



Abbey Academy Council Meeting Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 12:00 Abbey School

Those Present:	Role	Initials
Luci Windle	Executive Headteacher – via Teams	LW
Wayne Askham	Head of School	WA
Ian Tankard	Chair	IT
Dawn Jeffery	Parent Governor	DJ
Louise Abbott	Support Staff Governor	LA
Nicola Morris	Governor	NM
Niall Horstead	Staff Governor	NH
Also Present:		
Lyndsay Foster	Governance Clerk	CLERK
Joel Hardwick	Assistant CEO	JH
Laura Rzepinski	Observer	LR
Rachel Potts	Observer	RP
Apologies:		
Rachael Kent	Parent Governor	RK
Janine Brullo	Parent Governor	JB
No Apologies:		

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
1.1. To receive apologies for absence Apologies were received from RK and JB.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence Apologies were accepted for RK and JB.	
1.2. Confirmation of Vice Chair RK confirmed she is happy to continue as Vice Chair with Clerking Services.	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered. None.	
2.2. Resignation – Governor – Jim McIntosh Resignation received and accepted with thanks.	
2.3. Resignation – Governor – Ivy Dorchester-Brown Resignation received and accepted with thanks.	
2.4. Confirmation of New Term of Office – Parent Governor – Dawn Jeffery Agreed to renew term of office for a further 4 years.	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
3.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda None.	
4. ABBEY SCHOOL ACADEMY COUNCIL MINUTES	
4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 th July 2024 were approved as a true record with no amendments.	
4.2. Review of Action Tracker The outstanding actions on the action tracker were reviewed and updated. LW explained the CEO attended the Pupil Parliament last week. ACTION: JH to discuss with CG about cheat sheet for governors to receive a copy.	ACTION: JH 18/03/25
4.3. Matters arising from the Minutes None.	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	

LW provided an overview of the Headteacher's report, while WA presented key information on the screen, showcasing the improved accessibility of documents via the school's newly revamped website. The website has been extensively updated to ensure it is user-friendly and comprehensively organised for easy navigation.

The school's numbers remain relatively stable and are above the allocated places, although it was noted that the number of looked-after children is currently at its lowest in recent times. Staffing is also stable; however, the school has lost a Post-16 staff member and are due to be covering some positions due to maternity leave.

IT asked how does the Trust flexible working policy work with cases like this?

LW acknowledged the challenges in balancing school staffing needs with flexibility for employees, especially those who are carers or have young children. While the school offers flexibility, such as allowing staff to complete PPA (Planning, Preparation, and Assessment) time at home when possible, maintaining adequate numbers on-site remains a priority. IT emphasised that ensuring consistency for students is crucial and needs to be a primary consideration.

LW shared that the school's development plan has been updated to reflect Abbey's current progress and focus, with an emphasis on embedding the curriculum to ensure consistency across all areas. This year's overarching theme is about empowering students to be "change makers" and encouraging them to actively contribute to making the world a better place.

LW highlighted the 'Youth Sport Trust project' as a key initiative, aimed at enhancing resilience among girls through football. The project focuses on mental health and the supportive language used when interacting with girls, helping them to build confidence and emotional strength. It involves collaboration with professional sports teams, educational psychologists, and NHS staff to provide a well-rounded and impactful experience.

ACTION: LW to send out video of the link to clerking services of the youth sports project.

IT asked is there a baseline for the girls at Abbey?

LW confirmed that the Youth Sport Trust project includes a group of girls from Abbey, Discovery and mainstream schools. The group is intentionally small and consists of students from different ages who have been identified as being at risk of mental health challenges, exclusion, or involvement in criminal activity. Each participant was individually selected to ensure they would benefit from the program. Jill and Katy Crowley are leading the initiative, with LW providing oversight to support its implementation and success.

LW noted that the school was initially set to be the lead school for the Attendance Hub. However, due to changes in government, this initiative is no longer proceeding. Despite this, the school continues to share effective attendance practices with others.

WA added that they are actively addressing persistent absence through consistent follow-ups, including phone calls and home visits when necessary.

**ACTION:
LW
18/03/25**

IT asked how the changes in legislation are being communicated with parents?

LW confirmed that the school had collaborated with Discovery and ensured information was shared with parents ahead of the summer to keep them well-informed.

Additionally, LW highlighted that WA delivered a presentation on Evidence-Informed Practice to educators in China. This session was conducted via Zoom and facilitated by the University of Derby, showcasing the school's involvement in international educational exchanges and thought leadership.

Planned works & Capital Projects:

LW shared that the final corridor in the school has been completed. The next focus will be redeveloping the DT and IT rooms as part of the school's improvement projects.

Additionally, LW mentioned the school's involvement in the Play Ponics Initiative, a collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University. This project explores how engineering can be integrated into play, with plans to install a related feature in the school's wooded area. The initiative will not incur costs for the school aside from staff time. More details about the project are available on the school website.

JH asked how initiative came about?

LW explained that the school's involvement with the initiative came through Jill and her connection with the walking football program. WA highlighted the strong partnership with the university, noting that it has been mutually beneficial. The school has been asked to assist in writing the curriculum and collaborating closely with academics. Students have also been invited to work alongside university staff, enriching their learning experience.

LA added that the university was highly impressed by the students' capabilities and enthusiasm.

Sickness absence has predominantly affected part-time staff, although the school accommodates with five paid emergency leave days. Staff turnover remains low, retention rates are high and there are fewer long-term sickness cases compared to previous periods.

Inset days have been utilised to update safeguarding practices and align with the Development Plan, working in collaboration with Discovery. Additionally, two inset days have been rescheduled as twilight sessions to be held later in the year.

IT asked how the collaboration is going with Discovery and staff meetings?

LW expressed that things are going really well, especially with Discovery still being a new initiative. The "Change Maker" theme is continuing and efforts are being made to ensure consistency across the board. Additionally, the school has worked with Rachel Lang and has purchased access to the 'Calm App' app for all staff. The app, which focuses on meditation and sleep studies, has been highly beneficial for staff

well-being. Staff members have access to the app and five licenses to share with friends or family.

WA highlighted that the app has been particularly effective in helping students, especially after transitions, as it helps regulate their emotions. It has been much more effective than the Headspace app. LW noted that the school can also push certain features of the app to staff, such as anxiety and stress management techniques, particularly around stressful times like Christmas. The annual cost for the app is approximately £3,000.

IT added that initiatives like this are a great incentive for staff, helping them feel valued, which contributes to the school's strong staff retention rate.

WA displayed a document on the website during the meeting, which relates to the school's Quality Assurance (QA) cycle. LW mentioned that they are now aligning the school's QA process every half term with the Trust's QA cycle, which occurs annually. Additionally, the Team Curriculum document was distributed before the meeting and is also available on the website for easy access.

LW mentioned that all teachers are now Apple Teachers, having completed a free course that provides training and guidance on using Apple products, such as iPads, in the classroom. The school has successfully addressed previous safeguarding concerns by using a school app that sends immediate alerts about what students are viewing. This allows teachers to match their screens to the students' devices, ensuring better monitoring and control over their usage.

WA explained that when reviewing the learning cycle, they focused on the use of technology and its outcomes. They are also trailing the use of AI to help manage teacher workload and remove communication barriers. IT mentioned using Air AI moderation, a tool that allows teachers to take pictures of student work, helping reduce staff workload.

LW clarified that while they are still exploring AI, they are carefully considering what is appropriate for the school, especially in terms of safeguarding concerns.

WA discussed the importance of the Maths hub and its focus on SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and maths mastery. The goal is to examine the vision for mathematics across the school and identify the barriers students face in learning maths. They are also looking into how to introduce and integrate the maths hub model, ensuring that fluency in mathematics improves as students progress through the school.

IT asked WA is there a plan for the Maths hub higher up school and the EYFS maths hub?

WA confirmed that the approach started in both lower and upper school. LW added that a similar focus is being applied to oracy, emphasising the importance of students being able to understand the language used in math papers. They are aiming to integrate what students learn in role play through the 'Steam street' into their exam preparation, linking real-world applications to the concepts taught in the classroom.

LR asked what 'Steam Street' was?

LW explained that 'Steam street' is a corridor in the school where specialist rooms are located, designed to look like a street. Students are assigned roles, creating a practical, hands-on environment for learning. WA shared pictures of this setup on the school website.

LW also highlighted that pupil engagement last year led to the best set of results, with the school's Progress 8 score, used to measure secondary school performance being higher than three other secondary schools in Sheffield.

WA asked NH to give further details on outcomes?

NH confirmed that approximately 45 level 2 passes were achieved, covering subjects like home cooking skills, maths, and English. NH credited the success to the dedication of the staff in the school.

WA added that Vicky, the Head of English, has become an examiner. She stated that the experience has been the best CPD (continuing professional development) she has ever had.

IT asked if there were any NEET (Not in education, employment or training) children?

WA gave context that the process used to involve the LA providing the data for neet children but they have moved onto destination data which will break down where they have moved.

LW emphasised the importance of the school's collaboration with parents, highlighting the success of different settings and how the use of "Steam Street" has helped in preparing students by showcasing various opportunities available to them.

LA mentioned that they organise visits to colleges and job fairs, which have proven to be beneficial for the students.

LW also discussed the need to further support parents in understanding work experience, managing expectations and recognising how it might impact their children and families. This support will help to ensure work experience is a positive and impactful experience for everyone involved.

WA presented the core offer for pupil premium children on the screen, explaining how the breakdown of support is tracked throughout the school. This includes identifying targeted support for these students, ensuring they receive the necessary interventions to aid their progress. WA highlighted that over 52% of the students at the school are pupil premium.

NH discussed the use of the sports premium funding, which amounts to £16,000. The funding is allocated based on specific KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for extracurricular activities and it cannot be used for PPA (planning, preparation, and assessment time).

Sports premium is published annually on the school's website, which is the school's responsibility. Abbey has been using the funding effectively for extracurricular activities, including paying staff to run after-school clubs and lunchtime activities. Currently, the school is upskilling staff in fencing through a provider from Chesterfield. This includes foam fencing, which progresses to proper fencing, and the aim is to signpost students to Sheffield clubs where they can continue the activity.

LW discussed the end of the national tutor programme, which concluded after COVID, but the school is proud to have continued offering extracurricular activities such as music, dancing, and sports.

JH asked do Abbey struggle with transport after school for clubs?

WA informed that the main issue with wrap-around care is staffing and transport. The school had considered minibuses but found it too expensive and it would result in long, late days for students who were the final drop-off. The goal is to prepare students so they are ultimately able to access mainstream clubs closer to home.

IT asked if there's a lunchtime club?

LW stated that lunchtime clubs are already offered and are very busy.

NH mentioned that the upper school offers activities from Monday to Friday, weather-dependent. These activities are mostly indoor but they can use the 3G pitch, which is covered. Additionally, they now use the backyard as a basketball court since staff no longer need to park there.

JH asked is the BMX track used?

NH yes it's been used in the past and used in PE as there's bikes in school and its risk assessed and pupil risk assessed.

LW stated the bikes are costly to maintain.

They are attempting to replicate "Andy's Man Club" at the school, although they haven't been successful in arranging for them to visit on an inset day.

LW informed that the school continues to work on keeping students safe online. While students are excellent at following guidelines in school, they are not always as vigilant when outside of school. Parents are regularly signposted to information and reminded to check their children's devices. Any issues that arise are referred to the police as required.

LW also mentioned that there have been no reported incidents of bullying, staff/student incidents, or suspensions.

LW discussed the Personal Development section of the report while WA displayed it on the screen. They highlighted that the link to this information is available on the school website, where parents can access details about what is being covered in the curriculum.

LW discussed the development plan for pupil voice, highlighting various projects throughout the year. These include the Play Ponics initiative, which focuses on student empowerment. Additionally, they are working with South Yorkshire Careers on a program called "Start Small, Dream Big," which helps map out career pathways

<p>from KS1 using the Gatsby benchmarks. This initiative is also being integrated into the Steam Street approach to further develop students' career awareness and aspirations.</p> <p>WA displayed the family newsletter link on the website, which keeps parents informed, and the document was shared before the meeting. LW mentioned that while the school has a solid complaints procedure in place, it has been observed that families are bypassing this process and going directly to the police or LADO with their concerns, rather than using the school's formal complaints procedure.</p> <p>IT asked if there are provisions to restrict parents' access to site in extreme circumstances? LW confirmed that it is a functionality available to the school, if necessary.</p> <p>IT asked how has parents have responded to using X (Twitter) less and now using Seesaw? LW mentioned that parents have generally responded well to the changes, although some families are still reluctant to download and use Seesaw. DJ suggested that a demonstration could be helpful, perhaps at one of the parent coffee mornings, as they are well-received. WA confirmed that they plan to do this and also offer both face-to-face and online sessions, in addition to providing an E-Safety video demonstration.</p>	
<p>5.2. School Dashboard Summary</p> <p>A document was provided for information and a brief overview was given during the meeting.</p> <p>IT asked JH if the governors could have explanation under each point with more of an explanation? JH mentioned that they review the judgement and compare it to other schools and described how there are guidelines around certain areas, such as those where benchmarking data is available, whilst also noting that if any changes have been made, the reasons are usually highlighted. IT shared that he was considering how this would be viewed from an Ofsted perspective, particularly if governors were asked about it. LW confirmed that it is just a snapshot and other schools might provide more details if they aren't already rated as good or better. They suggested discussing it further at the next informal meeting.</p>	
<p>5.3. Budget Report</p> <p>The budget report was discussed and provided for information.</p> <p>IT asked if the teacher's pay rise has been taken into account on this report? LW confirmed that it is included.</p> <p>IT asked if the government core funding is it the same for specials or is it an extra pot? JH stated it still comes from LA.</p> <p>LR asked around supply staff figure? LW confirmed they don't use staff supply and seek to manage needs in house.</p> <p>LR asked if any vacancies? LW explained there are no current vacancies.</p>	

5.4. Teaching Staff Appraisal outcome report	
A document was provided for information.	
6. TRUST MATTERS	
<p>6.1 Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues</p> <p>JH informed that two new schools have joined the trust: Lotus in Sheffield and Endeavor in Nottinghamshire, both of which are SEMH schools.</p> <p>Additionally, two more schools Bents Green and Seven Hills in Sheffield have been approved to join. The trust is still working with the local authority (LA) on options and possibilities related to sufficiency needs. They are also awaiting further information from the new government regarding any strategy for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).</p>	
7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>7.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair</p> <p>ACTION: Clerking services to send out to governors invites for extra dates in 2025.</p>	ACTION: CLERKING SERVICES 05/12/24
8. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK	
<p>8.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None.</p>	
10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING	

Tuesday 18 March 2025	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey School
Tuesday 15 July 2025	12:00 – 14:00	Abbey School

Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE