement Action Plan (<b>SIAP</b>) <a href="#">By Brook Valley Primary SIP 24.01.09.docx</a> is in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs noted but not attributed specific monetary value</li> <li>• Scrutiny of cost/benefit is ongoing (particularly with regard to subject leadership)</li> <li>• Draft circulated remains subject to further input from staff at next week’s staff meeting – will then be reviewed again by the School Improvement Adviser (<b>SIA</b>)</li> </ul> <p>The board observed that many of the actions in the SIAP came out in the Local Authority’s (<b>LA’s</b>) supportive review and the SIAP actions are clearly pulled through into the Self Evaluation Form (<b>SEF</b>) (also circulated): <a href="#">By Brook Valley Primary SEF 30.11.23.docx</a></p>	
6	<p><b>Policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recommended by F&amp;P: Pay <a href="#">Pay policy 2023 updated pay scales rec'd by F&amp;P 12.01.24.docx</a></b></li> </ul> <p><b>(b) Recommended by F&amp;E:</b></p> <p><b>(i) RE: <a href="#">RE Policy 2022 updated for FGB 2024.docx</a></b></p>	

	<p>(ii) Admissions: <a href="#">Admissions-policy-2025-2026 draft for FGB.docx</a>  (iii) Accessibility Policy - deferred</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended by C,T&amp;L: None, next meeting 22 January 2024</li> </ul> <p>Subject to new vision statement being added, all policies listed above approved/ratified in the form circulated (as recommended by the relevant committee. <b>ACTIONS:</b> (i) Clerk to add new vision statement and arrange for filing/publication (as relevant) of the above-listed policies as approved policies and (ii) add Accessibility Policy to the next agenda.</p> <p><b>EG joined the meeting at 6.20pm</b></p> <p>DH explained the processes for published admission number (<b>PAN</b>) and seven yearly consultations on Admissions Policy (required even if no changes to the Admissions Policy). The board noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No changes proposed to the Admissions Policy as its prioritisation complied with mandatory provisions and it was not permitted to change this as previously discussed</li> <li>Whilst the LA had advised that the seven yearly consultation was not yet due, this did not accord with internal calculations</li> <li>DH should, in consultation with the board, be at liberty to accept children above PAN where permitted/desirable in the best interests of the children</li> </ul> <p><b>It was unanimously agreed that the Admissions Policy be consulted upon and in principle (but decided on a case-by-case basis) DH be authorised to exceed PAN where necessary/permmissible within current regulatory constraints. ACTION: DH to arrange consultation on the Admissions Policy (prudent measure) and confirm to the LA that the school is, in principle, prepared to exceed PAN where necessary.</b></p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>DH</p>
7.	<p><b>Scheme of Delegation (SoD)</b></p> <p>It was noted that committees' comments had been incorporated in the version circulated: <a href="#">Scheme of Delegation.docx</a>.</p> <p><b>The Scheme of Delegation was, subject only to updating of the dates on the front page, unanimously approved in the form circulated.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: Clerk to update the dates on the SoD and file as an approved document.</b></p>	Clerk
7.	<p><b>Safeguarding/Single Central Record Update</b></p> <p>JC reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring continues – JC continues to meet termly with DH and also the SENDCo/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (<b>DDSL</b>), last meeting was with the DDSL and included introduction to the new</li> </ul>	

	<p>Admin and Health &amp; Safety Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She was liaising with the new Admin and Health &amp; Safety Officer to arrange review of the Single Central Record (<b>SCR</b>)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>ACTION:</u></b> Clerk to confirm provision of identity documents to DH via email to the Admin and Health &amp; Safety Officer.</p>	Clerk
8.	<p><b>Link Governors Update: <a href="#">Visit Reports</a></b></p> <p>Plea for more visits to be conducted and visit reports completed/uploaded – governors reminded again that a variety of visits ‘count’ and provide insight into the school/opportunities to independently verify what is reported by leadership in governors’ meetings.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Curriculum, Teaching &amp; Learning (CT&amp;L) Committee Report/Minutes (matters arising)</b></p> <p><a href="#">20 November 2023</a> <a href="#">22 January 2024</a></p> <p>No update in DN’s absence and no meeting since the last FGB. Questions were invited – there were none.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Foundation &amp; Ethos (F&amp;E) Committee Report/Minutes/Action Plan (matters arising)</b></p> <p>It was noted that the minutes and associated documents have been circulated: <a href="#">Term 3 Meeting - 9 January 2024</a></p> <p>JC highlighted that she and DH attended Diocesan conference in November which highlighted the Church/School Partnership award – the school planned to work towards this next year: <a href="#">Church School Partnership Award - Diocese of Bristol (anglican.org)</a></p> <p>Questions were invited – there were none.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Finance, Premises, Staffing &amp; HR (F&amp;P) Committee Report/Minutes/Finance Report/Budget Approval and Risk Register Update</b></p> <p>It was noted that minutes and associated documents were available: <a href="#">Term 3 Meeting - 12.01.24</a></p> <p>EG highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cathryn MacDougall’s (Finance &amp; HR officer) last F&amp;P meeting – thanks were extended for all her support and very clear monthly management accounts and commentary.</li> <li>• End of November budget monitoring (latest) shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revenue income outturn at year end 23-24 is £1,103.8k against a budgeted outturn of £1,057.5k. (increase in expected income of £46.3k across the year)</li> <li>○ Revenue expenditure outturn at year end 23-24 is £1,137.3k against a budgeted outturn of £1,108.4k. (increase in expenditure of £28.9k)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The expected revenue outturn at year end 23-24 is an in-year deficit of £33.5k against a budgeted in-year deficit of £50.9k.- this is an adverse movement from last month of £7.3k <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ due to the recruitment of a new TA/MDSA at an additional cost of £5.9k,</li> <li>▪ an increase of £1.0k re additional staff training budget,</li> <li>▪ an increase of £0.8k for updated DBS checks for staff,</li> <li>▪ an increase of £0.3k for a new Music/Computing subscription</li> <li>▪ offset by a £0.8k saving on ASC pensions due to a new member of staff opting out.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ The in-year deficit will reduce our revenue free reserves moving into 24/25 from £136.8k to £103.3k.</li> <li>○ This would see revenue free reserves equivalent to 12.2% of GAG income.</li> </ul> <p>EG emphasised that the reserves being slightly in excess of current reserves policy could still be justified on the basis that a significant deficit is still forecast at the end of year 2 although F&amp;P do not believe there is a need to take specific action at this time.</p> <p>EG further highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no budgeted position for cyclical/programmed maintenance of the building (F&amp;P are prioritising this)</li> <li>• There is a variance of c. £!K overspend on training budget which, with the benefit of hindsight, could have been (at least partially) predicted given staff changes, upskilling, etc.</li> <li>• Whilst the position remains challenging – the monitoring is realistic and accurate (particularly due to the decision to provide for 5% inflation - ignoring LA advice to budget only for 3%)</li> </ul>	
12.	<p><b>Governor Training and Participation</b></p> <p><b>(a) Priority/Annual:</b></p> <p><b>(i) Cyber awareness all: <a href="https://www.ncsc.gov.uk">Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK</a></b></p> <p><b>(ii) Safer Recruitment (every 3 years): RJ, JC and DN all up to date</b></p> <p><b><u>ACTIONS:</u> (i) All complete priority training and upload certificates and (ii) DH to source online safety training.</b></p> <p><b>(b) Brochure on Teams + Cascaded training materials: <a href="#">Training</a></b>  <b><u>ACTION:</u> All to book LA training via the Clerk.</b></p> <p><b>(c) Ofsted Preparedness: <a href="#">Ofsted Preparedness</a></b>  Ofsted Preparedness folder and its contents noted.</p>	<p><b>All DH</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p>
13.	<p><b>Chair's Update</b></p> <p>Premises: Following on from F&amp;P update, the board noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some businesses encourage staff to volunteer as part of corporate responsibility ethos. <b><u>ACTION: RJ to send letters to local businesses to request practical assistance with school premises minor maintenance/decorating, etc as part of corporate responsibility undertakings.</u></b></li> <li>• There may be some with expertise and/or availability to assist within</li> </ul>	<p><b>RJ</b></p>

	<p>the school's parental community <b>ACTION:</b> RJ/DH to contact parent community (via newsletters/personal approaches) for assistance with premises management (minor maintenance/decorating, etc)</p> <p>New Governor: RJ reported that Lisa Nicolson (ex-governor) (LN) was willing and able to rejoin the board. <b>The co-option of LN was unanimously approved with immediate effect</b> <b>ACTION</b> Clerk to take up references on LN.</p> <p>Contracts: RJ reported that she and the new Admin and Health &amp; Safety Officer had reviewed/audited the contract documentation in school to produce an up-to-date contracts schedule. The school has a significant number of small contracts, but the initial priorities are the four main contracts:  (1) Catering  (2) Cleaning  (3) HR  (4) Audit  Catering, Cleaning and HR: RJ/Admin and Health &amp; Safety Officer will clarify terms/appropriately document (currently informal) contract extensions until the end of this academic year. None of these quite meet the threshold of £30,000 above which a tender process is mandatory pursuant to BBV's financial regulations manual. However, given that they are:  - close to the threshold  - significantly larger than any of the other contracts held by the school  - have not been market tested for some time  - provide vital services  Audit: The same internal regulatory points referred to above apply to the audit contract and additionally the provisions of the Academy Trust Handbook: Academy Trust Handbook 2023 which says (p.31 para 4.5) "Trusts should retender their external audit contract at least every five years and must consider the relevant points in 4.15 when evaluating." The audit provision was last tendered in July 2019.  F&amp;P recommend that all four of these contracts are put out to formal tender for ongoing services next year, with papers being brought to/process commenced at the next F&amp;P meeting. <b>It was unanimously agreed that the Catering, Cleaning, HR and Audit contracts be put out to formal tender as per F&amp;P's recommendation.</b></p>	<p>RJ/DH</p> <p>Clerk</p>
	<p><b>AOB</b>  Skills Audit: Will be considered in recruitment/training needs.</p> <p>Approval of HT Recruitment Working Party: RJ proposed that the headteacher recruitment working party comprise: herself (as chair of governors), JC, EG and DN (as committees' chairs) and LN (supported administratively by the Clerk). <b>The composition of the headteacher recruitment working party and delegation to that party was unanimously agreed (RJ, JC and EG abstaining in respect of their own appointments).</b> <b>ACTION:</b> Clerk to obtain agreement of absentees to appointments of (i) LN and (ii) HT working party</p> <p>Staff/Governor Social: The board discussed the desire to conduct a staff/governor social event at a mutually convenient time <b>ACTION:</b> NN</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

	<p><u>to check with staff on suitable dates for staff/governor social (possibly 9<sup>th</sup> February/end of TD Day)</u></p> <p>Parents Evenings: Governors requested to attend upcoming parents' evenings if feasible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 3.30pm – 6.00pm: MS, RJ and JC agreed to attend</li> <li>• 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 3.30pm – 6.00pm: MS and EG agreed to attend</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that governors need not attend the whole evening, but presence at part of the event would be appreciated.</p> <p><b><u>ACTIONS:</u></b> (i) MS, JC and RJ to attend Parents' Evening on 1<sup>st</sup> February and (ii) MS and EG to attend Parents' Evening on 6<sup>th</sup> February</p> <p>DH advised that the length of school day consultation letter was available should any governors wish to review.</p>	<p><b>NN</b></p> <p><b>MS, JC and RJ</b> <b>MS and EG</b></p>
14	<p><b>How have we contributed to the vision of By Brook Valley C of E Primary School today?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received comprehensive headteacher report and well-linked SIAP and SEF</li> <li>• Approved key policies and SoD</li> <li>• Participation: encouraged more link governor visits, continuing to meet Single Central Record best practice requirements (exceeding simple compliance) and agreed prudent admissions consultation</li> </ul>	
15	<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b> <b>Thursday 14th March 2024 at 6.00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Note</b></p>

**Next meetings:**

9th May 2024  
18th July 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.20pm



Signed.....

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Date...14.03.24.....