



**Abbey Academy Council Meeting
Tuesday 4th July 2023 at 12:00
Abbey School**

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
1.1. To receive apologies for absence Apologies were received for LA, ID-B, RK, JN and JH.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence Apologies were accepted for LA, ID-B, RK, JN and JH.	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered. None raised.	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
3.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda None raised.	
4. ABBEY SCHOOL ACADEMY COUNCIL MINUTES	
4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: The minutes of the meeting held 14 th March 2023 were approved as a true record with no amendments.	
4.2. Review of Action Tracker The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.	
4.3. Matters arising from the Minutes No matters arising were raised.	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
5.1. Headteacher Report Governors had been provided with the Headteacher’s report in advance of the meeting, via Governor Hub. The main points to note are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LW reported that the school has turned down 303 applications for places this year and have offered 25 places and the school is full to capacity at the moment. What makes the school accept one application and refuse another? LW explained that the process is to look for a diagnosis of Moderate Learning Difficulties	

(MLD), along with co-existing diagnoses if there are any. We also look at psychological reports for IQ and the pupil's peer group. Every single application is scrutinised.

Do we give reasons for refusing an application and what might these be? Yes, we would give reasons which might be that we think a child would be better placed in a different setting which can more adequately meet their needs. All efforts are made to accommodate each child, but this is not always possible and is not always in the best interests of that child.

Each application takes a huge amount of time to scrutinise and deal with, whether the child comes to the school or not.

Do you think that special schools will be forced to take more pupils in the future? Yes, we expect this to be the case. Our official pupil capacity is 170 but we currently have 212 on roll with 225 expected next year. In most cases, tribunals fall in favour of families, and we then have to find a way of accommodating these children.

Who at Abbey is involved in the selection process for children applying to come to the school? This is done by WA with assistance from other staff. If a second opinion is needed, then this will be given by LW. Any children who are granted places at the school come with some funding attached to pay for their support.

What is the difference between a learning difficulty and a mental health issue? This mainly relates to cognitive ability.

5.1.1 Appendix 1 - Updated SIP – no concerns or comments raised.

5.1.2 Appendix 2 – School SEF – No concerns or comments raised. Work is ongoing on this plan and updates will be given in due course.

LW explained that a lot of refurbishment work will be done over the summer and details are outlined in the Headteacher's report. The Sensory Room is now completed, and the library has been refurbished. The next area will be to look at the work needed in the DT room.

Post-16 Hub – we have been discussing the 5-year lease of this area with the LA. LW explained that if we wish to make this lease permanent then we are required to install a porch on the front of the post-16 building. Work will start over the summer and will complete by October half-term, and will include the porch as specified by the LA. Funding is available for this new building.

Sickness absence – absence is generally low across the school. Two members of staff have been on long term sick – one has now returned to work and the other has resigned. There are currently no staff on long-term sick at the school.

Workforce turnover – we have opened up another class at a school in Barnsley which required a new team to staff this class. One member of staff is leaving at the end of this year and we will need to fill this position in the near future.

LW explained that the school has received a few requests for staff wishing to return to work part-time following maternity leave. We have been able to agree to these requests and the school has been chosen as a national lead on Flexible Working Schools.

How does employing so many part-time teachers affect the budget? Each part-time employee makes up the equivalent of a full-time post so there is no impact on the school's budget.

How many part-time staff access all the training offered by the school? There are only two members of staff who do not access all training as they only work two days per week.

Have you heard of the Educational Plan for an Adopted Child (EPAC) and will it be introduced at Abbey? No, we are not aware of this initiative. JB explained that this is offered by Virtual Schools and will email the link to LW.

JB
21/11/23

The school has been awarded the Careers Mark following a gruelling application process.

LW showed a video to governors of the activities undertaken during National School Sports Week last month. This is organised by the Youth Sports Trust.

Progression – LW explained that we are currently developing Teaching 5-a-day approach which includes 5 aspects into teaching which will have an immediate effect, particularly for children with SEND needs. We are developing a teacher and TA toolkit for this initiative and LW will report on this again next year. We hope to share this approach with other schools in due course.

Big Ideas continue to support and hold the curriculum together and we continue to focus on house events and linking these to the Big Ideas and getting families involved as much as possible.

Data – a snapshot of the school's data for the Spring term is in the Headteacher's report. LW will send governors an update on this after the end of this week.

LW
W/C
10/07/23

We have made good progress overall in learning following the disruption caused by Covid. We are discussing target setting for children and we are reviewing the 3 pathways that are currently on offer to see whether these are right for the children and whether a different approach is needed.

We have brought in a new member of staff to deliver extra tutoring in Maths – this has been difficult for some of our children to adjust to but is already having a positive impact.

We will continue with our focus this year on the Youth Sport Trust whilst also keeping an eye on academic progress etc. Enrichment work such as the Youth Sport Trust makes a real difference to our children. These activities are giving our children more

independence and are also helping to give parents more confidence in allowing their children to be more independent.

Behaviour and attitudes – we continue to not exclude any children from the school. We have a strong restorative approach with children and staff and this works very well.

Attendance at the school is above national. We are continuing with our Top 10 initiative. PA is high but is still below national. PA has been impacted by holidays being taken in term time. We do not authorise any holidays taken in term time but we do recognise the benefits that children gain from having holidays.

We continue to spend a lot of time carrying out home visits and checking on children and bringing them into school if necessary.

Personal Development – We have appointed a teacher to take responsibility for the Youth Sport Trust and this has had a huge impact already.

Overall Effectiveness – we continue to have regular visits from the Executive Assurance Partners at Nexus and these have been very supportive and valuable. A few actions have arisen from these visits and we will work on these moving forwards.

What is the plan from an Ofsted perspective should we receive a visit shortly? What are your thoughts on what we would share with Ofsted? We are expecting an inspection at any point but have no idea when this will be.

What was GCSE attendance like and how did the children perform? Children performed very well overall. Most children were relaxed and calm throughout and were keen to sit their exams. NH had given the children lots of practice beforehand and this really benefitted them during the exams.

We received a visit from the Exams Inspector, and we have been instructed to change our exams storage unit to ensure it is fully compliant in future.

5.2. Community Voice Report

Main points to note from report circulated by WA:

WA reported that it has been challenging to engage some families with activities etc for a wide variety of reasons. The Family Voice exercise suggested producing a year calendar of events rather than a half-termly calendar.

The school has a Family Champion who does lots of work with our families and this has been successful with the families who have taken part.

Work in the community – Inclusion Champions been very successful for the school and the children involved. This approach gives our children confidence and really seems to work.

<p>Work experience for our children for post 16 and y11 has increased this year and we now have links with other businesses etc. Appropriate Risk Assessments are carried out with the companies offering work experience for our children.</p> <p>The BBC are producing a documentary following one of our Y11 children through their journey up to GCSEs. This will focus on disadvantages in education and is due out just prior to the GCSE results being released. LW/WA will advise governors when this documentary is to be aired.</p> <p>The Trust Sports Da was a real success and our children took charge of the events and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Sport plays a significant part of our children’s community engagement activities.</p> <p>Post-16 – photos of the event that children took part in are in the Headteacher’s report. We raised £2.5k in sponsor money from this event and plan to make this an annual event in future with families being invited to attend.</p> <p>The Happiness Group meets weekly and this has had a big impact for staff. The group has been able to bring about changes and has worked together to reduce staff workload whilst still having the same impact for our children.</p> <p>IT commended the school on the number of visits being offered by the school and the inclusivity of these visits for all children.</p> <p>LW noted that this is the first year that we have had to cancel trips because the costs were not affordable for some of our families.</p> <p>Could the Trust support the school more in getting money in for trips – could they help with subsidies? This is something we could consider. We have to be mindful of many families’ financial situation and their ability to pay for trips and visits. We are looking at how we might make costs savings on trips and whether we can ‘double up’ with another school to reduce costs.</p> <p>Governors wished to record their thanks to all staff and volunteers who have taken part in organising and being involved in these events and activities.</p>	<p>LW/WA 21/11/23</p>
<p>5.3. Budget Report</p> <p>Copy of the report was circulated via Governor Hub.</p> <p>LW explained that the budget situation is tighter this year. For 2022/23 we will have an in-year surplus of £169k. Next year we will enter a deficit budget because we will need to pay for the Pod. The year after that we predict a slight in-year surplus.</p> <p>We have no concerns relating to finances at the moment.</p>	
<p>5.4 Next Year’s budget and staffing structure</p> <p>See Headteacher’s report for details.</p>	

6. TRUST MATTERS	
<p>6.1 Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues</p> <p>Nothing reported at this meeting.</p> <p>6.2 Register of Interests – Annual Review</p> <p>Forms completed and will be returned to Clerking Services.</p>	
7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>7.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair</p> <p>All governors agreed to be part of a WhatsApp group to communicate any changes to meetings etc. LW will seek to arrange an additional meeting or training session for governors to visit the school.</p>	LW 21/11/23
8. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK	
<p>8.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
9. DATES OF NEXT MEETING	

Tuesday 21 st November 2023	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey Academy
Tuesday 12 th March 2024	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey Academy
Tuesday 9 th July 2024	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey Academy

Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE