



## Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools

Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Governing Board of Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools  
24<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 16.30 via Zoom

Governing Board	Initials	Role	Present / Apologies / Absent
Emma Barker	EB	Co-opted Governor	Present
Rosie Booker	RB	Co-opted Governor	Present
Natalie Butcher	NB	Headteacher/Governor	Present
Angie Johnson	AJ	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Martin Petersen	MP	Co-opted Governor	Present
Linda Russell	LR	Foundation Governor	Present
Jacqui Sinkins	JS	Staff Governor	Present
Josie Upton	JU	Parent Governor	Present
Sheila Watts	SW	LA Governor/Chair of Governors	Present
<b>Also Present</b>			
Justine Petersen	JP	Clerk	Present

<b>1. Welcome &amp; opening prayer</b>	SW welcomed all present and thanked them for attending. The meeting opened with a moment of quiet reflection. Governors were asked to consider the challenges faced by staff and the Federation families each day, and how the Governing Board could provide support.
<b>2. Apologies &amp; absence</b>	Apologies were received and accepted from Angie Johnson.
<b>3. Declaration of Interests</b>	SW invited governors to declare any business or pecuniary interests specifically relating to items on the agenda or that they had not already declared. SW was aware that EB had a potential conflict, and she would inform governors if it became relevant to discussions.
<b>4. Minutes of previous FGB meeting</b>	The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 were unanimously approved without amendment. SW will sign off electronically on Governorhub.
<b>5. Matters arising</b>	Governors were unsure whether AJ and the Business Manager had monitored GDPR. Action to carry forward. <b>Action – AJ and Business Manager to monitor GDPR.</b> SW has not yet monitored equality and diversity. Action to carry forward. <b>Action – SW to monitor equality and diversity.</b> All other actions were marked as complete or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.
<b>6. Committee updates</b>	<b>Achievement &amp; Standards</b> No meeting this half term.  <b>Resources &amp; Premises – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b> <b>Gov: Is there any update on the health and safety issues raised under item 8?</b> JU contacted the Business Manager to arrange a health and safety walk at Hickling, but she has not yet had a response. She has completed walks at Catfield and Sutton.  <b>Networking with Other Schools</b> NB continues to attend the North Norfolk Diocesan Headteachers Group. There is no set agenda, and the meetings are supportive.
<b>7. Governing Board</b>	<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> EB and RB analysed the results from the parent questionnaire, and their report was uploaded to Governorhub just prior to the meeting. The results were largely very positive, and there were many comments about the strengths of the

schools.

There are areas to explore further, such as one family mentioned their child feeling unsafe. This has been shared with NB and it will be discussed with the Pre-School Manager.

Some families felt lines of communication at Sutton could be improved, but the situation will be clearer in September when the new leadership structure is in place.

Some parents do not know who the governors are or their areas of responsibility. Information about governance will be included in every newsletter, and EB will include in note in the next edition to inform parents that governors are aware.

Six parents of children in YrR at Sutton commented on homework. This could need further discussion.

Overall, the comments were very positive.

Governors agreed unanimously to adopt the actions mentioned above, and they would be tracked during future meetings.

**Action – Review of actions arising from parent survey to be added to next agenda.**

### **Governor Monitoring**

#### **Staff Wellbeing Survey:**

SW thanked MP for his well-presented and clear report.

**Gov: The responses from Catfield stood out as being low. Is this indicative of the feelings at Catfield, or that staff feel they cannot engage?**

NB felt it was likely to be related to practicalities around the questionnaire. Due to circumstances outside of MP's control, the questionnaire was circulated late and the window for completion was small. It is an indication of the high workload at Catfield, and it would be beneficial to run the questionnaire electronically in future. MP agreed. The outcome is a baseline on which to build moving forward.

Governors were mindful that they could only take account of the responses received, and it was impossible to legislate for those that were not.

MP plans to run the survey again when the new leadership structure has had time to embed. The COVID elements would be removed, and staff would be asked what has changed.

**Gov: I am concerned with how this could be interpreted by an external scrutineer, particularly if they do not know the Federation well.**

Governors were mindful that the small numbers involved could skew the results significantly, but actions need to be put in place regardless of the number of responses.

Some responses were contradictory, for example all said the Federation was a happy and enjoyable place to work, but other answers suggested it is not.

Some staff said they were not asked regularly about their wellbeing. NB asks at every one-to-one meeting, and this is something senior leaders do particularly well.

**Gov: There is mention of long-term bullying, and that cannot go without comment.**

Governors are aware that this was a historic issue, and it has since been resolved.

Governors discussed possible actions. The lack of awareness about the Governing Board correlates with the outcome of the parent survey.

Some aspects would be relatively easy to address, such as by putting information on noticeboards.

**Gov: One question was around respect and inclusivity. Two disagreed and three neither agreed nor disagreed. These are concerning trends.**

*Confidential discussion.*

**Gov: Does the Federation still use the support line?**

Yes.

**Gov: Is it publicised on staff noticeboards?**

Yes, and wellbeing messages are included in every staff memo.

**Gov: Are staff directed to Head Space?**

NB was unsure. RB advised this is a subscription service, but it is currently free to educators. She suggested it be considered for mental health and wellbeing resources.

It was agreed that the R&P Committee discuss possible actions and report back at the next FGB meeting.

**Action – Actions arising from staff wellbeing questionnaire to be added to next R&P**

	<p><b>agenda.</b></p> <p><b>Update from Quality and Diversity Governor:</b> Deferred until next meeting. <b>Action – Clerk to add update from Equality and Diversity Governor to next agenda.</b></p> <p><b>Governor Training</b> The training log was confirmed as accurate. RB, EB, LR, JU and MP have completed Home Office Prevent training.</p>
<p><b>8. Headteacher Report</b></p>	<p>NB informed governors of changes to the roll.</p> <p>Catfield: 2 will leave but a family with 4 children is interested in joining in September. YrR will have 7 in September compared to a PAN of 11.</p> <p>Hickling: YrR will have 8 compared to a PAN of 11. 6-8 children will leave Hickling because of house moves or moves to private schools. None of the movement is a reflection on Hickling or the Federation. Forward planning is tricky. Where children are moving to other schools in year, there will not be confirmation until the end of term.</p> <p>Sutton: 4 moved to Stalham Academy at Easter. YrR will have 12 in September compared to a PAN of 25. There is interest in the pre-school, and the first intake is likely to be 9-10. NB stressed that there is a falling roll across schools generally, and comparatively the Federation is seeing less of a drop than other schools.</p> <p>Attendance: Catfield – 91.85% with 0.52% unauthorised. 2 sessions were taken as holiday.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p>Hickling – 82.66% with 1.23% unauthorised. Hickling has been severely impacted by chickenpox and COVID. The school has small numbers and percentages are skewed, but most absence is illness, and none is holidays.</p> <p>Sutton – 80.46% with 4% unauthorised. 44 sessions have been taken as holidays so far, and others are pending. NB reminded governors that the Federation has never issued fixed penalty notices, but holiday is having a significant impact on attendance at Sutton, and it might be time to review the policy.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p><b>Gov: Does attendance need to be considered at the July meeting ready for the start of the year?</b> Yes, a review of the Attendance Policy will be added to the next agenda. <b>Action – Review of Attendance Policy to be added to next agenda.</b> The County Attendance Team was surprised the Federation does not fine, but it would need to be applied consistently, and NB was not convinced it would make a difference. The DfE wants a national approach to attendance, and there will be more consistency going forward. Governors were mindful that the Federation has always resisted fining as incompatible with the Christian ethos, but absence figures have never been this high.</p> <p>Gov: It is probably because of COVID and missed holidays, and figures are unlikely to be so high next year. Fines are unlikely to work, and they would create additional work for NB while dividing relationships with parents. It would not be needed if the DfE imposes a blanket approach. Governors have a responsibility to the schools, and absence would be challenge area for Ofsted, particularly if no action is taken by the Board. However, it was unlikely it would make a difference in terms of Ofsted grading. Governors can demonstrate it has been considered and determined to be a temporary, post-COVID issue.</p>

	<p><b>Gov: When will the DfE guidance be published? Will it be mandatory?</b>          JU advised it would be mandatory, and implementation was likely to be rapid. There are no concerns with attendance data at Catfield, and Sutton is not due for inspection for some time.</p> <p><b>Gov: Has Sutton always had a relatively high level of holiday absence?</b>          Yes, it is a culture at the school.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p>Safeguarding:  <i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p>KS2 was selected for LA writing moderation on 17<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p>Curriculum enrichment is continuing, and the Federation is proud of what is being achieved. Jubilee weeks will take place at all three settings. Family craft afternoons, tea parties and a Norse lunch have been held.          KS1 and Catfield and Sutton visited the zoo.          One recent interview candidate complimented the Federation on having parents back in school for events. It is back to its fully functioning family environment.</p> <p>A Yr5/6 teacher has been successfully appointed. She has experience across KS2, and she is keen to work in a small village school.          Interviews will take place tomorrow for the SENCo post.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p>A SIAMS Health Check will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> June with Jon Moule. It was originally arranged for March, but it was cancelled due to COVID. LR will attend if possible.</p> <p>Sam Nixon, St Benet's School Improvement Officer, has visited. He challenged the Federation on its curriculum, and this was useful CPD and support. He was impressed with the work done, and this is given confidence to all involved. He was particularly impressed with the work on phonics. He asked about next steps. Other local schools have highlighted similar issues, and NB hopes they can group together to work on similar areas for mutual support.</p> <p><b>Gov: How have NB and JS protected their own time and put themselves first since the last meeting?</b>          It has been almost impossible, and SW and NB will have a separate conversation outside of the meeting.</p>
<p><b>9. Federation Development Plan</b></p>	<p>The FDP will be reviewed next half term.          One target was around phonics and early reading. The English Lead has met with RB. She has introduced a new incentive for children around 'punctuation pioneers' and 'spelling stars'. It is early days, but feedback has been positive, and NB is confident it will have a strong impact. Governors asked NB to pass on their thanks and congratulations to the English Lead.  <b>Action – NB to pass on governors thanks to English Lead.</b>          Writing moderation took place and there are points for development.</p>
<p><b>10. Future of the Federation Moving Forward</b></p>	<p>The original plan was for representatives of St Benet's Multi Academy Trust to attend the meeting, but SW was advised that their presentation would take a minimum of an hour. A separate meeting will therefore be arranged, and SW is awaiting suggested dates.          LR uploaded a document concerning questions to ask when considering joining a MAT to Governorhub, and it will form the basis for questions during the meeting.</p>
<p><b>11. Update from Working Party on Pre-School Provision on Sutton Site</b></p>	<p>8-9 children have booked for September. This is very positive.          New appointments have not been made because numbers are dropping in other areas. NB will consider staffing across the Federation to ensure the correct cover and ratios are in place.</p> <p>EB informed governors that the decision regarding 2-year-olds at Hickling is currently on pause because the leadership restructure is such a large task. It is hoped this can now go ahead in January but is dependent upon the situation in September. County is fully supportive, and they have congratulated the Federation on what has been achieved at Sutton so far.</p>

	<p><b>Gov: Has there been any parent feedback concerning the delay?</b></p> <p>Most families who need provision for 2-year-olds need it from January 2023, and no concerns have been expressed. Parents understand that the Federation remains interested in offering this provision.</p>
<b>12. Policy Approval</b>	The Staffing Adjustment Policy was reviewed and approved by the Resources and Premises Committee by email. There were some amendments to the previous version, but the Federation has adopted the County policy.
<b>13. Future dates of school events</b>	All dates are available via the website. Governors have been invited to attend the Jubilee celebrations.
<b>14. AOB</b>	None.
<b>15. Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>	Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2022, 16:30 at Catfield. LR submitted apologies in advance, as she will be on holiday.
<b>16. Summary Statement</b>	Staff wellbeing has run as a thread through the meeting. Governors have a level of concern, but action is being taken.  <i>JS left the meeting at 17:42.</i>
<b>17. Update on Leadership Restructure</b>	<i>Confidential discussion.</i>
<b>18. Closing Moment with Prayer</b>	The meeting closed with a moment of quiet reflection on how to further support staff wellbeing across the Federation.

With no further business the meeting finished at 17:49

Signed by the Chair of Governors as a true record of the meeting:

Date:

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