

**By Brook Valley Academy Trust**  
(Company Registration Number 8020467)  
**Academy Board Meeting**  
**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025**



**Minutes**

**Present:** Merope Sylvester (“MS”), Rosemary Jago (“RJ”), Deborah Henshall (Head teacher) (“DH”), Natasha Nicholas (“NN”), Jaclyn Cross (“JC”), Craig Parrott (“CP”), Lisa Nicolson (“LN”) and (from 5.50pm) David New (“DN”)

**Present virtually:** Elizabeth Gilbertson (“EG”)

**Members in Attendance** (until the end of the AGM, agenda item 3, at 6.15pm):

MS (Chair as member), Owen Upton (“OU”) (Representative of Diocese of Bristol Academies Company Diocese of Bristol Education (“DBE”), Keith Ernest (“KE”) and Rosalind Edwards (“RE”)

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

**In Attendance virtually:** (until 6.15pm) Simon Cunningham, Moores (the company’s auditors) (“SC”)

**Apologies:** Martin Lowe (“ML”)

Item	Minute	Action
	<b>Opening Prayer</b> JC led the opening prayer	
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> MS took the chair and opened the meeting at 5.41pm. Apologies were noted and accepted from ML and it was noted that DN was running a little late. MS declared that a quorum was present and formally welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly OU, KE, RE and SC – present for the AGM	
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.	
<b>3. AGM</b> AGM Business Items noted: <a href="#">AGM Notice 2024 25 Master ProformaJan2025FINAL.doc</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last AGM minutes (27 November 2023) <a href="#">BBV AGM Minutes 27.11.23 ChairHTApproved.docx</a> – approved in January 2024 board meeting</li> <li>• Ratification of the accounts</li> </ul>		

[BBV accounts FY24 - signed\[1\].pdf](#)  
[Accounts Approvals Register Dec 2024.docx](#)

- Review of management letter points [BBV Audit Summary Report 2024\[1\].pdf](#)
- Any other matters
  - Subsequent events confirmation given at December meeting
  - Electronic publication:
    - Filed at ESFA 20.12.24
    - Published on school website: [By Brook Valley C of E Primary School - Statutory Academy Documents](#)
    - Filed at Companies House: due May 2025 [BY BROOK VALLEY ACADEMY TRUST overview - Find and update company information - GOV.UK](#) **ACTION:** SC to arrange for filing of the 23/24 at Companies House.

**The meeting adjourned for the AGM 5.42pm – 6.15pm**

It was noted that during the AGM:

- The accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 (**Accounts**) were laid before the members, the auditors provided a summary and members’ questions were answered
- The trustees/governors confirmed that in their meeting in December they had:
  - Approved the Accounts, together with the associated Audit Summary (including Management Letter) and Letter of Representation
  - Confirmed the representations contained in the Letter of Representation and that, so far as they were aware, all relevant matters are disclosed in the Accounts and there are no subsequent events to report – i.e., no financial commitments, contractual problems/disputes/contingent liabilities, legal claims – ongoing or anticipated (including staffing), related parties’ transactions or post balance sheet events to disclose

<b>4</b>	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 FGB</b>  <b>The minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> December meeting were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting.</b>  <a href="#">BBV Academy Board Minutes 04.12.24 v1 - Copy.docx</a>  <a href="#">FGB Actions Log 2024 25.docx</a></p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Governance Structure</b>  <b>(a) Medium term strategy:</b>              a. Vacancies/recruitment              b. Skills  <b>(b) Governance Review:</b>              a. Roles and Responsibilities              b. Succession Planning              c. Detailed review of Scheme of Delegation              d. Priority documentation (identification and delegation for production/review)</p> <p>MS explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy session scheduled for 07.02.25 (9.30am – 2.00pm at YK Village Hall) would cover the above as part of holistic strategic discussions</li> <li>• Key areas to include in discussions in February:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Risk priorities (bringing together individual committees’ views into holistic overview)</li> <li>○ School vision &amp; values (refresh and structures/capacity required to help delivery):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deployment/capacity</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment</li> <li>▪ Communications with stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>DN confirmed that he was unable to attend the strategy session on that date. <b>ACTIONS:</b> (i) DN to liaise with LN to agree Curriculum, Teaching &amp; Learning Committee (CT&amp;L) input to the strategy session (to be communicated by LN on behalf of the committee in DN's absence) and (ii) all governors to attend 07.02.25 strategy session if at all feasible).</p>	<p><b>DN/LN</b> <b>All</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Headteacher Report (including costed School Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) and Self Evaluation Form (SEF) Review)</b> HT Report and Termly Monitoring Report circulated. DH highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of illness before Christmas (staff and children) – 95% attendance overall <b>ACTION:</b> <u>DH to add national attendance comparators to the HT Report after the meeting.</u></li> <li>• Safeguarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deputy Headteacher has completed deputy designated safeguarding lead training</li> <li>○ DH is booked to complete Single Central Record (SCR) training – to help bridge gap pending recruitment to office vacancies – JC confirmed she would also complete that training <b>ACTION:</b> <u>DH and JC to complete SCR training.</u></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lots of wider curriculum activities detailed in the HT Report (including Yr3/4 visit to Ashmolean Museum in Oxford this term)</li> </ul> <p>MS (as foundation governor) observed that the pre-Christmas church service she attended was brilliant – with the children engaged and extremely well-behaved and positive feedback received from parents.</p>	<p><b>DH</b></p> <p><b>DH and JC</b></p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Policies:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Recommended by Finance &amp; Premises Committee (F&amp;P): None</b></p> <p><b>(b) Recommended by F&amp;E:</b></p> <p><b>a. Accessibility</b> It was noted that the Accessibility Policy is being finalised by the Special Educational Needs &amp; Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) <b>ACTION:</b> <u>Accessibility Policy to be brought to the next meeting for ratification and Clerk to add to the next agenda accordingly.</u></p> <p><b>b. Equality Information Policy</b> It was noted that, following discussions at F&amp;E, the objectives had been tidied slightly and details of how monitoring is conducted clearly stated. <b>Subject to the addition of 'house-styled' front page, the Equality Information Policy was unanimously approved in the form circulated.</b></p> <p><b>(c) Recommended by C,T&amp;L:</b></p> <p><b>a. Special Educational Needs &amp; Disabilities (SEND) Policy:</b> <b>The SEND Policy was unanimously approved in the form linked below:</b> <a href="#">SEND Policy</a></p> <p><b>b. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy</b> DN reported that CT&amp;L were due to review/approve the EYFS</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>

	<p>Policy in its meeting on Monday <b><u>ACTION:</u></b> Clerk to add EYFS Policy to the next agenda.</p> <p><b><u>ACTIONS:</u></b> Clerk to arrange for filing/publication (as relevant) of the Equality Information and SEND policies as approved policies.</p>	Clerk
7.	<p><b>Scheme of Delegation (SoD)</b>  <b>The SoD was unanimously approved in the form circulated (pending any changes suggested or required as a result of strategic discussions on 07.02.25). <u>ACTION:</u> Clerk to file/publish the SoD as an approved document.</b></p>	Clerk
8.	<p><b>Safeguarding/Single Central Record Update</b>  JC reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authority (LA) audit completed and submitted</li> <li>• Her last link governor visit (towards the end of last term): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ spanned lunchtime – following a concern raised by a parent regarding lunchtime supervision she chose to see for herself what happens</li> <li>○ confirms that lunchtime in school is a major operation: some children are in the hall eating school dinner whilst others are in classroom eating packed lunch – with a rota of children eating/playing</li> <li>○ confirms that someone is always there and, utilising the large windows of the classrooms, staff always have ‘eyes on’ children in what is a very dynamic situation</li> <li>○ notes that there is a rota for who plays with what equipment on which days</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The board observed the need to maximise the outdoor areas and their management, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cotswolds Wardens (accompanied by young people from the local agricultural college) are coming in to help with repairs and maintenance of outside areas including the pond and willow walk</li> <li>• Parents and wider community volunteers’ capacity should also be sought and maximised <b><u>ACTION:</u></b> DH/MS to include request for <u>parent/community assistance with outside areas’ maintenance via newsletters/parish magazine, etc.</u></li> </ul>	DH/MS
9.	<p><b>Link Governors Update</b>  <b>(a) Visit Reports: <a href="#">Visit Reports</a></b>  DN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmed summary prepared for CT&amp;L on Monday</li> <li>• Reminded all governors to visit school (and produce reports) as much as possible</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commented that comments about positive behaviour observed are great</li> </ul>	
10.	<p><b>Curriculum, Teaching &amp; Learning (CT&amp;L) Committee Report/Minutes/Action Plan (matters arising)</b>  <a href="#">Term 2 02 Dec 2024</a>  <a href="#">Term 3 27 Jan 2025</a></p> <p>DN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirmed CT&amp;L had not met since the last FGB (next meeting scheduled for Monday) although the December minutes had been circulated</li> <li>Reported highlights of the December meeting were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Maths Subject Leader presented – came across very strongly</li> <li>SEND Policy was reviewed and approved</li> <li>Pupil Premium Report was deferred, for ratification on Monday</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>ACTION:</u></b> Clerk to add ratification of Pupil Premium Report to the next agenda.</p> <p>Questions were invited – there were none.</p>	Clerk
11.	<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 14 January 2025</a></p> <p>JC highlighted the school visits noted with focus on increased visibility of governors.</p> <p>It was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents’ Evening 4<sup>th</sup> February – MS and RJ have agreed to run a governor ‘stall’ – to be available for parents to have an informal chat about governance/consider applying to be a governor – all governors welcome to join this session for as long as they can make themselves available</li> <li>MS met with an interested parent to whom she was open and honest about the workload involved in governance, explained that there is a formal process for appointment of parent governors and invited to chat again at the Parents’ Evening mentioned above</li> </ul>	
12.	<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 had been circulated and financial matters discussed as part of AGM:  <a href="#">Term 3 Meeting 17.01.25</a></p> <p>CP highlighted, in addition to the financial matters discussed in the earlier AGM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra audit fees: The committee discussed the c.£3K + VAT additional fees incurred by the auditors in supporting the former</li> </ul>	

	<p>finance officer with the year-end/audit close, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The auditors had gone above and beyond this year</li> <li>○ As a gesture of goodwill, SC and team had tried to absorb the costs as much as feasible</li> <li>○ The committee recommended payment of the additional fees</li> </ul> <p><b>The board unanimously supported and ratified F&amp;P decision that the additional audit fees be paid forthwith.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Health &amp; Safety/Compliance Risks: The committee acknowledged that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There was no contingency in the budget for significant, unanticipated buildings and infrastructure costs</li> <li>○ The risk of boiler failure had increased substantially following a recent malfunction – previous advice indicates that the boilers are reaching the end of their life and, due to their age, obtaining replacement parts is increasingly challenging</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>ACTION: Draft buildings maintenance plan to be considered (including building contingency into the budget) at the next F&amp;P.</u></b></p>	
13.	<p><b>Governor Training and Participation</b></p> <p>(a) <b>Brochure on Teams + Cascaded training materials:</b>  <a href="#">Training Brochure (15).pdf</a>  <a href="#">Training</a></p> <p><b><u>ACTION: All to book LA training via the Clerk.</u></b></p> <p>JC reported that she and MS had attended diocesan training linked to the SIAMS strands – with some particularly good sessions on collective worship and vision <b><u>ACTION: JC to share the diocesan training materials via upload to the TEAM training folder.</u></b></p> <p>MS reported that she was booked to attend new chair of governors training.</p> <p>(b) <b>Ofsted Preparedness: <a href="#">Ofsted Preparedness</a></b>  Ofsted Preparedness folder and its contents noted.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>JC</p>
14.	<p><b>Chair’s Update</b>  All updates noted above.</p>	
	<p><b>AOB</b>  <b>Office Staff</b>  As discussed in the AGM, it was noted that DH was formulating a new role description with a view to advertising for an office manager role – encompassing finance and contracts management.</p> <p><b>Social</b>  It was noted that a staff and governors’ social event – meal at the local pub – was scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> January and all are invited – menu circulated for pre-ordering.</p> <p><b>Admissions</b>  DH reported that the only consultation response was from the LA and was supportive.  <b>The Admissions Policy was unanimously approved in the form</b></p>	

	<p><b>circulated. ACTION:</b> DH/Clerk to arrange for filing and publication of the <u>Admissions Policy as an approved policy.</u></p> <p><b>Browne Jacobsen Fees</b>  DN reported that the amount proposed to be billed is twice the original estimate. RJ explained that, whilst legal costs often overrun estimates, the lawyers must discuss and agree additional costs in advance – she agreed to support him as necessary in challenging the extent of this uplift.  <b>ACTION:</b> DN to liaise with the lawyers to negotiate a reduction in fees.</p>	<p><b>DH/Clerk</b></p> <p><b>DN</b></p>
15	<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>• Committed to strategy session on 07.02.25 to focus on vision &amp; values, skills and communications</li> <li>• Supported staffing challenges – including job descriptions for office roles</li> </ul>	
16	<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b>  <b>Thursday 13th March 2025 at 6.00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Note</b></p>

**Next meetings:**

15 May 2025

17 July 2025

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.22pm



Signed.....

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Date.....