



## **Abbey Academy Council Meeting Tuesday 21 November at 12:00 Abbey School**

<b>Those Present:</b>		
Joel Hardwick	Assistant CEO	JH
Luci Windle	Executive Headteacher – via Teams	LW
Louise Abbott	Support Staff Governor	LA
Dawn Jeffery	Parent Governor	DJ
Jim McIntosh	Governor – Finance Link Governor	JMcI
Janine Brullo	Parent Governor – via Teams	JB
Rachael Kent	Parent Governor	RK
Nicola Morris	Governor	NM
Niall Horstead	Staff Governor	NH
<b>Also Present:</b>		
Wayne Askham	Head of School	WA
Lyndsay Foster	Governance Clerk	CLERK
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Ian Tankard	Parent Governor – Careers Link Governor	IT
Jill Newman	Assistant Headteacher	JN
Alison Warner	Chair – Safeguarding Link Governor	AW
<b>No Apologies:</b>		
Ivy Dorchester-Brown	Governor – Wellbeing Link Governor	ID-B

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
1.1. To receive apologies for absence 1.2. Apologies were received for JN, AW resigned as of 21/11/23.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence Apologies were accepted for: JN & AW.	
2. BEST WE CAN BE AWARDS	
2.1. Presentation to Staff Nominee(s) To remove off future agendas.	<b>ACTION: CLERKING SERVICES</b>
3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
Discussed and confirmed for new Chair to be Ian Tankard. It was discussed that a Vice Chair was required and any expressions of interest to email through to LW. Letter of Thanks from the Governors to be sent to AW. Document handed out by LW for information.	<b>ACTION: LW 12/03/24</b>
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
4.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda None raised.	
5. ABBEY SCHOOL ACADEMY COUNCIL MINUTES	
5.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: The minutes of the meeting held 4 July 2023 were approved as a true record with no amendments.	
5.2. Review of Action Tracker The outstanding actions on the action tracker were reviewed and updated.	
5.3. Matters arising from the Minutes LW Discussed about the BBC production mentioned in 5.2 of the minutes, what the documentary was about and the visit from Fatima Whitbread in school November, Fatima did a presentation on how she got to where she is where she came from and her background into the sport. She handed out her past sporting medals for the children to look at, the children loved it and recognised her from 'I'm A Celebrity get	

me out of here' and was really engaged in the presentation. There will be 3 children from school delivering the story in the documentary which is due to be aired in the Spring.

**6. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED**

WA described the challenges and successes linked to a growing number of Pupil Premium (PP) students on roll.

LW highlighted the struggle to hire quality Teaching Assistants (TA's), attributing it partly to COVID-related preferences for flexible, family-friendly work hours. Despite this challenge, they feel relatively better positioned compared to neighbouring schools.

JMcI questioned if the salary was a factor in the hiring struggle. LW acknowledged its influence, especially since it's pro rata for part-time roles, discussing the discrepancy between TA wages and those offered by supermarkets or retail.

WA emphasised investment in TA training, using the TA toolkit, and opportunities for advancement through teaching apprenticeships and level 3 TA programmes.

Recruitment support, including fairs, has been organized, but there's a shortage of teachers due to the impact of online learning during COVID.

Efforts are underway to explore advertising strategies and career development opportunities for candidates, as indicated by the HR team's initiatives.

CPD's impact on the curriculum was highlighted by WA, with LW confirming plans for Post 16 readiness by February half-term.

Sickness rates, influenced by seasonal changes and COVID, have affected staff absenteeism, but the school boasts a commendable staff retention rate.

The school's strong teacher learning profile, verified through support and challenges, was emphasized by WA.

LW mentioned the push for Makaton, especially during crises when non-verbal communication becomes vital. Teachers create individualized targets for students, fostering collaborative efforts.

The well-being team's remarkable efforts, leading to zero exclusions since 2014, were praised by WA.

DfE's involvement in attendance and support for families dealing with delayed medical procedures during different seasons, notably during COVID, was mentioned.

<p>WA described the current attendance patterns - attendance surpasses national rates for Special schools but is behind mainstream levels.</p> <p>Steam Street roles have promoted diversity in career choices among children, offering further support to the Abbey promises.</p> <p>Work experience initiatives for post-16 pupils in various places aim to boost their confidence in applying for part-time jobs.</p> <p>Steam Street's Winter Wonderland focus provides an enjoyable, uncrowded environment for all students.</p> <p>Families are invited to share their experiences at the Abbey, fostering community engagement and highlighting the school's achievements, detailed on page 18 of the report.</p>	
<p>6.2. School Dashboard Summary</p> <p>LW informed they are working closely with the Trust and C. Garbutt who is the support and challenge partner, the dashboard shows the school continues to evaluate at Good or Better across all areas with no changes or concerns arising from the support and challenge meeting this term.</p>	
<p>6.3. Budget Report</p> <p>LW discussed the salary uplift that's been granted has had an impact on the budget. Currently a good carry forward but the Pod has to be paid for so next meeting this will show in the budget.</p> <p>There will be a continuing focus on resources and spend to ensure the carry forward remains healthy.</p> <p><b>JMcI - asked if there's anyway income can be increased?</b> LW informed this would only really be by increased pupil numbers. One option that has been considered would be to look into becoming a research school and this is potentially a way to bring in income to school.</p> <p>JH discussed top-up and place funding, the place funding hasn't increased since set in 2014 and not changed with inflation, its set nationally so needs to change with inflation.</p> <p><b>JMcI - asked if mainstream schools are still at same amount since 2014?</b> JH responded that special schools don't automatically get an increase, that is passported through local authorities who can determine the extent of the increase, where the national funding formula determines rises for mainstream schools.</p> <p><b>JMcI - asked do they believe a change in government would make different for SEN schools?</b> LW discussed the extent to which the system is broken and parents losing faith in schools, mainstream schools are penalised for keeping SEN pupils in school when</p>	

exam results are affected. Its underfunded and due to using a restricted framework, tribunals have gone up overall.	
6.4. Teachers Staff appraisal outcome report – for information  The Academy Council discussed the document.	
<b>7. TRUST MATTERS</b>	
7.1 Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues  JH informed the trust continues to grow and are now identified as sponsor for 2 SEN schools, Holgate Meadows in Sheffield and Derrymount in Nottinghamshire. 2 other schools have applied to join the MAT - Bents Green and Levett.  <b>JMcI – asked was it just LA schools applying to join the trust and could government changes help.</b> JH - Yes, given the pressure on special schools and the need for support, academisation may not slow down for this sector, most secondary schools have already academized, and primary schools may continue at a slower pace given those that have not already academized are more likely to be consciously opposed to the change, at least for the moment.	
<b>8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
8.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair  LW Arranged an additional meeting or training sessions for governors to visit school, arranged for 5 <sup>th</sup> February 10-2pm.	
<b>9. CONFIDENTIALITY &amp; RISK</b>	
9.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting  None.	
<b>10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING</b>	

Tuesday 12 March 2024	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey School
Tuesday 9 July 2024	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey School

**Minutes approved**

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE