

**By Brook Valley Academy Trust**  
 (Company Registration Number 8020467)  
**Academy Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024**



**Minutes**

**Present:** David New (“DN”), Merope Sylvester (“MS”), Rosemary Jago (“RJ”), Elizabeth Gilbertson (“EG”), Deborah Henshall (Head teacher and Accounting Officer) (“DH”), Natasha Nicholas (“NN”), Lisa Nicolson (“LN”) and Craig Parrott (“CP”)

**In Attendance:** (until 6.50pm) Karen Robinson (Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”)) (“KR”), (until 6.50pm) Simon Cunningham, auditor (“Auditor”) and Michelle Hocking (Clerk/Company Secretary) (“Clerk”)

**Apologies:** Jaclyn Cross (“JC”) and Martin Lowe (“ML”)

Item	Minute	Action
	<b>Opening Prayer</b> MS led the opening prayer.	
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> It was noted that RJ was standing down as chair of governors (HUGE thanks extended) and so DN (current vice-chair of governors) took the chair and opened the meeting at 6.02pm. Apologies were noted and accepted from JC and ML. DN declared that a quorum was present and formally welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	<b>Pecuniary and Business Interests Register</b> It was noted that all present had completed the annual Related Parties Declaration of Interests forms. LN declared an interest in the AOB agenda item as she knew the complainants personally – it was agreed that her potential conflict would be dealt with by her leaving the meeting during discussion of this agenda item. No other interests were declared in the business of this meeting.	
2A	<b>Presentation of Accounts</b> Noted that the preliminary draft accounts for 23/24 (Y/E 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2024) had been circulated to the Finance & Premises Committee (“F&P”) shortly before the meeting. The Auditor reported that the audit team were at the school yesterday and it as hoped would be in a position to finalise the 23/24 in a format for approval by close of play tomorrow – subject to receipt of governance report from the board. <b>ACTIONS:</b> (i) Clerk to provide updated <u>administrative details (including attendance registers for FGB and each committee)</u> (ii) DH to provide updated operational details and (iii) RJ/EG	<b>Clerk</b> <b>DH</b> <b>RJ/EG</b>

to provide updated governance wording for inclusion in the final governance report.

The Auditor reported:

- Accounts' production was delayed due to a little more end of year reconciliation and costs centres' allocation work being required following a gap in school finance staff with no handover from the previous CFO
- No issues have been identified with the day-to-day book-keeping – these records are not materially incorrect or factually wrong
- Challenges have arisen around 'drawing a line in the sand' – determining the end of year position as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024
- The preliminary draft accounts (as circulated to F&P) will change following detailed reconciliation, including adjustments to:
  - Pupil Premium (which was overstated in the draft circulated) – shown as c.£43K rather than c.£27K
  - Prepayments and accruals
- These adjustments relate to 'correcting geography' – the bottom line is not anticipated to change significantly

#### Questions

**Q1:** So, current figures show surplus of c.£112K – how far adrift is that number?

A: Whilst we are unable to be definitive at the moment, the figures are potentially £10-12K off – so more accurately likely to be c.£100K surplus.

F&P members present observed that, in the figures they have reviewed, the end of year position forecast was c.£14K surplus, such adjustments would lead to virtually zero surplus and so concerns were raised as to whether the board could be advised to give 'going concern' assurances at this stage.

**Q2:** Are these surplus amounts over and above contingencies?

A: No, they are actual.

The Auditor emphasised that the errors identified (which will require the adjustment down of the surplus) relate to accounting entries duplications/errors around year end rather than actual cash.

F&P members present highlighted:

- The 'going concern' confirmation statement is a fundamental part of the governance report and looks forward at least 12 months
- Based on the above, the surplus at year end is – without taking into account any changes moving forwards – likely to be only a few hundred pounds
- The projected pupil numbers are within the budget

The Auditor noted:

- By Brook's financial position is not as challenging as many other schools
- There are nuances around the 'going concern' statement for single academy trusts and schools can run a deficit budget in certain

circumstances with the permission of the Education & Skills Funding Agency (**ESFA**)

Questions

**Q3:** How are such challenges usually managed?

A: Either through encouragement to join a multi-academy trust (**MAT**) (although this would be subject to plans to alleviate financial challenges and the financial incentive for MATs to take on struggling schools has been removed) or reducing costs (often through combining classes to reduce staffing costs). Some form of recovery plan would need to be submitted to the ESFA.

The Auditor stressed that he would be very surprised if, at this time next year, By Brook were not still a going concern unless at the next pupil census the number on roll (**NOR**) had markedly declined or pupil intake numbers significantly declined.

The board discussed, noting:

- Reluctance to combine classes unless absolutely necessary, predominantly due to:
  - perceived or actual impact on educational provision
  - imposition of operational constraints (maximum class sizes and impact on ability to grow numbers for future sustainability, etc)
- Relatively prudent NOR factored into budget and financial impact of higher intake than budgeted (DH noted that she had shown around approximately 40 families – many more than last year – and this did not include families with children already at the school whose younger siblings were anticipated to join)
- Following a previous period of declining NOR – reducing to c.180 at which the position was close to requiring a restructuring:
  - lots of initiatives have been put into place to support increase in NOR
  - savings have been implemented e.g. combining contracts, etc
  - increasing income (through wraparound care, external sports clubs, etc)
  - staffing is now stable
- The wraparound care offer is part of the school's USP – outsourcing would not be costs or resources effective and families value the fact that the provision is offered in-house, staffed by adults who know and are known by the children
- FoBBVS are very active – particularly this year and last year – and donate much-valued funds, although these are for additional items rather than to cover base costs (which would not be appropriate)

The Auditor noted headline and very provisional control observations/recommendations:

- Retention of a regularly updated fixed asset register (this is an Academy Trust Handbook (**ATH**) requirement)
- Trade creditors: as these are accounting entries, their frequency is at the board's discretion – many academies detail these only at year end, although By Brook's previous CFO did this monthly
- Prepayments and accruals: again, their frequency is discretionary and many academies detail only at year end although By Brook previous did them monthly

<p>The board discussed, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESFA have asked to see monthly management accounts</li> <li>• Given financial constraints and the board's desire to maintain close oversight to track the position accurately – it would be preferable to continue with full monthly reporting</li> </ul> <p><u>Questions</u></p> <p><b>Q4:</b> How much of KR's time would need to be ringfenced in order to complete prepayments and accruals on a monthly basis?  A: When everything is running smoothly, one whole day a month.</p> <p><b>Q5:</b> Would more time need to be ringfenced to produce the rest of the full monthly management accounts?  A: The time challenges/pressures on KR's time predominantly arise due to carrying a vacancy in the school office – KR is helping to cover the tasks associated with this role including, at certain times, being the only member of staff in the office. The vacancy will be filled from February and the role has been retained in the budget throughout (so there will be a slight saving for the period between the previous incumbent leaving and the new person starting in February).</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory accounts and audit report must be submitted to the ESFA by 31<sup>st</sup> December</li> <li>• The Auditor would circulate draft accounts (including reconciliation) to F&amp;P on Friday – for F&amp;P to review and discuss in a special meeting with the Auditor on Monday at 8.30am</li> <li>• Questions had been raised by the Diocese as a member – some of which related to financial matters</li> </ul> <p><b>It was unanimously agreed that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>F&amp;P meet with the auditor on Monday to review and recommend the draft accounts</b></li> <li>• <b>If and to the extent that F&amp;P cannot finalise the draft accounts for recommendation to the board following Monday's meeting with the Auditor, review and finalisation of the accounts for recommendation to the board is delegated to EG and RJ</b></li> <li>• <b>EG, RJ, DH, the Auditor and the Clerk together draw up responses to the questions raised by the Diocese and circulate these and the recommended accounts to all members with revised AGM notices</b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>ACTIONS:</u></b> (i) Auditor to provide revised accounts including reconciliations from the provisional draft accounts already circulated to F&amp;P (ii) F&amp;P and the Auditor to meet via TEAMS on Monday at 8.30am (iii) F&amp;P/EG and RJ to finalise accounts and recommend to the board via email (iv) all board members to raise any questions on/approve the accounts in the form recommended by email (v) DH and KR to ensure the approved accounts are submitted to the ESFA by 31.12.24 and published on the school website by 30.01.25 and (vi) Clerk to add ratification of email approval of the accounts to the next agenda.</p> <p><b><i>The Auditor and KR left the meeting at 6.50pm</i></b></p>	<p><b>Auditor</b></p> <p><b>F&amp;P</b></p> <p><b>F&amp;P/EG and RJ</b></p>
---	---

		<p>DH and KR</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Governing Body Structure:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Interim proposals – appointments to roles</b></p> <p>Following RJ stepping down, it was proposed that MS take on the role of chair for an interim period until the end of this academic year. It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All present had been given the opportunity to step forward had they so wished and no other member of the board wished to take on the role</li> <li>• Under the articles of association, the chair of governors is also a member of the academy trust company</li> </ul> <p><b>It was unanimously agreed that MS be and is appointed chair of governors with immediate effect to serve until [30 June 2024[the first meeting of the academic year 25/26] ACTIONS: (a) Clerk to (i) update the records to reflect the change of chair and (ii) draw up necessary documents to transfer company membership from RJ to MS (b) RJ and MS to (i) complete/sign documentation to transfer company membership as required and (ii) compose communication to parent regarding change in chair.</b></p> <p>Sincere thanks for all she has done as chair of governors was extended to RJ.</p> <p><b>(b) Medium term strategy:</b></p> <p>a. <b>Vacancies/recruitment</b></p> <p>b. <b>Skills</b></p> <p><b>(c) Governance Review:</b></p> <p>a. <b>Roles and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>b. <b>Succession Planning</b></p> <p>c. <b>Detailed review of Scheme of Delegation</b></p> <p>d. <b>Priority documentation (identification and delegation for production/review)</b></p> <p>MS explained that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She had agreed to step into the role of chair of governors for an interim period, during which she would scope out/put together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A strategic plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategy for dealing with questions raised (particularly at AGM)</li> <li>▪ Organising a specific strategy session with governors</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Skills audit – to identify any untapped potential/skills gaps to be closed by training and/or targeted recruitment</li> <li>○ Recruitment plan/succession planning strategy</li> <li>○ Communications around changes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>It was acknowledged that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been an incredibly tough year for staff and it is crucial that the much-postponed staff/governor social event takes place – the date of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 has been set and all governors are asked to attend if they are able</li> <li>• EG cannot be present in person at the AGM (on 23<sup>rd</sup> January) and may struggle to attend virtually – whilst the Auditor, KR and DH will</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>MS/RJ</p>

	<p>all be present, it is requested that any financial questions (from members or governors) are raised in writing in advance of the meeting to facilitate EG inputting into meaningful responses</p> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b> (a) MS to (i) draw up strategic plan for discussion (ii) arrange a focussed strategy session for governors (iii) circulate skills audit (via the Clerk), draw up recruitment plan/succession planning strategy (b) Clerk to (i) liaise with MS as necessary to support MS in the above governing body structure changes actions and (ii) request questions from all to be provided in advance when circulating AGM notices and (c) All governors to complete skills audit and (if feasible) attend strategy session</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>All governors</p>
4.	<p><b>Minutes of last meetings and matters arising:</b></p> <p><b>(a) 18 July 2024 FGB meeting</b>  The minutes of the meeting of 18 July 2024 in the form circulated were unanimously approved as an accurate record of that meeting and RJ authorised to sign them as chair of that meeting. RJ authorised the Clerk to affix her electronic signature to the minutes of 18 July 2024 accordingly. <b>ACTIONS:</b> Clerk to affix RJ's electronic signature to the minutes of 18 July and file them as approved.</p> <p><b>(b) 18 October 2024 Special FGB meeting</b>  The minutes of the special meeting of 18 October 2024 in the form circulated were unanimously approved as an accurate record of that meeting and EG authorised to sign them as chair of that meeting. EG authorised the Clerk to affix her electronic signature to the minutes of 18 October 2024 accordingly. <b>ACTIONS:</b> Clerk to affix EG's electronic signature to the minutes of 18 October and file them as approved.</p> <p><b>(c) <a href="#">FGB Actions Log 2024 25.docx</a></b></p>	
5.	<p><b>Postponed business:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Ratification of email approval of Committees, Panels, Working Parties and Named Governors (Appendix 1 to 18.10.24 minutes)</b>  The composition of committees, panels, working parties and named governors as set out in appendix 1 to the last minutes were unanimously ratified and approved. <b>ACTION:</b> Clerk to update the records accordingly.</p> <p><b>(b) Ratification of School Improvement Action Plan (Appendix 2 to 18.10.24 minutes)</b>  The School Improvement Action Plan was unanimously ratified and approved.</p> <p><b>(d) Ratification of email approval/comments on policies listed in the agenda (Appendix 3 to 18.10.24 minutes)</b>  Each of the policies listed in appendix 3 to the last minutes were unanimously ratified and approved in the form linked in that appendix <b>ACTION:</b> Clerk to arrange for filing and publication of each of the policies listed and linked in appendix 3 to the 18.10.24 minutes as approved policies.</p> <p><b>(d) Safeguarding Governor Update (Appendix 4 to 18.10.24 minutes)</b>  The safeguarding governor update was noted with thanks and no questions were raised on it.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

	<p><b>(e) Single Central Record Update (Appendix 5 to 18.10.24 minutes)</b> The single central record update was noted with thanks and no questions were raised on it.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Headteacher Report</b> It was noted that the Headteacher Report and School Improvement Action Plan (<b>SIAP</b>) had been circulated and discussed in detail at Curriculum, Teaching &amp; Learning Committee (<b>CT&amp;L</b>). DH invited questions. <u>Questions</u> <b>Q6:</b> In the SIAP action around safer recruitment there is no action included in the box – can this be corrected please? A: DH will review and add as necessary <b><u>ACTION: DH to add action re safer recruitment into the SIAP.</u></b></p> <p>The board observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CT&amp;L were impressed with the maths subject leader report which was brought to the last committee meeting – the committee are confident that there is a well-monitored and structured curriculum for maths</li> <li>• Such strengths reflect the impact of the additional subject leadership time and training days agreed by the board – DH reported that these have been used well by staff and she was confident that the standard observed with maths is replicated across all subject leaders' areas (even the Early Careers Teachers (<b>ECTs</b>) who are new to subject leadership and so being supported by subject leadership mentors as part of this time)</li> </ul> <p><u>Questions</u> <b>Q7:</b> Given that financial constraints have led to reduction in some of this support, can such high standards still be maintained? A: Yes – we have operationally redeployed Higher Level Teaching Assistant (<b>HLTA</b>) to cover in order to facilitate subject leaders continuing with this level of non-contact time. This year the ECTs are in their second year and so their non-contact time has reduced from 20% to 15% - this represents a slight saving in such a tight budget/staffing structure. The ECTs release time will also reduce further next year – to the standard 10% of all teachers. All staff are working really hard and being extremely flexible to minimise the impact of financial constraints on the quality of educational provision – but when it becomes possible to spend on any further support it would definitely be DH's priority to do so.</p> <p><b>Q8:</b> Given the redeployment of the HLTA as described, is there sufficient Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (<b>ELSA</b>) capacity maintained? A: Yes, another HLTA is being trained in ELSA.</p> <p>It was noted that staffing variables/uncertainty remain from September – whilst DH is not aware of any staff unhappiness, some staff may choose to leave for promotion, personal reasons, at end of temporary contract, etc.</p>	<p><b>DH</b></p>

	DH was thanked for her comprehensive report.	
7.	<p><b>Policies:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Recommended by F&amp;P:</b></p> <p>a. Pay Policy</p> <p>b. HR model policies</p> <p><b>The Pay Policy was unanimously ratified and approved in the form circulated.</b></p> <p>As detailed in the F&amp;P minutes circulated, it was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school had previously adopted it's HR provider's model policies</li> <li>• The robust administration of HR policies had lapsed slightly due to staff changes/lack of capacity in the office team</li> <li>• Having engaged a new HR provider, it would be prudent to adopt all of the new provider's model policies</li> </ul> <p><b>The board unanimously ratified and agreed the F&amp;P resolution that all Juniper HR Policies be deemed approved with effect from the date they are uploaded to the Juniper HR website, with formal governor review only taking place following amendment of them by Juniper HR (notwithstanding DfE guidance that certain HR policies be reviewed on an annual review cycle).</b></p> <p><b>(b) Recommended by F&amp;E:</b></p> <p>a. Accessibility - need to agree measurable objective(s)</p> <p>b. Equality Information - agreed to condense the preamble and focus on one or two objectives – linked to the SIAP</p> <p>c. Admissions – DH confirmed that the Admissions plan has been checked and uploaded to the website and a consultation period has now commenced, with the relevant parties informed.</p> <p><b>Subject to the comments and adjustments above, each of the Accessibility Plan, Equality Information and Admissions Policy were unanimously ratified and approved in the form recommended by Foundation &amp; Ethos Committee (F&amp;E) <u>ACTIONS: (i) DH to circulate the final, F&amp;E recommended versions of each of the Accessibility Plan, Equality Information and Admissions Policy for completeness and (ii) the Clerk to arrange for filing and publication of these agreed documents as necessary.</u></b></p> <p><b>(c) Recommended by C,T&amp;L:</b></p> <p>a. SEND (doc to follow CT&amp;L meeting 02.12.24)</p> <p><b>Subject to correction of a couple of typographical errors identified and change of dates, the Special Educational Needs &amp; Disabilities (SEND) Policy was unanimously ratified and approved in the form recommended by CT&amp;L <u>ACTIONS: (i) DN to circulate the final, CT&amp;L recommended version of the SEND Policy for completeness and (ii) the Clerk to arrange for filing and publication of the SEND Policy as necessary.</u></b></p>	<p>DH Clerk</p> <p>DN Clerk</p>
8.	<p><b>Mandatory documents:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Pupil Premium Report (strategy &amp; impact due by 31.12.24)</b></p> <p>It was reported that the Special Educational Needs &amp; Disabilities Coordinator (<b>SENDCo</b>) was working on the pupil premium report and CT&amp;L had suggested this be approved ex committee. <b><u>ACTIONS: (i) DN/CT&amp;L to liaise with SENDCo to agree the Pupil Premium Report (ii) DH to arrange for the agreed Pupil Premium Report to be published as necessary by 31.12.24 and (iii) Clerk to add ratification of the CT&amp;L</u></b></p>	<p>DN/CT&amp;L</p> <p>DH Clerk</p>

	<p><u>approved Pupil Premium Report to the next agenda.</u></p> <p><b>(b) Annual Accounts (due by 31.12.24) – post-filing AGM arrangements proposed</b></p> <p>As noted above, the approved accounts to be circulate to members as soon as feasible – requesting any comments or queries prior to Christmas if feasible (noting that the AGM is now scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 – which is after the accounts’ ESFA filing date of 31<sup>st</sup> December) <b>It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk was authorised to draw up, RJ authorised to sign and the Clerk authorised to dispatch revised AGM notices accordingly.</b> <u><b>ACTIONS:</b> (i) Clerk to draw up and circulate revised AGM notices (together with request to raise questions in advance) and (ii) RJ to review, approve and sign/authorise affixation of her electronic signature to the revised AGM notices.</u></p> <p><b>(b) Special Educational Needs Report</b></p> <p><b>Subject only to updating the dates, the SEND Report was unanimously ratified and approved in the form recommended by CT&amp;L ACTION:</b> <u>DN to notify SENDCo and ensure SEND Report is file and published as necessary.</u></p> <p><b>(c) Children Looked After Annual Report</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Children Looked After (<b>CLA</b>) Report (including previously CLA) forms part of the Pupil Premium Report.</p>	Clerk RJ
9.	<p><b>Scheme of Delegation</b></p> <p><b>Pending governance review discussed above and subject to inclusion of risk review in all committees’ Terms of Reference (as per item 15 below), the Scheme of Delegation was unanimously re-approved in its current form.</b></p> <p><u><b>ACTION:</b> Clerk to amend the committees’ terms of reference to include risk review, dates on the Scheme of Delegation and re-file/publish the Scheme of Delegation as an approved document.</u></p>	Clerk
10.	<p><b>Safeguarding/Single Central Record (SCR) Update</b></p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the knowledge that she was unable to attend this evening, JC had uploaded updates to the meeting folder prior to the meeting.</li> <li>• JC had confirmed that the SCR is up-to-date with no gaps or omissions</li> </ul>	
11.	<p><b>CT&amp;L Report</b></p> <p>DN (as chair of CT&amp;L) reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting took place on Monday – minutes to follow <u><b>ACTION:</b> DN to circulate CT&amp;L minutes when ready</u></li> <li>• As noted above, a strong maths subject leader report was given</li> <li>• Committee action plan was agreed – based on SIAP</li> <li>• As noted above, the SEND Policy was approved for recommendation to the board</li> <li>• The Early Years Foundation Stage (<b>EYFS</b>) Policy was briefly discussed and will be brought to the January committee meeting for detailed review and approval</li> <li>• Parent questionnaires responses were discussed</li> <li>• DH explained how high expectations and more explicit communications around these expectations were discussed at staff</li> </ul>	DN

	<p>meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The headteacher’s monitoring report and link governor reports were reviewed and discussed</li> <li>• Some questions around admissions were discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deferred entry applications were supported by CT&amp;L <b>The board unanimously ratified and approved CT&amp;Ls decisions regarding deferred entry applications</b></li> <li>○ DH mentioned that flexi-school application(s) had been received by the school but noted that she had discretion to decide these without reference to governors and did not give any details of these to the committee in order not to ‘taint’ governors in the event any appeal panel were required.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><i>RJ left the meeting at 7.50pm</i></b></p> <p>The board briefly discussed perceived and actual risks around deferred entry when reaching secondary school and whether it was incumbent on the school – even at this early stage – to signpost families to further information regarding the impact of deferred entry into the school system upon reaching secondary school age.</p> <p><b><i>DH and NN left the meeting at 7.51pm</i></b></p> <p>Governors noted that, anecdotally, they understood that deferred entry children were usually under pressure to rejoin their chronological year group as soon as possible at secondary school but the accuracy of and rationale for this was uncertain.</p> <p><b><i>RJ, DH and NN rejoined the meeting at 7.54pm</i></b></p> <p><b><u>ACTION: DH to check with local secondary schools what their policies are regarding deferred entry children and communicate/signpost affected families as necessary.</u><sup>1</sup></b></p>	DH
12.	<p><b>F&amp;E Report</b></p> <p>It was noted that the minutes had been circulated. There were no questions on the F&amp;E minutes.</p>	
13.	<p><b>F&amp;P Report</b></p> <p>EG (as chair of F&amp;P) reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes circulated and accounts details discussed above</li> <li>• Current forecasts (as reviewed at F&amp;P) show a slightly improved position (£85K deficit – movement from previous £102K deficit) subject to the following caveats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School is currently paying for alternative provision for a child which should be refunded – at least in part (DH added the cost of this is £60K with c.£53K expected to be refunded by the LA)</li> <li>○ Staffing costs provision had to be increased – pay wards and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Following the meeting, DH looked back at pupils who have previously and confirmed that there has never been an issue with them transferring to secondary school and staying in the year they are in – no question about them moving into what would be deemed to be their ‘correct chronological’ year.

	<p>increase in employers' national insurance contributions (whilst this may be funded in whole or in part, this is uncertain at present so F&amp;P have asked that the full cost, assuming no additional funding, is included in the budget by way of prudence) – according the board are warned to expect the November management accounts to look particularly poor</p> <p>It was acknowledged that staff are doing as much as they possibly can in very challenging circumstances and thanks were extended to all staff.</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the cancellation of the catering tender, F&amp;P had agreed a 12 months extension to the existing catering contract</li> <li>• Given that the office will not be fully staffed until February, there are tight time constraints on running another tender process and to impose a tender process on the new starter immediately they start would be unfair</li> </ul> <p><b>The extension to the current catering contract until August 2025 (as agreed by F&amp;P) was unanimously retrospectively ratified and negotiation and approval of further renewal (insofar as feasible on the same terms as currently) for a further 12 months was delegated to F&amp;P. ACTION: DH/F&amp;P to agreed further extension of catering contract until August 2026.</b></p>	DH/F&P
14.	<p><b>Governor Training &amp; Participation: Brochure on Teams + Cascaded training materials</b></p> <p>Details circulated noted and all reminded to book training via the Clerk.</p>	
15.	<p><b>Risk Review</b></p> <p>Noted that current risk register (and its review) is very F&amp;P-centric and there is a need to broaden the register to cover other areas of risk.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b> (i) Clerk to update all committees' Terms of Reference in the Scheme of Delegation to include risk assessment responsibilities (ii) DN, EG and JC (as chairs of committees) to ensure risk review is a standing agenda item at every committee meeting (iii) Clerk/MS to ensure that risk review is a standing agenda item at every FGB meeting – with a detailed review being conducted at least once a year.</p> <p><i>LN left the meeting at 8.05pm</i></p>	<p>Clerk DN, EG and JC</p> <p>Clerk/MS</p>
16.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>(a) Complaints' Update</b></p> <p>The discussion of this agenda item is recorded in an anonymised, confidential appendix to these minutes.</p> <p><i>LN rejoined the meeting at 8.25pm</i></p> <p><b>(b) Communication with Parents</b></p> <p>RJ reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An email from a Yr1 child's parent was referred to her (as then chair of governors) as a complaint</li> <li>• She and JC (as safeguarding governor) met with the parent – it quickly became clear that the concerns raised were discussion points</li> </ul>	

	<p>rather than a formal complaint and the meeting, which centred predominantly upon communications between school and parents, was quite positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key actions arising were noted, are being progressed and will be circulated to all governors <b><u>ACTION: RJ to circulate actions arising from RJ/JC meeting with Yr1 parent</u></b></li> <li>• The parent's concerns have been resolved but has generated a clear opportunity to speak to an independent person about some general communications and support parents can bring, etc.</li> </ul> <p>(d) <b>Admissions Consultation</b> DH reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The admissions consultation is in progress – consultation period ends next week</li> <li>• 1 response received so far: from the LA requesting that the policy specifically states that in-year transfers are to be made via Wiltshire Council</li> </ul> <p>The board noted that, whilst as an academy the governing board is the school's admissions authority, the school engages Wiltshire Council to administer its admissions and so to add such wording to the policy is not contentious as it merely clarifies what happens in practice. <b>The addition of the LA's requested wording to the Admissions Policy was unanimously approved. <u>ACTIONS: (i) DH/Clerk to add in-year transfers wording to the Admissions Policy and (ii) Clerk to add review of consultation responses and ratification of the final Admissions Policy to the next agenda.</u></b></p>	<p>RJ</p> <p>DH/Clerk Clerk</p>
17.	<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>• Reviewed financial information, compliance and sustainability</li> <li>• Appointed new chair of governors and considered strategic and succession planning</li> <li>• Received updates/detailed oversight of progress, planning, compliance and operational successes and challenges</li> </ul>	
5.	Date of next meeting (including AGM): 23 January 2025	

**Next meetings:**

**23 January 2025 – including AGM (5.30pm start)**

**13 March 2025**

**15 May 2025**

**17 July 2025**

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....