**The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust**

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**Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting**

**5.30pm on Thursday 21st September 2023**

**PRESENT:**

Mrs E de la Motte (Chair), Mr J Briggs (Headteacher), Mrs N McDowell, Mr N Little, Mrs C Stow-Smith, Mr M Fryer, Mrs A Gibbs, Mr A Philips and Mr G Buchanan

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Steve Leigh – Clerk to the Governing Body

**Action**

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| **Procedural Business** | | |
| **1.** | **Welcome**  The meeting opened at 5.30pm with all welcomed. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could move to business. |  |
| **2.** | **Election of Chair**  Mrs E del la Motte was nominated as Chair to the Governing Body for the 2023/2024 academic year (seconded by Mr N Little ). There being no other nominations, Directors voted unanimously in favour of Mrs De la Motte being appointed as Chair to the governing body for the coming academic year.  ***Directors RESOLVED to approve the appointment of Mrs E de la Motte as Chair to the Governing Body for the 2023/2024 academic year.*** | **Clerk to the Board** |
| **3.** | **Election of Vice Chair**  In his absence, Dr L Bryantwas nominated as Vice Chair to the Governing Body for the 2023/2024 academic year (seconded by Mr G Buchanan). There being no other nominations and subject to Dr Bryant’s confirmation of accepting this position, Directors voted unanimously in favour of Dr Bryant being appointed as Vice Chair to the governing body for the coming academic year.  ***Directors RESOLVED to approve the appointment of Dr L Bryant as Vice Chair to the Governing Body for the 2023/2024 academic year.*** | **Clerk to the Board** |
| **4.** | **Notification of items of other business**  There were no other items of urgent business to raise for discussion at item 19 of the agenda. |  |
| **5.** | **Declarations of Interest**   1. **Declarations of Personal or Pecuniary Interest**   All Directors were reminded that any personal or pecuniary interest relating to items on the agenda should be declared. There were no declarations of interest made by any governor in relation to items on the agenda.   1. **Declaration of any updates for the Register of Business Interests**   Directors were reminded of the requirement to maintain a register of business interests and for this to be updated on a regular basis. ***All governors present confirmed that their registers were up to date at the time of reporting.***   1. **Automatic Disqualification Declaration reminder for Charity Trustees**   Directors were reminded of the automatic declaration for Charity Trustees. There were no declarations to raise for attention. | **Headteacher**  **Headteacher** |
| **6.** | **Minutes and matters arising**   1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023**   ***Governors RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023 be approved for signature by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting with a signed copy to be provided for the school file.***   1. **Matters arising from the minutes**   **Item 1: Welcome to new Directors** - ***Headteacher to confirm receipt of DBS check for Mrs Gibbs.***  **Item 7: Headteacher’s Report** – ***further quotes to be pursued / obtained to resolve field drainage issue.*** Refurbishment of toilet areas completed, offering a much-needed improvement to the school.  **Item 8: Safeguarding** – referencing previous discussions regarding year group transition, the Headteacher reported that the year had started off well with the majority of pupils settling quickly into school life. Noted that Year 2 was a particularly challenging year group.  **Item 19: Director Monitoring visits** – noted that Mrs Kershaw had been unable to visit the school as planned towards the end of the Summer term. ***Chair and Mrs McDowell to circulate written reports from visits undertaken towards the end of the Summer term.***  There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not already covered elsewhere on the agenda for the meeting. It was confirmed that all actions noted at the previous meeting had been completed. | **Chair / Headteacher**  **RK / NMc**  **Headteacher**  **Chair / NMc** |
| **Items to Arrange / Consider** | | |
| **7.** | **Management Accounts**  Directors received for information a copy of the Management Accounts for July 2023, noting that the year end position was looking a little more positive than had previously been projected.  ***Directors questioned whether there had been any notable reductions in the costs of utilities over recent months, acknowledging that it was too early to make any clear assessment at this point but the position would continue to be closely monitored.***  ***Questioning the level of reserves currently being maintained by the Trust,*** Directors suggested that once the year end position was clear, this figure needed to be considered in the context of the Trust’s Reserves Policy and its provision for the level of reserves. It was agreed that following completion of year-end financial position, the F&A Cttee should check level of reserves against the policy, considering any required review of its provisions as appropriate. It was also suggested that any review be undertaken in the context of any guidance received from the ESFA (revised guidance expected over the Autumn term).  ***Questioning the August management accounts***, it was explained that these were nearing completion and would be circulated to Directors as soon as completed.  ***Directors RESOLVED to receive and note for information the Management Accounts for July 2023.***  Directors were advised that they would be provided with a new finance support officer from EPM (a Senior Partner with EPM) who would be picking up the support that had previously been offered by Hannah Alderson who would be leaving the company in the near future to take on a finance roll with another MAT. | **Headteacher** |
| **8.** | **Annual Report**  ***Directors agreed that the Chair would use the narrative from the Headteacher’s half termly reporting as the basis for completing the Annual Report***. All agreed that this was an approach that worked well and should be maintained. | **Chair** |
| **9.** | **Admissions**   1. **Current Numbers on Roll**   Directors acknowledged that numbers on roll for September 2023 amounted to 615 pupils.   1. **Admission arrangements for September 2024**   Directors noted that there were no required changes to the admission arrangements for September 2024.   1. **Admission Consultation**   Directors received a copy of the proposed Admissions Policy for September 2025 together with a map of the school’s catchment and were reminded of the consultation arrangements that would need to be pursued with any required changes to the policy. Directors noted and supported the suggested expansion of the catchment area.  ***Directors RESOLVED to approve the progression of an admissions consultation for the Federation’s admissions arrangements effective from September 2025 in line with the suggested widening of the catchment area for the school.***  Directors discussed the parking situation outside of the school entrance, noting the efforts that continued to be made by the school in reminding parents about considerate parking and road safety. Communications with parents would continue. | **All to note**  **All to note**  **Headteacher** |
| **10.** | **Overview of School Data**  Directors were presented with a summary of EYFS, Phonics, KS1 and KS2 results for the Summer 2023, noting specifically the impact of the Covid years on KS1 results. Writing had produced a particularly disappointing set of results and would be a key target for improvement across the coming academic year.  KS2 had produced a strong set of results, particularly in the context of the Covid years and the disruptions to learning from this period.  Directors discussed the use of app technology and if this had an adverse impact on the quality of handwriting, noting that technology was used predominantly to support home working and to provide extra practice. Teaching of writing would continue to be a focus for the school. |  |
| **11.** | **School Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Forms**  Directors received a copy of the School Development Plan for 2023/2024 with priorities for the year and required Director monitoring to these priorities summarised as follows:   * Priority 1 – Leadership & Management * Priority 2 – Quality of Education * Priority 3 – Behaviour / Attitudes & Personal Development / Wellbeing * Priority 4 – Engagement & Partnership   Directors were informed that the Headteacher had now embraced the School IP technology platform that would capture the content of the school development plan and allow for its effective monitoring which all Directors would eventually be able to access.  ***Directors RESOLVED to approve the School Development Plan Priorities for 2023/2024 as presented.***  To support effective Director monitoring, it was ***agreed that Directors work in pairs for all visits to be arranged over the coming academic year. The Headteacher agreed to put together a plan of visits for the year (themes and suggested dates), circulating this for the attention of Directors when completed.*** | **All to note**  **Headteacher** |
| **12.** | **Director Visits – Summer term 2023**  Directors acknowledged that the Ofsted inspection had got in the way of all scheduled visits being completed before the end of term. Reports from those Director visits that did take place over the Summer term would be sent to the Headteacher for circulation. As discussed earlier in the meeting, visits to be resumed over the course of the Autumn term.  From the visits that did take place (focussing on Premises and Pupil Attendance), there were no significant issues to raise for discussion / report. | **Chair / NMc** |
| **13.** | **PE / Sports Funding Action Plan**  Directors received a copy of a paper which evidenced the impact of the PE & Sports Premium over 2022/2023. Plans / activities for 2023/2024 would be similar to those pursued over the last academic year.  Directors discussed the provision made for Year 6 swimming and the impact that Covid has had on pupil ability to meet national curriculum requirements for water safety.  ***Directors RESOLVED to receive the PE / Sports Action Plan (Evidence of Impact 2022/2023) as presented.*** | **Headteacher** |
| **14.** | **Risk Register**  Directors received a copy of the latest version of the Federation’s Risk Register which had been reviewed and updated. There were no significant changes to highlight.  ***It was*** ***agreed that all Directors ensure they have received appropriate safeguarding training***. ***Directors also agreed to confirm receipt and reading of the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (Part 1). Headteacher to circulate confirmation pro-forma.***  ***Directors RESOLVED to receive and approve the reviewed Risk Register as presented.***  ***Directors raised an issue concerning parent use of the Seesaw platform and some confusion that had arisen between the Family and Student functionality of the platform. The Headteacher agreed to investigate the issue and to resolve as appropriate.*** | **Headteacher**  **Headteacher** |
| **15.** | **Safeguarding Report**  Directors were presented with a copy of the Headteacher’s Safeguarding Report for the year to date. There were no significant issues to raise or highlight at this point.  ***Directors RESOLVED to receive the Headteacher’s Safeguarding Update Report as presented.*** | **All to note** |
| **16.** | **Governance Updates**   1. **Directors Code of Conduct 2023/2024**   ***Directors RESOLVED to approve the Federation’s Code of Conduct for 2023/2024 as presented.***   1. **Governor Business Interest Pro-forma**   Directors were reminded of the requirement for all Directors to maintain a Register of Business Interests over the academic year. All Directors present updated / confirmed their register of business interests for the 2023/2024 academic year to date.   1. **Skills Audit**   ***Directors agreed that latest version of the NGA Skills Audit matrix be circulated to all Directors for completion and return to inform any further training needs over the coming academic year.***   1. **Current Structure of the Governing Body**   Directors received details for the governing body’s structure for the 2023/2024 academic year with no amendments to highlight.   1. **Annual Review of Committee Memberships 2023/2024**   Received and noted as presented. ***Directors agreed that the Teaching & Learning Cttee was to be dissolved with items of discussion being picked up in the main meetings of the full governing body. To support this arrangement, Directors agreed that future governing body meetings offer a half hour walk around the school with opportunities for book scrutiny etc.***  To support the new governor appointments to the Board, it was ***agreed that an open invitation be offered to AG / AP to attend Audit & Finance Cttee meetings over the coming year.***   1. **Review of standing items and terms of reference for the Board**   Received and noted with no requested changes to that presented. | **Headteacher**  **All to action as appropriate.**  **Headteacher / All to action**  **All to note**  **Headteacher**  **Headteacher** |
| **17.** | **Policy Updates**  ***Directors RESOLVED to receive / approve the following reviewed policies for immediate adoption:***   * Keeping children safe in Education 2023 (received for adoption * Child Protection Policy – * SEND Information Report and Policy - approved * Administration of Medicine - approved * Looked After Children (LAC) Policy - approved * Marking and Feedback Policy - approved * First Aid Policy – approved * Education Policy Visits - approved * Pupils with additional Health Needs – approved * Supporting Pupils with medical conditions - approved | **Headteacher** |
| **Concluding Items** | | |
| **18.** | **Melrose Update**  On behalf of the CEO to Melrose Learning Trust, the Clerk to the Board thanked the Directors for their decision to merge with Melrose Learning Trust and were provided with an indicative timeline of the activities that would need to be pursued to complete this merger. It was hoped that completion was being aimed for some time between January and April 2024. A formal application would be made to the DfE to commence this process.  ***Directors agreed that the Board needed to appoint independent legal advisors to support the Federation’s merger with Melrose Learning Trust, requesting that the Headteacher pursue and appoint with approval of the governing body.***  Discussing the Board’s decision to merge with Melrose Learning Trust, ***Members of the Federation confirmed their approval to the Board’s recommendation for the merger of the Federation of Abbey Schools with Melrose Learning Trust.*** | **Headteacher / Chair**  **All to note** |
| **19.** | **Any Other Business**  There were no other items of urgent business to raise for discussion. |  |
| **20.** | **Approval of documents for inspection**  ***Directors RESOLVED that the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting and all supporting papers circulated for this meeting be approved for inspection. Papers exempt or to be redacted in their information:***   * Management Accounts and Budget Report | **Headteacher** |
| **21.** | **Date and Time of Next Meeting**  ***Directors noted date and time of next meeting of the Governing Body as follows:***   * Audit & Finance Committee – Thursday 9th November 2023 at 5.30pm * Full Board - Wednesday 29th November 2023 at 5:30 pm   Directors were thanked for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.  There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.22pm | **All to note** |

Chair…………………………………………………………………

Signed……………………………………………………………….

Date………………………………………………………………….