

By Brook Valley Academy Trust
(Company Registration Number 8020467)
Academy Board Meeting
Thursday 9th May 2024



Minutes

Present: David New (“DN”), Deborah Henshall (Head teacher) (“DH”), Natasha Nicholas (“NN”), Jaclyn Cross (“JC”), Lisa Nicolson (“LN”), Merope Sylvester (“MS”), Craig Parrott (“CP”) and (joining virtually) Elizabeth Gilbertson (“EG”)

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

Apologies: Rosemary Jago (“RJ”) and Martin Lowe (“ML”)

Item	Minute	Action
	Opening Prayer JC led the opening prayer	
1.	Welcome and Apologies In RJ’s absence, DN took the chair and opened the meeting at 6.00pm. Apologies were noted and accepted from RJ and ML. DN 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.	Minutes of last meeting – 14 March 2024: BBV Academy Board Minutes 14.03.24 HTApproved Matters arising not covered elsewhere) FGB Actions Log 2023 24.docx <u>ACTIONS:</u> (a) DH to add (i) LN to national college governors’ list and (ii) add Online Safety to all governors’ National College watchlists and (b) all to complete online safety training by the end of May.	DH All
4.	Headteacher Report Termly Monitoring Report and HT Report circulated. DH highlighted: Behaviour Ongoing behaviour issue – support for staff and child in place	

	<p>Attendance Details in report. The board observed that the attendance and persistent absence figures are a real testament to the work the school does.</p> <p>Continuing Professional development (CPD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really good session with School Improvement Adviser (SIA): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ conducted ‘deep dive’ in Geography – building on Local Authority’s (LA’s) supportive review ○ SIA worked with DH and Geography subject lead • Second additional training day at the end of that week – at which, based on Geography discussions, all subjects were reviewed/plans tightened • Staff have been looking at curriculum offer – tightening and improving clarity – improving rigor and starting to look at next year’s curriculum. <p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>Q1: How much feedback have you received from parents about the extra training days?</p> <p>A: There was one who commented very early on, but nothing since. Addition training days (plus ½ day extra for Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) cover teacher) was requested for this year on the basis of recruiting three Early Career Teachers (ECTs) who couldn’t take on subject leadership (so greater burden on other teachers). All subject leaders have a ½ day per term to properly review the curriculum and conduct pupil conferencing. F&P committee have suggested this should continue next year.</p> <p>The board noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current recruitment: four additional members of staff next year – rational for continued additional training days to help embed new staff, cement subjects’ improvements, etc • Staff feedback is that this year’s sessions have been purposeful and impactful • Whilst provision INSET dates went out in the last newsletter, these could easily be changed • These additional training days support both quality of teaching and staff welfare (which also have direct and indirect impact on children) <p>Based on the volume of change and benefit this year and lack of negative parental feedback, it was unanimously agreed that the three extra INSET Days continue next year (with DH using her discretion as to when to schedule them across the year).</p>	
5.	<p>Policies:</p> <p>(a) Recommended by F&P:</p> <p>(i) Fraud It was noted that, whilst not mandatory, the committee recommended adoption of an anti-fraud policy and DH/the Clerk were liaising on drafting a suitable policy for By Brook Valley based on a model policy. ACTIONS: Clerk to (i) <u>provide a draft anti-fraud policy for DH’s review prior to circulating to governors and (ii) add Anti-Fraud Policy to the next F&P and FGB agenda.</u></p> <p>(ii) HR policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DBS: DBS Policy .docx b. Responsible Use Responsible Use Policy .docx 	

	<p>(iii) Risk Management – note of October update Risk Management Policy .docx</p> <p>(iv) Critical Incidents Critical Incident Policy .docx</p> <p>(v) Lettings Lettings Policy.docx</p> <p>(vi) Staff Governor Expenses Allowances Staff,Governor, Allowances Policy Approved March 2023 Review March 2024.docx</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is good practice to renew DBS checked if they were last conducted some time ago (for longstanding members of staff) or if a member of staff changes roles. For volunteers (including governors), it may be preferable to register for the update service (which is free of charge): DBS Update Service - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) the wording of the Responsible Use Agreement lacks clarity around governors taking responsibility for devices left in cars ACTIONS: (i) <u>Clerk to recirculate an amended version of the Responsible Use Agreement via online forms and (ii) all to (re-)complete the amended Responsible Use Agreement via online forms.</u> <p>It was unanimously agreed that (i) each of the HR policies listed in (ii)a. and b. and each of the policies listed in (iii) – (vi) (inclusive) above is approved in the form circulated.</p> <p>(b) Recommended by F&E:</p> <p>(i) Exclusion Exclusion Policy for review May 2024 The Exclusion Policy was unanimously agreed in the form circulated.</p> <p>(ii) Equality Deferred.</p> <p>(c) Recommended by C,T&L: None – meeting next week ACTIONS: Clerk to (i) file the approved policies as approved and, where appropriate, arrange for their publication on the school website and (ii) add Equality, Learning Outside the Classroom & Educational Visits and Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions to the next agenda.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Safeguarding/Single Central Record Update</p> <p>JC reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy Trust Governance Guide: Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) – says in para 7.9.3 Cyber security: “The board needs to understand the considerable damage cyber security attacks can cause to their trust. At least one trustee should complete the cyber security training.” – as discussed above, it is proposed that at By Brook Valley all governors (who are also trustees) complete this training. She had visited school and shared her visit reports: Agenda 6 Focus visit JC Safeguarding 190424 Agenda 6- Focus Visit JC SG staff 120324 Guidance shared at the last meeting is worth a re-read: Quick Read Safeguarding Responsibilities 	

	<p>Governors Safeguarding Training PowerPoint March 2024</p> <p>The board acknowledged that safeguarding culture as well as paperwork is key and all members of the board are confident that there is a strong and consistent safeguarding culture at By Brook Valley.</p>	
7.	<p>Link Governors Update: Visit Reports</p> <p>Plea for more visits to be conducted and visit reports completed/uploaded.</p>	
8.	<p>Curriculum, Teaching & Learning (CT&L) Committee Report/Minutes (matters arising)</p> <p>Update deferred as the next CT&L meeting is on Monday.</p>	
9.	<p>Foundation & Ethos (F&E) Committee Report/Minutes/Action Plan (matters arising)</p> <p>It was noted that the minutes and associated documents have been circulated: 13 May 2024</p> <p>JC highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience the Church Day – scheduled for June • JC has conducted review of the school website from a Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS) focus and fed back comments/updates suggested • The committee discussed renewing the church/school partnership award and also WIRE award¹ • Policies were discussed <p>Questions were invited – there were none.</p>	
10.	<p>Finance, Premises, Staffing & HR (F&P) Committee Report/Minutes/Finance Report/Budget Approval and Risk Register Update</p> <p>Term 5 Meeting - 03.05.24</p> <p>2024 Tender Documents</p> <p>EG reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the departure of the previous Finance/HR Officer there has been no budget monitoring (i.e. last monthly management accounts produced to the committee were in December 2023) • This is in technical contravention of the Academy Trust Handbook² • The committee have requested that the new Finance/HR Officer provides monitoring base by the end of this month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The committee has agreed to write to the auditors to advise that we do not intend to produce monthly management accounts for January 2024, February 2024, March 2024 or April 2024 	

¹ [WIRE Award - Diocese of Bristol \(anglican.org\)](#)

² [Academy Trust Handbook - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This in on the bases that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DH has assured that the in-school team are complying with spending policies ▪ It is best use of capacity available to move forwards – provided that the position as at the end of May is as expected – rather than focus on retrospective production of monthly management accounts (the current Finance/HR Officer would not have capacity to do this and the school would have to pay for external assistance) • EG (as chair of F&P) will meet with the current Finance/HR Officer to establish next year’s budget as it needs to be settled, approved and reported in the Budget Funding Report (BFR) by the end of the academic year. • Tender processes reported at the last meeting are ongoing <p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>Q2: Is the lack of capacity just time rather than skills deficit? A: Yes, the committee believes the current Finance/HR Officer knows what they need to do. They started in the middle of March and needed to get up to speed as a new starter, particularly using a different financial system to the one with which they previously worked.</p> <p>Q3: Are there any additional training needs which have been identified? A: Unknown at present. EG assured the board that if anything anomalous/unexpected is found when reconciliation is done, then further investigations will be undertaken.</p> <p>Q4: Is the support being given by EG is part of her role as chair of F&P, or is it straying into school leadership, operational areas? A: EG plans to talk with the Finance/HR Officer about setting the budget for next year, by way of strategic overview – not to discuss any detailed concerns e.g. the board’s decision (based on F&P recommendations) to not follow the LA inflation assumptions. DH added that the Finance/HR Officer was using Civica Support to get to grips with things, but the full training is very expensive. The board emphasised that, if training is required it must be completed (irrespective of cost) in order to ensure compliance with legal requirements.</p>	
11.	<p>Governor Training and Participation</p> <p>(a) Priority/Annual:</p> <p>(i) Cyber awareness all: Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK</p> <p>(ii) Online Safety (as mentioned above)</p> <p>(iii) Safer Recruitment (every 3 years): RJ, JC and DN all up to date</p> <p>(b) Brochure on Teams + Cascaded training materials: Training ACTION: All to book LA training via the Clerk.</p> <p>(c) Ofsted Preparedness: Ofsted Preparedness Ofsted Preparedness folder and its contents noted. The board acknowledged recent feedback about the inspection process was that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a focus on mental health awareness • leaders are given the opportunity to pause 	All

15.	How have we contributed to the vision of By Brook Valley C of E Primary School today? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received comprehensive headteacher report • Approved key policies • Robustly challenged financial records/ appropriate provision of financial oversight 	
16.	Date of next meeting: Thursday 18th July 2024 at 6.00pm	Note

Next meetings:

18th July 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.40pm

Signed.....

Date.....