By Brook Valley Academy Trust
(Company Registration Number 8020467)
Academy Board Meeting
Thursday 12th March 2026
Via virtual conferencing facilities

Minutes

Present: Merope Sylvester (”**MS**”), Deborah Henshall (Head teacher) (**“DH”**), Natasha Nicholas (**“NN”**), Jaclyn Cross (**“JC”**), Lisa Nicolson (**“LN”**), Craig Parrott (**“CP”**), (until 7.37pm) Martin Lowe (**“ML”**), (from 6.36pm) Elizabeth Gilbertson (**“EG”**), and (from 6.11pm) David New (**“DN”**)

In Attendance: Michelle Hocking (Clerk) (**“Clerk”**) and (6.13pm – 6.44pm) Bronwyn Lightowler, School Business Manager (**“BL”**)

Apologies: Jenny George (**JG**)

Item	Minute	Action
	Opening Prayer JC led the opening prayer	
1.	**Welcome and Apologies** MS took the chair and opened the meeting at 6.00pm. Apologies noted and accepted from JG, others presumed to be running a little late – quorum present.	
2.	**Pecuniary and Business Interests Register** No changes to interests previously declared nor interests declared in the business of this meeting.	
3.	**Minutes of last meeting:** **The minutes of 22 January were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting.** MS authorised the Clerk to add her electronic signature to the approved board minutes. <u>**ACTIONS:** Clerk to add MS’s electronic signature to the approved minutes and file and (as relevant) publish them.</u> **+ matters arising not covered elsewhere: FGB Actions Log 2025 26.docx** ***DN joined the meeting at 6.11pm*** Actions updated live in the meeting. It was noted that online safety sessions had elicited positive parental feedback. ***BL joined the meeting at 6.13pm – review of actions***	**Clerk**

	postponed pending BL's presentation of finance update (in lieu of separate Finance, Premises, Staffing & HR Committee meeting being included at Full Governing Body (FGB))	

4.	**Finance, Premises, Staffing & HR**
	Budget Monitoring
	BL highlighted the following from February monitoring:
	• Surplus = £6K (against originally budgeted £6.8K)
	• Income: Unexpected extra income relates to:
	  o Early Careers Teachers (**ECTs**) grant not included in original budget c.£7.2k.
	  o Additional Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) funding from LA c.£7.5k.
	  o two pupils for whom the school did not receive their total allocation from last summer c.£7.5K
	  o £1.5k less pupil premium due to one Child Looked After (**CLA**) no longer eligible
	  o Employers Allowance for National Insurance, government. increased amount to £10.5k
	  o Staff absence claims c.£1k paid
	• Expenditure: Additional expense:
	  o Fixed wire testing: Does not need to be repeated as complete in 2024, but the report flagged some actions which may incur some costs
	  o Roof: leak in area between hall and new build + drone indicated whole roof clogged with leaves, etc – urgent remedial work completed at cost of £800
	  o Educational Supplies: Extra spend for a couple of subscriptions which were not in the original budget
	  o Digital Day: £700 (total cost was £800, but this was offset by parental contributions of £100)
	  o Non-educational Supplies: a. Saving of £1K and b. income offsets expenditure
	  o No change to IT
	  o Only minor changes to Professional Services
	• Audit Adjustments:
	  o When processing the reversing journals from 24/25 into 25/26, two queries with auditors – differences of:
	    ▪ £1712.91 Cr in Accruals (adjustment made in 2022/2023)
	    ▪ £3555.06 Db, this equates to a DB to I&E of £1842.15. (relates to the 2023/2024 carried forward amount not being rolled into the 24/25 year correctly)
	  o Bl and auditors agreed to JNL these to I&E in order to ensure the figures tally with their expectations moving forward - this will have an impact of £1.8 additional expenditure on the budget monitoring report this month, spread across a number of ledger codes that auditors were able to ascertain from previous years.	

	o Simon Cunningham is happy to field any questions governors may have relating to this. BL reported the following future impacts (each within in-school delegated authority levels): • Flooring Works – total c.£1,200 (hole in hall floor and step in urinals) • Playground works – total £500 - £600 (removal of collapsed wooden framework) ***Assets Management Plan Update*** Updated draft circulated just before the meeting (updated with owners, minor works (trees and windows), and seven years' premises plan (new area 6 on last page) **Subject to any comments fed back to BL by Tuesday 17th March, the Assets Management Plan was unanimously approved in the form circulated. <u>ACTION:</u>** <u>All to feedback any comments on the Assets Management Plan to BL by 17th March.</u>	**All**
	Ratifications **Tree works** **The ex-committee email approval of the tree works was unanimously ratified.** **Windows' works** **The ex- committee email approval of the windows' works was unanimously ratified.** **Pay Policy** Deferred. **<u>ACTIONS:</u>** <u>(i) MS and DH to produce revised Pay Policy (ii) Clerk to circulate revised Pay Policy for email approval (iii) all governors to review and comment on/approve revised Pay Policy via email and (iv) Clerk to add ratification of the revised Pay Policy to the next agenda.</u>	**MS/DH** **Clerk** **All** **Clerk**
	Catering Tender Update BL reported that she had invited five companies to tender (deadline tomorrow). Two had declined to tender. Two have not responded. One tender received – from current provider. ***Data Protection Officer (DPO) Action Plan update*** Advised to adopt the (appropriately personalised) model policies linked in the agenda. **The board unanimously delegated completion of final elements of personalisation to DH and BL and, subject to such personalisation, each of the following policies were unanimously approved: Acceptable Use, Artificial Intelligence, Bring Your Own Device, CCTV, Data Breach, Information Security and Records Management. <u>ACTIONS:</u>** <u>DH/BL to finalise and publish as necessary each of the above-listed DPO policies.</u>	**DH/BL**

	Internal Audit Update and Action Plan BL reported that documents had been supplied on request and report was awaited. **Critical Incident Policy/Plan** Deferred. **ACTIONS:** (i) DH/BL to draft/update Critical Incident Policy/Plan and (ii) Clerk to add Critical Incident Policy/Plan to the next agenda. **Information Security Incident Procedure** Deferred. **ACTIONS:** (i) DH/BL to draft/update Information Security Incident Procedure and (ii) Clerk to add Information Security Incident Procedure to the next agenda. **Business Continuity Plan** Deferred. **ACTIONS:** (i) DH/BL to draft/update Business Continuity Plan and (ii) Clerk to add Business Continuity Plan to the next agenda. **Estate Vision & Strategy Document** Deferred. **ACTIONS:** (i) DH/BL to draft/update Estate Vision & Strategy document and (ii) Clerk to add Estate Vision & Strategy document to the next agenda. **Gifts, Hospitality & Anti-Bribery** The board noted: • p5 highlight: No digital record at present but BL happy to create • Consider increasing value from £30 to £40 in line with recent inflationary rises **Subject to removal of reference to digital record and increase in disclosable amount to £40, the Gifts, Hospitality & Bribery Policy was unanimously approved in the form circulated.** **ACTIONS:** Clerk/BL to amend the Gifts, Hospitality & Bribery Policy to remove reference to digital record and increase disclosable amount to £40 and file/publish, as necessary. ***BL left the meeting at 6.44pm*** **Lettings Policy** **The Lettings Policy was unanimously approved in the form circulated.** **ACTIONS:** Clerk/BL to file/publish as necessary the Lettings Policy. **Debtor Management Policy and Procedures** Deferred. **ACTION:** Clerk to add Debtor Management Policy to the next agenda. **HR Policies (reviewed against latest models):** **a. Performance Management (subject to decision on 5.4, 6.1 and 7.3)**	 **DH/BL** **Clerk** **DH/BL** **Clerk** **DH/BL** **Clerk** **DH/BL** **Clerk** **Clerk/BL** **Clerk/BL** **Clerk**

	b. Capability Policy – no changes: **c. Disciplinary** **d. Grievance: NB: 3.5 refer to helpline?** **e. Lone Working – no changes** **f. Menopause – no changes** **g. Probation – no changes** **h. Flexible working – no changes** **i. Redundancy – no changes** **j. Teachers' Severance – no changes** **Subject to final elements of personalisation, each of the HR policies listed above were unanimously approved in the form circulated and completion of final personalisation was delegated to DH and BL to action and approve on behalf of the board. ACTIONS:** (i) Clerk to update the vision statement (including in the footer) of each of the approved policies (ii) BL and DH to action final personalisation and (iii) Clerk/BL to arrange for publication of the approved HR policies to governors and staff as relevant.	**clerk** **DH/BL** **Clerk/BL**

	Matters arising continued
	NN explained that, in her view and based on tours conducted, etc the school's main unique selling points are being a one-form entry village school in a rural setting with a substantive site (particularly notable being the size of the school field).
	
	The board observed that:
	• The sustainability of maintaining one-form entry must continue to be monitored due to:
	  o Falling local demographics and demographics forecasts
	  o The fact that the school is staffed for 33 more pupils than are currently on roll (although, based on applications data, expecting number on roll (**NOR**) to rise to 188 next year)
	
	• Draft budget for 2026/27 will be brought to the next meeting and detailed scrutiny then will include consideration of sustainability, but:
	  o The financial position is currently better than anticipated
	  o Subject to any current unexpected changes to the forecast, the current staffing and class structure will remain affordable for at least 26/27 and 27/28
	
	DH emphasised that, whilst a cautious approach is required given the falling roll anticipated by the current local demographics forecasts/apparent lack of movement into the village/immediate area, etc:
	• Based on current applications data, the school is expecting and intake of 26 in September 2026 – which is better than forecast
	• The smallest class in school at the moment is Yr3 and even that would be too big to facilitate a mixed class structure	

5.	**Policies ownership and review process** Review schedule circulated. **ACTIONS:** (i) DH to confirm in-school leads for specific policies (ii) all to note policies for which they/committees upon which they sit are responsible and act to comply with review schedule for them and (iii) Clerk to add policies review schedule as a standing agenda item.	**DH** **All** **Clerk**

6.	**Headteacher Update (including School Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) and Self Evaluation Form (SEF) Review):**
	Acknowledged that all had reviewed the documents circulated.
	
	DH highlighted:
	• Increase in safeguarding concerns (including one family escalated from Child in Need (**CiN**) to Child Protection (**CP**)
	
	Q1: Are the CP family as comfortable as they can be with the escalation?
	A: No, they are not at all happy. There has been a gradual escalation from early support to CiN to CP and both DH and NN have been working very hard with the family to convince them that the measures are supportive and in the best interests of the children. Although there has been some family resistance, they are becoming more open, and it is hoped they will continue to engage to maximise the benefits of the support available.
	
	• RE:
	  o The letter regarding changes to the RE curriculum went out today – this includes change of title to 'Religion & World Views' and includes study of humanism – the Diocese has authorised this and governors have been very complimentary about how the communication clearly identified how this sits with the school's vision and values
	  o RE Lead and DH attended Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (**SIAMS**) training last week
	  o The Statement of Entitlement[1] is ready is publish on the website
	  o The school is due SIAMS inspection in 2026/27, but latest unofficial indications form the inspections team is that it is more likely to be 2027/28
	
	• Staffing: Maternity leave returner has requested reduction to 0.6 FTE – approved and implementation in progress	

[1] The Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education in Church of England schools defines the expected high-quality, rigorous, and academically challenging RE curriculum for all students. Published by the National Society of Education, it ensures balanced teaching, with a high proportion of Christianity, alongside other worldviews.

	• Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (**SEND**):
	  ○ The school has been named in an Education Health Care Pan (**EHCP**) – the school's SEND coordinator has spoken to the child's parents and current nursery and believes the school could meet need with higher funding (the EHCP needs require one-to-one support, so the funding needs to be more)
	  ○ The government's white paper includes costs savings measures whereby those with moderate learning difficulties are moved from special schools to mainstream schools – this raises a number of things to consider, including:
	    ▪ How to adapt teaching and curriculum in mainstream schools to meet the needs of higher numbers of those with learning difficulties
	    ▪ How to meet needs with limited funds (e.g. finance building adaptations works, local hubs models – such as a large Swindon multi-academy trust which is aiming to develop one of its school sites to accommodate SEND/ resource base facilities)	

7.	**Safeguarding/Single Central Record Update**
	JC and DH reported:
	• Altered the way the timing works – JC meets with DH between monitoring report and FGB meeting to review safeguarding, attendance, lateness, and behaviour
	• Safeguarding action plan is appended to the SIAP:
	  ○ Staff have visited Integrated Front Door (**IFD**)[2]
	  ○ JC and MS will also visit IFD
	  ○ School now has generic safeguarding email address which can be picked up by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (**DSL**) and all Deputy DSLs (supports greater robustness/speed of reaction)	

8.	**Link Governors Update** It was observed: • Few parents' evening reports **ACTION:** All governors who attended parents' evenings to write up visit reports for the record • World Book Day – MS verbally reported how impressed she was with the engagement and attention span of the children **ACTION:** MS to write up visit report for World Book Day	**All who attended parents' eve** **MS**
9.	**Climate Action Plan** Noted that no comments had been received on the draft plan. DH reported that the draft had also been shared with staff and JG had	

[2] Child protection - Wiltshire Council

	collated a team of volunteers to commence implementation – thanks were extended for this. **The Climate Action Plan was unanimously approved in the form circulated.** **ACTION:** Clerk to publish the Climate Action Plan on the school website.	**Clerk**
10.	**Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Working Party** No update. **ACTIONS:** (i) DN to arrange inaugural meeting of the MAT working party (comprising DN, LN, MS, DH, and Carrie Davies) and (ii) Clerk to add MAT Working Party Update to the next agenda.	**DN** **Clerk**
11.	**Curriculum, Teaching & Learning (CT&L) Committee Report/Minutes/Matters arising** No meeting since the last FGB – rescheduled as a joint meeting with Foundation & Ethos (**F&E**) on 28th April. ***January Policies (Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), SEND Policy and SEND Report)*** **Subject to (i) JC's comments on the face of these documents and (ii) updated footers where appropriate, each of the EYFS Policy, SEND Policy and SEND Report were unanimously approved.** **ACTIONS:** Clerk to (i) ensure the minor amendments referenced above are made to the policy documents and (ii) the update policy documents are published on the school website. ***March Policies (Learning Outside the Classroom and Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions)*** Deferred. **ACTIONS:** (i) DH to ensure that the Learning Outside the Classroom and Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions (**March Policies**) are reviewed by in-school staff (ii) DN/JC to ensure that the March Policies are reviewed by governors at the joint committee meeting on 28th April and (iii) Clerk to add ratification of the March Policies to the next agenda.	**Clerk** **DH** **DN/JC** **Clerk**
12.	**Foundation & Ethos (F&E) Committee Report/Minutes/Action Plan (matters arising)** JC highlighted: • Church/ School Partnership Award: Silver award received. Fantastic result noted. The board acknowledged that this is really positive and the result of a lot of work – particularly in the context of no incumbent/member of the ministry team being on the board – thanks extended to all involved and the RE Lead (Charlotte) in particular. • Experience Eucharist: This is scheduled for next week for Key Stage 2 children – lots of preparatory work being done • Committees: Discussion of structure of joint meeting with CT&L – next meeting scheduled for 28th April at 9.30am	

	ML left the meeting at 7.37pm	
13.	**Governor Training & Participation: Brochure on Teams + Cascaded training materials:** Noted – together with ongoing action for all to book training via the Clerk.	
14.	**Chair's Update** ***Risk*** MS highlighted: • No specific changes in risk profile noted. • A copy of the school's Risk Management Policy was requested at the recent audit – only a very old version was located and so for audit purposes reported that there was not one in place • Propose all action plans are collated in one place (to better track risk) and protocol/framework of how risk is managed is produced **ACTIONS:** (i) MS/the Clerk to produce draft risk management policy/protocol and (ii) Clerk to add Risk Management Protocol/Policy to the next agenda ***Website*** MS highlighted positive feedback from parents to the latest restructuring of the school website. **ACTION:** All governors to provide bios for the website as soon as feasible. ***Communications/ Marketing Plan*** MS confirmed that the governors' newsletter had been published and she received positive feedback on it at the parents evening she attended. **It was unanimously agreed that, to maintain a balance between maintaining appropriate visibility and not overwhelming parents with paperwork, a governors' newsletter is circulated a couple of times per annum.** ***Parent Governor Nomination process*** **ACTION:** MS to consider/progress recruitment opportunities and revert.	**MS/Clerk** **Clerk** **All** **MS**
15.	**Pay and Performance Management:** **a. Set HT Interim Performance Management meeting** It was noted that, although an interim performance management meeting is not mandatory, the headteacher performance management panel were happy to conduct a meeting after Easter – by TEAMS if preferable for DH. DH confirmed that she did not consider an interim appraisal necessary at this stage and, given her current capacity challenges requested that no interim meeting takes place. **b. Scheme of Delegation (SoD) (amendment to reference Pay Panel ToRs are in Pay Policy)** Proposed that, for the sake of completeness, the SoD be	**Clerk**

	amended to specifically state that the Pay Panel terms of reference are set out in the Pay Policy. **The amendment to the SoD to reference that the Pay Panel terms of reference are set out in the pay policy was unanimously agreed.** **ACTION:** Clerk to action the amendment and file/publish the updated SoD as required. **c. Note HT Pay decision made in the autumn** **The decision of the Pay Panel (to whom appropriate powers are delegated) to increase DH's salary in line with recommendations from the Headteacher Performance Management Panel were noted for the record and unanimously supported.**	
12.	**AOB** None.	
13.	**How have we contributed to the vision of By Brook Valley C of E Primary School today?** • Celebrated Church/ School Partnership Award • Updated policies • Approved plans to streamline governance and sub-committee structures • Approved the Climate Action Plan • Maintained clear financial oversight of the budget MS extended thanks to all.	
14.	**Date of next meeting:** **Thursday 14 May 2026 at 6.00pm**	**Note**

Next meetings:
14th May 2026
16th July 2026

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.50pm

Signed M Sylvester Date…14.05.26…