



Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools

Minutes of a Meeting of the
Governing Board of Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools
25th March 2021, 16.30 via Zoom

Governing Board	Initials	Role	Present / Apologies / Absent
Mia Baker	MB	Co-opted Governor	Absent – maternity leave
Natalie Butcher	NB	Headteacher/Governor	Present
Angie Johnson	AJ	Foundation Governor	Present
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
Rosie Brookes	RB	Co-opted Governor	Present
Emma Barker	EB	Co-opted Governor	Present
Also Present			
Jo Wheadon	JW	Business Manager	Present
Justine Petersen	JP	Educator Solutions Clerking Service	Present

1. Welcome & opening prayer	SW welcomed all present to the meeting and thanked them for attending.
2. Apologies & absence	None.
3. Declaration of Interests	SW invited governors to declare any business or pecuniary interests specifically relating to items on the agenda or that they had not already declared. There were none.
4. Minutes of Previous FGB Meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 9 th February 2021 were unanimously approved without amendment. SW will sign a copy on Governorhub.
5. Matters Arising	<p>EB and RB have been added to the Single Central Record.</p> <p>County provides access to local benchmarking data but the Federation isn't listed. It is the same with the national benchmarking. There is data for Catfield but not for the other schools. It is possible that the data for Catfield includes Sutton and Hickling combined. JW will check.</p> <p>Action - JW to check whether benchmarking data is just for Catfield or for the Federation combined.</p> <p>JW has not yet contacted AJ regarding the single central record and GDPR checks. She was waiting until the budget was complete, and she will do so after Easter.</p> <p>Governors were unsure whether AJ had contacted the SENCo.</p> <p>All other actions were marked as complete.</p>
6. Committee Updates	<p>a. Achievement & Standards – 8th March 2021</p> <p>The minutes were circulated and there were no comments or concerns.</p> <p>b. Resources & Premises – 8th March 2021</p> <p>The minutes were circulated and there were no comments or concerns.</p> <p>c. Networking with Other Schools</p> <p>NB is working on a collaborative project around curriculum leadership with a group of North Norfolk.</p> <p>She is also networking through her NPQH. There are weekly network meetings and she is gaining a more national picture of leadership, the current situation in schools and sharing best practise.</p>
7. Governing Board	<p>Training Log</p> <p>LR has two training sessions booked – Monitoring on 20th April and Costing School Development</p>

	<p>Plans on 10th June. She recommended the Diocese's Introduction to Governance in Church Schools session on 17th May, and the 21st June session on Monitoring in Church Schools.</p>
<p>8. Headteacher Update</p>	<p>There has been little change in pupil numbers and the PANs are as expected. 11 have Catfield as their first preference, 10 have Hickling and 14 have Sutton. Gov: How often do the schools picked up second choices? This is not common but some local schools have been oversubscribed in particular year groups. The above numbers are the most likely and the budget has been based on them. One KS2 child will move to Catfield from Sutton in September.</p> <p>Attendance is very positive.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p>There have been no exclusions.</p> <p>The Assistant SENCo post has been very valuable, particularly in providing support at Catfield.</p> <p>The focus over the last three weeks has been on mental health. A unit was trialled within the new RHSE framework and it was very positive. Distancing has been a particularly powerful tool. The older children are anxious that COVID-19 will never go away, and the younger children have massive social gaps.</p> <p>NB has met with the account manager at Norse. There is some demand for hot meals and the schools would like to provide them, but Norse cannot accommodate this without a significant cost implication. Screens would need to be installed to protect their staff, or lidded lunches would have to be provided at an additional cost of £ per meal per child per day. A Federation-wide decision will be made after Easter. Gov: What is happening at other local schools? Other schools have kitchens, but NB does not know whether they have installed screens. She will investigate the cost of screens and discuss with the Heads of School. Uptake of school lunches is very low because the children are only being offered packed lunches they are not of particularly high quality. Some pupil premium children will not access their free school meal unless it is a hot meal. Catfield has a high number of deprived families, and all of this needs consideration. Gov: It is quite an undertaking. Would it be possible to get meals from somewhere el. Norse can provide them in sealed boxes which can then be kept in hot cupboards in school, but Norse will not allow their staff onto the school site unless they are satisfied that it is safe. This would mean screens being installed, regular deep cleans and staff not coming into contact with the children. It needs to be a balanced, carefully considered decision</p> <p>The children have been back in school for less than three weeks and assessments have not yet taken place. They will be done in the first two weeks after Easter, including pupil progress meetings. Data will be available at the next meeting of the A&S Committee. The indications are that the remote curriculum has had a positive impact. The schools managed to sustain high standards in as many areas as possible. There are some areas that cannot be taught effectively remotely, and these will be a focus moving forward.</p> <p>Gov: Did the mental health module identify any safeguarding concerns that need looking into? It raised staff awareness of mental health. There are children on the radar who have concerning mental health issues and the schools are working with the families, both formally and informally. It is likely that more issues will arise as time evolves.</p> <p>The COVID-19 risk assessment remains in place. The children are again in bubbles and there is little change since the autumn. Governors are unable to visit the school but all now have secure nsix email addresses for remote monitoring.</p> <p>NB met with RB and EB last week to discuss communication with stakeholders. A list of possible questions have been sent to NB. Most involve transition from remote learning back into school, what the children may need and what they miss. Communication with parents has been considered in terms of enhancing parental understanding of what the Governing Board does. The governor information section on the website could be updated, for example including photos</p>

	<p>of governors rather than the drawings and including more information on governor responsibilities.</p> <p>Governors should be better known to parents and to staff. There could be a governor section in the newsletters. The Governing Board could have its own Twitter feed to really promote communication, but this would require regular commitment.</p> <p>Governors agreed that this sounded very positive, and there is a lot more that can be done to improve engagement. The first step is pupil voice next term.</p> <p>The levels of safeguarding need continue to increase.</p> <p>There has been one incident of bullying. This was dealt with and no further incidents have occurred.</p> <p>Staffing is the main barrier. A high percentage of staff are shielding. The curriculum has been maintained despite this challenge, and staff have been extremely resilient.</p> <p>Gov: The increase in safeguarding can be challenging for staff. Are we happy that there is enough support available to them, particularly if they are struggling?</p> <p>Senior leaders are very mindful of this. When staff are dealing with a safeguarding issue there is always another person to talk to. DSL meetings take place fortnightly in each school, and NB attends. NB has a rota to go through any cases under child protection, and also those for whom there are concerns. DSLs Hold each other accountable for next steps and actions.</p> <p>Gov: All staff OK in terms of their own welfare, and is there something in place if they are feeling the pressure?</p> <p>Yes, and staff approach school leaders about this. NB provided a recent example during which she covered a class to allow those teachers and support staff some time to talk and be together. Leaders know the value of the staff.</p> <p>NB has people around her and the leaders in school have each other. It can be difficult but the system is working.</p>
<p>9. School Development Plan</p>	<p>No update at this meeting. LR informed governors that this is being monitored by the A&S Committee, and Jo Nutbeam submitted a full report to the last meeting.</p> <p>The main project is RHSE, and NB gave a presentation to the Committee.</p>
<p>10. Future of the Federation Moving Forward</p>	<p>Governors are thinking wider than the pandemic and there are exciting developments going forward. The model is being refined across all three schools and the curriculum is being taken forward.</p> <p>Gov: Are there any changes in terms of the schools linking with other schools?</p> <p>No, not at the moment.</p>
<p>11. Budget/Finance</p>	<p>Discuss and Approve the 3-Year Budget</p> <p>Budget setting took place on 8th March. It originally suggested that the Federation would go into deficit in budget year 3, but this then changed to year 2. There was careful work around the budget to determine whether there could be savings, including looking at staffing. Senior leaders were asked for their thoughts on the ideal model to make their schools run effectively. Pupil numbers are dropping at Sutton and this was taken into account in terms of staffing projections.</p> <p>The budget is now in surplus for the full three years.</p> <p>There was money to be spent in the first year. The level of SEN is high and funds will be spent on providing the equivalent of an additional day support.</p> <p>SW stressed that NB and JW had worked hard on the budget before the meeting so they were already aware of the financial position moving forward.</p> <p>The trends are down overall but there is still a small surplus. It would not take much to push the Federation into a deficit, but the position is very positive compared to many other schools.</p> <p>There are designated lines for the SDP for the first time. There is also a vision to enable the Heads of School to have better ownership over pupil premium and PE premium.</p> <p>Additional department codes have been included and this will be more efficient moving forward.</p> <p>Governors unanimously approved the three year budget. Proposed by SW and seconded by LR. SW will send through to County as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>Gov: Did the Finance Officer respond regarding the benchmarking?</p> <p>Yes, he said the Federation could benchmark against local or national or both, but until JW has the figures or clarification she cannot progress this any further.</p>

	<p>Review Capital Reserves SW reminded governors that the capital was discussed this time last year and governors agreed to a project around ICT. That money has been spent and the project was completed at Sutton. There is now additional funding to spend and plans are in place to consider where this is needed moving forward at both Catfield and Hickling. Both schools need ICT but the laptops provided by the DfE do not need to be returned, so the funds can be spent elsewhere. This needs further evaluation and it will be considered at the next meeting of the R&P Committee. Action – Clerk to add capital spending, review of capital reserves and putting money aside for future IT needs to the agenda of the next meeting of the R&P Committee.</p> <p>Financial Benchmarking Covered above.</p>
12. Policies	<p>RHSE Policy Unanimously approved without amendment.</p> <p>NB explained that the parent consultation took place recently and feedback was very positive. NB and JU held sessions on Zoom, but only one parent attended. This shows that parents were happy with the information provided. Governors agreed that this was indicative of the levels of trust the parents have in the school, and it is strong evidence of the strength of the relationship.</p>
13. Future School Dates	<p>LR will attend the assembly tomorrow. A celebration took place at Hickling for all children who missed celebrating their birthdays together this year. It was a lovely day and the parents were very thankful. Easter egg hunts will take place on all sites tomorrow. Staff are working hard to ensure the children don't miss out. All children have been outside as much as possible.</p>
14. AOB notified to the chair in Advance	None.
15. Date and Time of Next Meeting	Tuesday 25 th May 2021, 16.30
16. Summary Statement	Children are thrilled to be back at school and they have enjoyed their first few weeks. Staff are helping children overcome difficult moments and the strategies are making a difference. The relationship between the school and parents is going from strength to strength.
17. Closing Moment with Prayer/Reflection	The meeting ended with a moment of quiet reflection.

With no further business the meeting finished at 17.45

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

Date:

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