



## Abbey Academy Council Meeting Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 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
Jill Newman	Assistant Headteacher – Item 6.2 only.	GN
Ian Tankard	Parent Governor – Careers Link Governor	IT
Janine Brullo	Parent Governor	JB
Rachael Kent	Parent Governor	RK
Nicola Morris	Governor	NM
Alison Warner	Chair – Safeguarding Link Governor	AW
Niall Horstead	Staff Governor	NH
<b>Also Present:</b>		
Wayne Askham	Head of School	WA
Vicky Hawksley	Governance Clerk	VH
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Ivy Dorchester-Brown	Governor – Wellbeing Link Governor	ID-B
<b>No Apologies:</b>		

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
<p>1.1. To receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received for IDB.</p>	
<p>1.2. To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted for IDB.</p>	
2. BEST WE CAN BE AWARDS	
<p>2.1. Presentation to Staff Nominee(s)</p> <p>Not applicable at Abbey School. Requested that this item be removed from all future agendas.</p>	<p><b>ACTION: Clerking Services completed</b></p>
3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>3.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered.</p> <p>3.2 Confirmation of new Parent Governor – Rachael Kent, Governor – Nicola Morris and Staff Governor – Niall Horstead – all were confirmed and welcomed to the Academy Council.</p> <p>3.2 Expression of Interest – Vice- Chair – IT volunteered following the last meeting and was accepted as Vice-Chair by all present.</p>	<p><b>ACTION: Clerking Services completed</b></p>
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
<p>4.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda</p> <p>None to raise.</p>	
5. ABBEY SCHOOL ACADEMY COUNCIL MINUTES	
<p>5.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were approved as a true record with no amendments.</p>	
<p>5.2. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.</p>	

<p>5.3. Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>No matters arising were raised.</p>	
<p><b>6. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED</b></p>	
<p>6.1. Headteacher Report</p> <p>LW referred to the report which had been circulated in advance. The main points to update on were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment of the Food Tech room and the Science Lab will be taking place and work has started on a new Sensory Room which will improve the offer to meet the specific needs of our students. The work should be completed after Easter.</li> </ul> <p><b>What facilities will students use whilst the work is underway?</b> There is a smaller sensory room which students use already and the Wellbeing Team are putting on additional sensory circuits which will continue into the future. We are also looking at support sanctuaries which are places in school where a child can have some peace and quiet and is a safe place for children to use.</p> <p><b>Which staff are on the MPQ course?</b> LW explained that two staff are undertaking this course at the moment. The Trust offers a Generation Next programme for aspiring leaders which is 18 months to 2 years in duration and includes a programme for the practical aspects of leadership.</p> <p><b>Does Nexus offer support for ECTs as well?</b> Yes. Furthermore, Abbey School was randomly selected by the organisation who assign the ECT qualifications to look at our ECT Programme.</p> <p><b>Could Academy Council members be given a tour of the school to meet any new staff members?</b> Yes, this can be done immediately after this meeting ends.</p> <p>Further points to highlight included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sickness absence is low across the school.</li> <li>• Quality of Education – WA stressed that the school must ensure that our Outstanding status does not mean that we become complacent. We are constantly reviewing and building up our evidence to back up this judgement.</li> <li>• LARS process – JM recommended that other AC members should take part in this initiative. Members are given opportunities to ask lots of questions to the member of staff in the area being scrutinised. LW to inform AC members when the next LARS process will take place. NH confirmed that this is a very positive exercise and was valued by the teachers involved as well as the governors. The next LARS will be on Behaviour and Wellbeing or Post-16 and AC members are invited to volunteer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Although the school is outstanding, what would be the main areas for development?</b> WA explained that this would be ensuring that there is triangulation in our assessment of personal development. We are ensuring that we are reviewing all</p>	

the sections that contribute to the personal development of our children and how we are ensuring they are able to make a meaningful contribution to society.

LW explained that a range of projects are being run by the school and we are looking at where our children could progress in the Special Olympics. The school has a netball club and it was suggested that a swimming club may be another option.

**How confident are our children in talking about personal development in school?** WA explained that this is linked to rights, respects and curriculum.

- Behaviour and Attitudes (Page 13) – LW explained that the school continues to operate without the need for suspensions or permanent exclusions. We have found other, more effective ways of resolving issues and we always involve parents when necessary. We have found that suspensions for our children are not effective.
- Attendance – this has been slightly lower than expected but is still above national. The PA rate is high, mainly due to holidays being taken in term time. We have now separated the holidays from this data to understand where the underlying issues are. As a result, we operate Project 10 which is for our top 10 children whose absence we are concerned about. We monitor this weekly and address any issues with parents.
- Children on roll missing in education – LW explained that school had one child who was with us for 6 months before moving abroad. We do not have a forwarding address or school for this child which meant that the child was missing in education for about a week and this was picked up appropriately with the local authority.

**Does Abbey have any school refusers?** Y11 is always a challenging year group. One student is struggling with full-time education but we are working with outside agencies, Early Help etc to try to identify the issues and put any support in place. Any school refusers are recorded on the Project 10 list.

**What has been the impact of Project 10 and are these top 10 constantly changing?** Yes, Project 10 gives us more clarity on a child's situation and allows us to focus on these children and look at ways of improving their attendance. This is also about how the team works with the family and students. Project 10 also allows us to look at where resources are being spent and where they are needed.

**Do you have any trouble with families not welcoming school input?** Yes, sometimes this can require delicate handling but we have to ensure that children are in school and that they are safe. We try to engage parents and students into school life as much as possible.

**Do you find that children who have made progress slip back at the beginning of the next term?** Yes, this sometimes happens but we have a range of approaches we use to address this, chiefly the way that school operates transitions in advance of holidays.

Further points to highlight included:

- School Prom will be taking place soon and the children are really excited about this. The event will be held in the evening this year.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JH explained that we are consulting on formalising the arrangement with the Hub at Horizon and are in the process of submitting a business case for this. The response to the consultation has been really positive so far and comments made have been very positive.</li> <li>LW explained that we have 6 big ideas which underpin our curriculum. We will rearrange the Big 6 day as the last one was cancelled because of snow.</li> <li>We are continuing with support for Fountaindale Academy and our children undertake work experience there and this is a reciprocal arrangement. We are also supporting Discovery Academy and working closely with them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governors recognised the enormous amount of work taking place across the school. Is there anything that is limiting what we can do?</b> LW explained that the building is a limiting factor and the Post-16 building is still not complete. There are also some financial constraints related to energy costs and pay rises although Abbey are able to manage these better than many other schools. We do still have families where we are working to increase the value they place on education and Covid has had an impact here.</p> <p><b>What is the engagement like with families with LAC children or foster families?</b> There is a mixed picture of involvement from these families. Some are very proactive but others are less so. Some families are hard to reach and we do all we can to engage these families.</p> <p>6.1.1. Appendix 1 - Updated SIP –no concerns or comments raised.</p> <p>6.1.2. Appendix 2 – School SEF – some sections will be rewritten and this will be reviewed at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>There is a lot of information contained in the SEF document. Could a summary of the main points be provided to AC members with the key points to note?</b> Yes, governors can be given a summary version containing the main points.</p>	<p><b>ACTION: LW/WA 04/07/23</b></p>
<p>6.2. Community Voice Report</p> <p>Main points to note from report circulated by JN:</p> <p>JN invited members to give any ideas for getting families more involved in activities taking place at Abbey School. Community work is important for our children, and we need to promote the school within the local community. We work closely with Winterhill and recently held our 'Girl Power' day at that school.</p> <p>Netball Club – this started from the Girl Power event and has continued. Some girls are now attending national competitions, and this is really valued by our parents.</p> <p>We are constantly looking at what our children can do and what activities they can take part in – we have recently started working with a fencing coach and a quarter of the school has now taken part in fencing activities and this has been very well received. We are hoping to take our children to the Fencing Centre in Manchester and are working with Newman School and other schools on this.</p>	

<p>Climbing is also a big attraction for our children and finding the right sports for them to take part in is really important.</p> <p>Youth Sports Trust (YST) Award – we were able to share this with Y11 students who had all been to Fountaindale Academy and worked with the children there.</p> <p>We also have links with a local person who donated prom dresses and suits for our children.</p> <p>School fund account – very healthy, no concerns to raise.</p> <p>IT reported that the Rotherham Charter is used at the school he works at and noted that lots of other schools are adopting the ideas that Abbey are coming up with – good practice is being shared across these schools and IT wished to acknowledge the positive work that is being shared across Rotherham.</p> <p>JN left meeting at 1.15.</p>	
<p>6.3. Budget Report</p> <p>LW explained that the budget is currently very healthy and we have been able to absorb the increases in energy costs and the recent pay rise. However, the budget will become tighter if funding does not increase.</p> <p>Strikes – only two members of staff took part in the first strike, one on the second and 2 are expected to strike on the days allocated later this week.</p> <p><b>Does the school make a financial contribution to Nexus?</b> Yes, this is currently 5% of our budget.</p> <p><b>Will that figure change if there is an impact on the school’s budget in future?</b> LW feels that the Trust has been open and transparent and we receive a lot of support from the Central Team. The layer of support from the Central Team is very valuable and we feel that we are getting value for money. JH explained that the Trust has an aspiration to reduce the contribution from schools in the future but this will depend on increases and funding in the future.</p> <p><b>Have you received the GAG for special schools next year?</b> This will be filtered through LAs and explained the legal issues the Trust had been involved in to ensure the appropriate amount of funding was received.</p> <p><b>Are there any areas of risk?</b> No, we have costed in the financial burdens, refurbishments etc and we have a carry forward figure.</p> <p>The school does rent out some of its facilities to bring in more income and it was suggested that the house could be used for children’s parties etc. LW explained that Art Therapy use the house a lot and the drumming teacher is located in this building as well. We are thinking creatively and long term to see if the house could be re-purposed.</p>	

<p>6.4. School Calendar – for information</p> <p>For info only.</p>	
<p>6.5. Cabinet Member and MP’s Feedback from Pupil Parliament – verbal</p> <p>LW to discuss this at the next meeting and have the student MPs come to the start of the meeting as well.</p> <p>There will also be feedback from the Staff Parliament next time.</p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> <b>LW/</b> <b>Clerking</b> <b>Services</b> <b>04/07/23</b></p>
<p>6.6. Skills Audit – Governor Self-Assessment – Verbal</p> <p>The Clerk explained that the NGA Skills Audit document will be submitted to AC members next week for completion by 31<sup>st</sup> March. Results of this audit will be discussed at the summer meeting.</p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> <b>Clerking</b> <b>Services</b> <b>04/07/23</b></p>
<b>7. TRUST MATTERS</b>	
<p>7.1 Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues</p> <p>JH explained that most schools have remained open or partially open during the recent strikes.</p> <p>Capital – JH reported that we have undertaken condition surveys and we now receive an annual amount of funding from the DfE. The boiler at Abbey School is in need of replacement and there are a number of schemes around installing LED lighting to save money in the long term. Abbey is a candidate for this and we are also looking at roofing and solar panels where appropriate. Sustainability audits are being considered for each school.</p> <p>Post-16 building – planning permission has been granted. We are now waiting for the LA Asset Management Board to make a decision next week. After this we hope the contractor will be able to return to the site and resume the work.</p> <p><b>Does the delay in the work starting affect the price?</b> Not at the moment but we may be required to negotiate on this in future. Much of the ground work has already been done.</p> <p><b>How many will the new building house?</b> It will be similar to the mobile building in the upper school with similar space and a couple more offices available.</p> <p>There will be a separate car park for this new building.</p>	
<b>8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
<p>8.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair</p> <p>LW reported that we are now the owners of the International Schools Award and we won the Youth Sport Award for outstanding inclusive school.</p>	

<p>Governor roles – LW confirmed designated roles for each member of the Academy Council.</p> <p><b>Can we share governor contact details within the Academy Council so that governors are able to link with each other?</b> Clerk to check with Clerking Services.</p> <p><b>Does the Trust have an Acceptable Use of IT policy?</b> Yes.</p> <p>JB indicated that she would be willing to volunteer at Discovery Academy and will liaise with LW on this. Governors are welcome to visit Discovery and Fountaindale if they are able.</p>	<p><b>ACTION: Clerking Services completed</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: JB/LW 04/07/03</b></p>
<p><b>9. CONFIDENTIALITY &amp; RISK</b></p>	
<p>9.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p>9.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p><b>10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING</b></p>	

Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey School
-----------------------------------	---------------	--------------

**Minutes approved**

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE