

By Brook Valley Academy Trust
 (Company Registration Number 8020467)
Academy Board Meeting
Thursday 27th November 2025



Minutes

Present: Merope Sylvester (“MS”), Deborah Henshall (Head teacher) (“DH”), Natasha Nicholas (“NN”), Jaclyn Cross (“JC”), Craig Parrott (“CP”), David New (“DN”) and Jenny George (JG)

Present virtually: Lisa Nicolson (“LN”)

Members in Attendance: Keith Ernest (“KE”) and (until the end of the AGM, agenda item 3, at 6.08pm): MS (Chair), Owen Upton (“OU”) (Representative of Diocese of Bristol Academies Company Diocese of Bristol Education (“DBE”) and Rosalind Edwards (“RE”)

In Attendance: (until 6.55pm) Bronwyn Lightowler, School Business Manager (“BL”) and Michelle Hocking (Clerk/Company Secretary) (“MH”)

In Attendance virtually: (until 6.08pm) Simon Cunningham, SumerAuditCo (the company’s auditors) (“SC”)

Apologies: Elizabeth Gilbertson (“EG”) and Martin Lowe (“ML”)

Item	Minute	Action
	Opening Prayer JC led the opening prayer	
1.	Welcome and Apologies MS took the chair and opened the meeting at 5.30pm. Apologies were noted and accepted from EG and ML. 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.	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. AGM AGM Business Items noted: AGM Notice 2025 26 Master ProformaJNov25v1.doc		

[BBV AGM AgendaNov2025.docx](#)

As the last meeting, at which the AGM documents were approved and delegated to MS, DH and MH to finalise and circulate, was not quorate **the board unanimously ratified the form of AGM documents circulated and delegation of their personalization and dispatch to MS, DH and MH.**

- Last AGM minutes (23 January 2025) [BBV AGM Minutes 23.01.25 Board approved.docx](#)
https://bybrookvalleyprimary.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/FGBMeetings/ESsmHQ13LYdLr mFdN_gLbXgBkLxfdmrLyzLbPS23rF38PQ?e=JLDUUC– approved in March 2025 board meeting
- Ratification of the accounts [By Brook FY25 accounts v12 11 25.docx](#)
- Review of management letter points [BBV Audit Summary - FY25 v2 12 11 25.pdf](#)
- Any other matters
 - Subsequent events confirmation
 - Electronic publication:
 - To be filed at DfE by the end of December
 - To be published on school website by the end of January
 - To be filed at Companies House: due May 2026

The meeting adjourned for the AGM 5.40pm – 6.08pm

OU, RE and SC left the meeting at 6.08pm

It was noted that during the AGM:

- The accounts for the year ended 31 August 2025 (**Accounts**) were laid before the members, the auditors provided a summary, and members' questions were answered
- The trustees/governors:
 - **Unanimously approved and ratified the accounts for the year ended 31.08.25 in the form circulated (subject to settlement of the 'going concern' statement and inclusion of minor administrative amendments identified.**
 - 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

ACTIONS: (i) BL/DH and MS to finalise the 'going concern' statement and circulate the final Accounts to governors via email (ii) BL to file the Accounts at the DfE (ii) MH to publish the Accounts on the school website and (iii) SC to arrange for filing at Companies House.

4	Finance, Premises, Staffing & HR Committee Report – key items pending next committee meeting: After School Club Pricing BL reported that the fees increase commenced with effect from 1 st September – this was urgently required to avoid use of core funding to
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<p>support the wraparound provision (as fees had not changed for some time, despite increasing staff costs) The board unanimously ratified the decision taken to increase the after-school club pricing.</p> <p>Laptops BL and DH reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the current laptops are so old that they are unable to support the Windows 11 upgrade • Staff are struggling to cover the whole IT curriculum with the devices currently available (although there are tablets in addition to laptops – their functionality is limited) • To comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), devices cannot be shared – all children must have access to their own device to maintain robustness of filtering and monitoring processes • Whilst there is no specific budget for more laptops, there is money in the bank, and it is proposed some of this is spent to support the ever-expanding IT curriculum • Four quotations have been obtained (as per summary circulated) and the suggested supplier is offering to supply 30 laptops at a cost of £7.5K <p>The board discussed, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quotations do not include insurance cover (for breakages, etc) and this is also not covered under the school’s existing insurances • Staff are proposing acquisition of 30 devices on the basis of this being enough for one full class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use can be rotated around relevant classes ○ Use of devices is a clear curriculum requirement ○ As mentioned, safeguarding requires one device for each child ○ Although no class exceeds 30 children, it would be preferable to have a couple of extra devices (to provide cover in the event of damage, etc) • It is best and common practice to maintain a rolling programme of replacement for IT over a five-year period <p>The board unanimously agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The immediate acquisition (using cash funds) of 32 laptops (based on the suggested supplier’s quotation • BL’s budgets for a five-year rolling programme of IT replacement moving forward <p>Catering Tender (due to commence January 2026) – oversight BL reported that commencement of the catering tender was on her ‘to do list’ for January 2026. <u>ACTION: Finance & Premises Committee (F&P) to monitor and input into the catering tender process and recommend the preferred caterer to the board.</u></p> <p>ICT Review/Tender consideration BL reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has extensive experience of working in schools ○ Has a large team (which suggests built-in capacity although communication is sometimes lacking, and untrained personnel 	<p>F&P</p>
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<p>have been deployed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fairly complex contractual arrangements with relatively lengthy notice periods ○ Is expensive – e.g. charging a flat rate for Windows 11 upgrade, irrespective of the number of devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alternative provider 1 (Apollo): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extensive experience of working in schools ○ Team of experts ○ Excellent references ○ Very expensive ● Alternative Provider 2 (EFX): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extensive experience of working in schools ○ Sole trader (so lack of back-up capacity) ○ Outstanding references from other schools – very responsive and knowledgeable ○ No minimum contract term – no notice required ○ Inexpensive (hourly rate) <p>Q1: Does the sole trader have capacity to take on more schools? A: Yes, although there is obviously a risk as there is no back up if he falls ill, etc.</p> <p>The board unanimously agreed that Alternative Provider 2 (EFX) be appointed on a trial basis.</p> <p><u>ACTIONS: BL to (i) proceed with engagement of EFX and (ii) report back on adequacy of provision in March.</u></p> <p>LA Finance Support BL reported that there is already budget of £1K for these services (which are ‘pay as you go’) and no changes or additional services are required at this stage. The board unanimously approved the continuation of the current LA Finance Support provision on these bases.</p> <p>Emergency Lighting update BL reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The initial priority issues with the emergency lighting have been resolved (works conducted on 31.10.25) – she noted that, as previously reported to governors, these were issues identified by the school’s fire and emergency contractors (Haven) in their last compliance report ● The contractors who conducted the works identified a few further issues which were not detailed in the Haven report – BL is gathering quotations for these additional works and will report back on costs in due course <p><u>ACTIONS: (i) BL to report back on costs of additional emergency lighting work identified and (ii) MH to add ratification of emergency lighting costs to the next agenda.</u></p> <p>Assets Management Plan It was noted that the assets management plan update (including addition of laptops) is in progress <u>ACTION: BL to update the assets management plan and F&P to monitor progress of the assets management plan.</u></p> <p>Internal Audit: Recommendations</p>	<p>BL</p> <p>BL MH</p>
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	<p>BL reported that she had approached various providers (as Juniper no longer offer internal audit or Data Protection Officer (DPO) services):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWAP: Very expensive and quote does not include breadth of services required • 1-West: Similar costs but include DPO services <p>Provider moving forward The board unanimously approved proceeding with 1-West for internal audit and DPO services based on the quotations’ summary provided by BL. ACTION: BL to proceed with 1-West for internal audit and DPO services.</p> <p>Foci for this year To be confirmed. ACTIONS: (i) <u>MH to circulate DfE recommended areas via email for governors’ consideration ex-committee</u> (ii) <u>consensus foci to be prioritised and ratification of these to be added to the next agenda.</u></p> <p>Photocopier ratification: Photocopier Contract Report for Gogs (1).docx The board unanimously ratified the email approval of the photocopier contract.</p> <p>AGM documents ratification It was noted that these had been ratified above.</p> <p>Trees Work BL and DH reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A trees survey was conducted in October half term – from which there is a long list of recommended actions • The survey has provided a RAG-rated list of actions and quoted c.£5K to complete them • A second quote is currently being obtained <p>ACTION: (i) <u>BL to circulate tree quotations and recommendations to governors in due course</u> and (ii) <u>MH to add ratification of tree works to the next agenda.</u></p> <p>On behalf of the board, DH and MS thanked BL for all her hard work and clarity and order she is bringing to the financial administration of the school.</p> <p><i>BL left the meeting at 6.55pm</i></p>	<p>BL/ F&P</p> <p>BL</p> <p>MH</p> <p>BL MH</p>
5	<p>Minutes of last meetings:</p> <p>(a) FGB Meeting 18 September 2025 BBV Academy Board Minutes 18.09.25ChairApproved.docx The minutes of 18th September meeting were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting.</p> <p>(b) FGB meeting 10 November 2025 BBV SPECIAL Academy Board Minutes 10.11.25 HTSBMApproved.docx The minutes of 10th November meeting were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting.</p>	

	<p>MS authorised MH to add her electronic signature to the approved minutes. ACTIONS: MH to add MS's electronic signature to the approved minutes and file and (as relevant) publish them.</p> <p>+ matters arising not covered elsewhere: FGB Actions Log 2025 26.docx</p> <p><i>DN briefly left the meeting to accompany BL to the car park (as some young people had congregated there)</i></p>	MH
6	<p>New Ofsted Framework Update Deferred in DN's absence.</p>	
7	<p>Headteacher Report (including School Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) and Self Evaluation Form (SEF) Review) Report circulated. DH highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TD Day at the end of Term 1 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online safety training session (DH cascaded NSPCC training she had attended) ○ Assessments focus session – following up on Ofsted areas for improvement • Yr 6 PGL Trip: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Very successful trip ○ Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) well-catered for (the PGL team were helpful, proactive and made excellent adaptations) <p>Q2: Did you receive good feedback from parents? A: Yes – and some much-appreciated cards and gifts for staff.</p> <p>MS and JC reported that they had attended the recent History 'linger & learn' session – which was well-attended by parents with good engagement from all present (children and adults).</p> <p><i>DN returned to the meeting at 7pm (confirming that the youths had moved on at his request)</i></p> <p>It was further highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback on quizzes had been received • JC and DH attended the Bristol Diocese Conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Good and varied speakers ○ Realistic understanding of challenges schools are facing • The Church/School Partnership Award documents were submitted to the local vicar and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) yesterday – the team are hopeful of achieving Silver award • Children's participation in UK Parliament Week in school has been interesting and included great discussions and voting, etc • Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE): Staff are reviewing the changes to guidance to consider whether any curriculum changes are required (well ahead of implementation time) • Religious Education (RE): DH 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attended Wiltshire RE Agreed Syllabus event ○ Met with the School Improvement Adviser (SIA) to review/update the School Development Plan/School Improvement Action Plan (SDP/SIAP) and School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) in line with the new Ofsted framework – including the RE syllabus ○ A diocesan colleague, who is a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspector, has advised on the SIAMS process and reassured the team that inspectors recognise the journey schools are on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number on Roll (NOR): DH has conducted 34 show arounds this year (compared with 36 last year). It was acknowledged that all are mindful of falling numbers and that one of the school's unique selling points is being a village school with seven classes (i.e. no mixed classes at present). ● Christmas Tree: A kind parent has, following a general request, agreed to donate a Christmas tree to school (following the success of the poppy display, staff felt a tree at the front of the school would be great) – governors suggested that, as part of the church school partnership, perhaps the local churches could be asked to donate a Christmas tree on a rotation basis moving forward. ● Choir: The school choir is very good and proving very successful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has performed at the Music Centre in Bradford-on-Avon (with three other schools) ○ Has been invited to perform at the Maud Heath Vineyard Christmas event ○ Is inclusive – with members ranging from four to eleven years old <p>The board briefly discussed alternative fundraising strategies, and it was suggested that parents may be willing to donate via purchasing from online 'wish lists' ACTION: LN to set up a 'wish list' via the school's Amazon account.</p>	LN
6 Co nt	<p>New Ofsted Framework</p> <p>DN presented as per the Appendix, highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The process focuses on curriculum and inclusion – management of strengths and areas for development ● Everything is looked at through the lens of inclusion (groups of children identified as needing adaptations – Disadvantaged, Pupil Premium, English as an Additional Language (EAL), etc PLUS e.g. as boys' writing) via case sampling (6 identified children – irrespective of size of school) ● Compliance Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to fit all of the criteria for each grade (8 graded areas – each with their own toolkit) ○ Assessment of whether areas required 'attention' or 'urgent attention' is somewhat subjective ● No exempt schools ● No short inspections ● Plan to schedule inspections every five years (although this is based on capacity and there is believed to be a current shortage of inspectors) ● More collaborative approach with big emphasis on foundational learning 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on sample children setting the tone – the mantra is that if a school is getting it right for the most disadvantaged, it is getting it right for everyone <p>Implications – before the call:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all staff (teaching and support staff) understand the toolkits for each area Maintain a strong SEF Maintain a relevant SIAP – ensure sensible actions are being taken and appropriate adaptations made Ensure up-to-date policies and procedures are published on the school website Draft a ‘script’ to help appropriate steering of initial phone call conversation between senior leaders and inspector <p>When the call comes –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support lead inspector to select the case samples Co-plan learning walks <p>During the inspection –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in learning walks Conduct ‘keeping in touch’ meetings 	
8	<p>Risk Management: Risk Register Sept 2025.xlsx SFSO Email.pdf By Brook Valley AT Outcome letter 30.10.25.pdf The positive letters circulated and their evidence of reduced risks in these areas were noted.</p>	
9	<p>Policies: SUBJECT VISION STATEMENT UPDATE:</p> <p>(a) Recommended by F&P:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Health & Safety: Health & Safety Policy MS Update Nov. 2025.docx (ii) Charging & Remissions – ratification of 10.11.25: Charging & Remissions (iii) Data Protection – ratification of 10.11.25: Data Protection (iv) Responsible Use – ratification of 10.11.25: Responsible Use (v) Pay <p>Subject to inclusion of the updated vision statement, each of the Health & Safety, Charging & Remissions, Data Protection and Responsible Use policies were unanimously approved in the form circulated.</p> <p>ACTIONS: (i) MH to add vision statement to each of the Health & Safety, Charging & Remissions, Data Protection and Responsible Use policies and file (and where relevant publish) them as approved policies (ii) DH to finalised and circulate the Pay Policy for approval via email and (iii) MH to add ratification of the Pay Policy to the next agenda.</p> <p>(b) Recommended by F&E:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Attendance: Attendance Policy 25 26 	<p>MH DH MH</p>

	<p>(matters arising)</p> <p>JC reported that the minutes of the last meeting had been circulated, with many of the key points already mentioned. Questions were invited. There were none.</p>	
13	<p>Governor Training & Participation:</p> <p>(a) Skills Audit: nga-skills-audit-single-schools-20240802 (2).xlsx <u>ACTIONS:</u> (i) MH to circulate skills audit form to each governor for completion and (ii) each governor to complete their skills audit form and return to MH prior to Christmas.</p> <p>(b) Brochure on Teams + Cascaded training materials: Training Brochure Nov 2025.pdf Training</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u> All to book LA training via MH.</p>	<p>MH All</p> <p>All</p>
14	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>All updates noted above, save to note that the draft Climate Action Plan was in progress and discussions with Diocesan colleagues planned in line with the Diocese's sustainability initiatives. <u>ACTIONS:</u> (i) DH and JG to progress the Climate Action Plan and report back and (ii) MH to add Climate Action Plan Update to the next agenda.</p>	<p>DH/ JG</p> <p>MH</p>
	<p>AOB</p> <p>(a) Health & Safety Rota [TBD with BL]: H&S Rota.docx <u>ACTIONS:</u> (i) BL to populate Health & Safety Rota with proposed dates and (ii) Governors to volunteer to attend school to conduct Health & Safety walkaround via the rota.</p> <p>(b) Schools Block Transfer Update: Schools Block Transfer Consultation</p> <p>MS explained that the Local Authority was fully aware of schools' challenged budgets and are realistic about lack of affordability – all schools encouraged to engage with and honestly respond to the consultation.</p> <p>(c) Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)</p> <p>DH reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has recently been provisionally named – at the parents' request - on the EHCP of the child who, under previously reported outreach arrangements, has been attending the school from Silverwood School (special school) one day a week • Whilst all at the school are very pleased that the family is so positive about the school and recognises its inclusive culture, and happy to continue the part-time outreach arrangements, the child has significant and complex needs (non-verbal, requiring a hoist and support from two members of staff, etc) and the school simply cannot meet the child's needs on a fulltime/permanent basis (staffing and infrastructure constraints) <p>The board unanimously supported the leadership team's operational decision to challenge the naming of the school on this child's EHCP on the basis of inability to meet need.</p>	<p>BL All</p>

15	<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"> • Welcomed the scrutiny of members and professional auditors' support and assurances around the school's finances and financial procedures • Approved the audited accounts and controlled spending to support the ongoing success and sustainability of the school – including ensuring maintenance of a robust and adaptive curriculum offer • Received overview of the variety of enrichment activities taking place in school and celebrated staff input • Supported the school's church school ethos – overview of Church/School Partnership events and opportunities 	
16	<p>Date of next meeting: Thursday 22nd January 2026 at 6.00pm</p>	<p>Not e</p>

Next meetings:

12th March 2026

14th May 2026

16th July 2026

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.20pm



Signed.....

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