

Brookside Academy (327) – Board of Governors  
Company Registration Number: 07641618 (England & Wales)



Minutes of the **Board of Governors** hybrid meeting held in the Oak Board Room, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The meeting started at 6.02pm.

#### MEMBERS

✓	Stuart Clowes	(SC)	✓	Julie Summerhayes	(JS)	(Chair)
-	Stuart Evans	(SE)	✓	Alex Tedford	(AT)	(Vice Chair)
v	Helen Fisher	(HF)	✓	Brian Walton	(BW)	(Headteacher)
-	Jenny Moore	(JM)	✓	Adi Whatling	(AW)	
✓	Jonathan Sansam	(JSa)	v	Lauren Whinton	(LW)	

#### IN ATTENDANCE

-	Sarah Ashford	(SA) Deputy Headteacher	✓	Sandra Cinicola	(SCi)	Business Manager
✓	Jenny Warrington	(JW) Clerk to Governors	-	Nicola Nevell	(NN)	Assistant Headteacher
v	Joe Scaife	(JSc) Bishop Fleming / Accountant				

(✓ those present) (v = virtual attendance)

## Minutes

No.	Item	Action
	<b>Audit Committee</b> Chaired by Alex Tedford (Business Lead) School staff are excluded	

#### BUS01/23

#### Annual Accounts

The business lead thanked Joe Scaife for joining the meeting of the audit committee, having already attended the clearance meeting. The agenda for the discussion was circulated before the meeting.

The audit was discussed first and has been completed. The process of auditing went smoothly this year. The accountants were pleased with this and conveyed that at the clearance meeting. It was a clean audit for numbers and regularity and with an almost clean management letter, with only one minor point.

Next the one page summary was discussed. At the Year ended 31 August 2023 the Income and expenditure first net operating surplus of £175, 525. There was a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Charge of £74,000. The net result for the year was £267,451 with a net change in capital funds of £-107,264. There has been a planned reduction in reserves.

HF joined on Teams at 18.08.

There was a main adjustment of £300,000, an adjustment of £45, 000 to HMRC. The accountants didn't need to post many journals as what was provided by the academy by SCi and her team was good. There were no unagreed journals.

Another document looked at was Key Issues for Discussion.

No.	Item	Action
	<p>The first two significant risks, the management of override controls and fraud in income, are risks if the numbers are materially misstated. There were no material errors from Bishop Fleming. There were three standard regularity risks with no material errors found. Overall, they are five standard risks with no material errors found.</p>	
	<p>Next Journal testing was discussed as an area of attention when completing the audit. There were a consistent number of journal posts, except for January when the back pay journals for wages which was tested with no issues found. There have also been more journals for Year End. There have been some journals over the weekend but this is no cause for the concern as your finance team has been working on the weekend. The fixed asset register is a point raised but the narrative for this should be ok. No bank posting issues this year so this is marked as resolved.</p>	
	<p>There's a new auditing standard this year which delves into IT with more detail. The Management Letter points to this commonly but nothing here for Brookside.</p>	
	<p>The Accounts are a good lengthy document with financial summary. To give the highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are in the same format as last year</li> <li>• Trustees report is first and is looking for inconsistency (financial review (page 6) and reserves policy (page 7)</li> <li>• The academy is much closer to its reserves level and there's enough explanation in the accounts.</li> <li>• There's a reference about changing from a Single Academy Trust to a Multi-Academy Trust (page 8)</li> <li>• There's a summary of numbers (page 21)</li> <li>• Local govt pension scheme is detailed (half way down page 22)</li> <li>• Cash and Cash equivalents (page 23) was at £1.3 million down from £5 million, now down to £500,000.</li> <li>• Net current is £381, 000.</li> <li>• Liquidity – solvency is a comfortable number which gone down because spent funds</li> <li>• It's a strong balance sheet</li> <li>• There are several pages of notes, income notes (page 29) there's income from all sorts of places, the GAG line has gone down slightly. Total income up has gone up by £200,000 from 2 categories the nursery and high needs.</li> </ul>	
	<p>At the clearance meeting the academy was comfortable with numbers in terms of how they were tested about where we expecting to be. There were no surprises for anyone.</p>	
	<p>Expenditure is listed (page 31) as staff costs being the main item, depreciation, £34,000 previously, and couple of thousand this year supply costs. Legal and professional costs are up (this is more professional rather than legal).</p>	
	<p>AW joined the meeting at 18.25.</p>	

No.	Item	Action
	<p>Digging into professional costs funds are being spent on Alternative Provision, which sits under this heading. There are notes about fixed assets. General annual grant is £381,000. Fixed asset purchases are from unrestricted funds, not free reserves. There's no carry forward. The meeting could spend five to ten minutes on local government pension fund – life expectancy has gone down by 0.2-0.3 of a year, which is less than in other places.</p> <p>The governors had no questions or comments about the accounts. They discussed the letter of representation and would look to sign the accounts. There are no known uninsured liabilities. The clearance meeting was fine. There is nothing for related party transactions. The Academy is a going concern and can survive for another twelve months with target reserves.</p> <p>The accountants will send the documents for signing.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair thanked Joe Scaife for attending on Teams and he left the meeting at 18.31.</p> <p><b>Stuart Clowes proposed that the accounts were approved by governors and Julie Summerhayes seconded this motion.</b></p> <p><b>All approved.</b> <b>For: 8 Against: 0</b></p>	
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><p><b>A governor asked why the GAG had gone down?</b> The 90 cohort was showing for an additional year, was lagged by a year.</p></div>	

**Governor Meeting – Opening Section**  
**Chaired by Julie Summerhayes (Chair of Governors)**

<b>G21/23</b>	<b><u>Welcome</u></b>	<p>The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including two governors on Teams.</p> <p><b>a) Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were accepted from Stuart Evans (work) and Jenny Moore (course). With 8 of the 10 Governors present the meeting was quorate.</p> <p><b>b) Declarations of Interest</b> None</p>
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<b>G22/23</b>	<b>Head teachers report</b>	<p>The Headteacher updated the governors after the Ofsted inspection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Five governors were in the Ofsted feedback session</li></ul>
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No.	Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give a summary of the Ofsted inspection it was an extremely positive experience</li><li>• The children were a delight and credit to the academy.</li><li>• History, Mathematics and early reading were chosen for deep dive analysis</li><li>• The inspection was a section 8 with one inspector for two days</li><li>• The initial phone call was 2 hours and what was discussed was tested during the inspection</li><li>• The governors are waiting for the report</li><li>• The inspector asked the governors how they were supporting wellbeing especially with the level of safeguarding at the academy</li><li>• SEND was looking 50/50 concerns are about the pathway.</li><li>• There were nearly 100 parent responses which is 30 more than last inspection and the comments were positive</li><li>• Preparation helped this being a positive experience</li><li>• The inspector was very skilled and experienced and understood the academy, inclusion and specialist provision and covered a great deal within the two days.</li><li>• The children used Eyegaze and PECS boards to respond to the inspector. One was asked 'Do you like school?' to which they responded using PECS 'No... I love school.'</li><li>• Two significant strengths were commented on by the inspector – SEND and Personal Development.</li><li>• The inspector commented that phonic TAs are not following the same curriculum as the teachers in KS1 but the results are good (100% in Year 2 last year) and we're not teaching by a script.</li></ul>	
	<b>A governor asked whether there would be a positive tweet about Ofsted?</b>	
	The Head said he intended to write to parents when the report comes out.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Staff Governor said the staff survey was full with people and there was positive discussion about the open door policy and being really lucky to have subject leader time and can go and talk to the leadership team. They said the inspector was helpful during the subject leader discussion.</li></ul>	
	<p>Post Ofsted it is important to maintain motivation. The academy is looking forward to going to Millfield to use their theatre for the Christmas performance. This theatre is purpose built with lights and a stage and capacity of 350. The performance will be readings and songs rather than a play to include all children.</p>	
	<p>The governors would like an invitation to the performance. A governor volunteered to meet and greet at the front of house.</p>	<b>BW</b>

No. Item

**A governor asked whether there would be opportunities for stage hands, lighting, costumes?**

The Headteacher said they were looking to the teachers ideas. It wouldn't be a play for upper KS2 so 120 children could be involved.

There were no further questions for the Headteacher about his report.

## Business Section (BUS)

Chaired by Alex Tedford (Business Lead)

### BUS02/23 Staffing

#### Staffing Update

There has been a traumatic and sorrowful event for a teacher at the academy with the death of their child. A supply teacher is covering the class and is confirmed until January 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.

A lower KS2 teacher has resigned and there has been one applicant for the post.

**A governor asked why there hadn't been many applications?**

The Business Manager felt it was due to timing mid-way through the autumn term.

**Another governor asked what the reasons for the resignation were?**

The reasons were personal.

A specialist provision teacher has also resigned but missed the deadline for resignations so may need to stay until the end of Spring Term unless the post can be filled more quickly. A nursery assistant has resigned but this has been managed internally by juggling shifts and changing keyworkers whilst maintaining the consistency.

The organisation chart shared before the meeting was up to date when it was sent out.

### BUS03/23 Premises

#### a) Capital Projects

The Local Authority has been talking about investing in the specialist provision. The governors discussed the timing of the investment given the announcement of Local Authority £100 million debt. To move a build project for specialist provision forward the academy would seek consultancy from Futures for Somerset but would worry about spending the funds without investment being confirmed.

Joining a MAT may offer some support in terms of services lost from the LA.

No.	Item	Action
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A governor cautioned that ring fenced money was gone in another part of the country where a council was in debt.

The governors felt a big financial commitment would be risky currently.

**A governor asked could the money be taken back if it was invested?**

The Headteacher didn't know whether the money could be taken back.

**A governor asked how the Local Authority debt could affect the academy.**

School money is ringfenced. Services from the Local Authority (LA) may be reduced. The IAR may come from the ESFA instead of through the LA. Some services like payroll may carry on as they are traded services which are income generating for the LA. GAG is from ESFA.

**A governor asked whether it is likely that the Local Authority will spend its ring fenced funds?**

The Head said the LA wanted to invest because they had invested in so many specialist schools but hadn't yet invested in Brookside specialist provision.

#### **BUS04/23 Health and Safety**

##### Health and Safety Update

Health and Safety is a prominent issue for the academy. There are increasing compliance requirements. There has been a new asbestos survey. The new build has no asbestos. In the older part of the building there may be asbestos in some areas of floor adhesive and in the wall of the boiler house. Some areas are not accessible. One area needs repair or removal during the next holiday. The surveyor spent two long days working on the 60-page report. The Head and Business Manager would do the Duty to Manage Asbestos training and the Business Support Coordinator would do Asbestos Awareness Training.

The Business Support Coordinator has also done Legionella training and oversees the water quality monitoring for this.

#### **BUS05/23 Themed Policies**

##### a) Policy Grid 2023/24

The policy grid was shared before the meeting. The Head commented that the relationship policy was in progress.

##### b) Policies for approval

There were two policies for approval with only minor amendments shown by tracked changes.

No.	Item	Action
	<p>The Health and Safety Policy was proposed by Stuart Clowes and Seconded by Alex Tedford.  <b>All present approved.</b>  <b>For: 8 Against: 0</b></p>	
	<p>The Finance Procedure  Stuart Clowes proposed the policy be approved and this was seconded Julie Summerhayes.  <b>All present approved.</b>  <b>For: 8 Against: 0</b></p>	

### Governor Meeting – Final Section

Chaired by Julie Summerhayes (Chair of Governors)

#### G23/23 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Vice Chair raised a point for consideration and asked that the minutes be amended and recirculated for approval by email.

The minutes were not approved for this evening and will be recirculated.

*[Governors not present at the meeting abstained from approving the minutes)*

#### G24/23 Papers for Information

##### Safeguarding Report 2022-2023

The Head circulated a report he had written about safeguarding at the academy. There seems to be an increase in multi-agency and parental correspondence.

##### **A governor asked whether the report was maintainable?**

The Headteacher felt that yes the report would be maintainable. The report comes from CPOMS and the Headteacher contextualises it. It would be possible to do the same report in order to compare and contrast another year.

The Land and Buildings Collection Tool Report was submitted.

##### **A governor said he didn't know the field behind the MUGA wasn't owned by the Academy.**

The land is owned by Clarks. There was an enquiry about it but it is currently leased.

No.	Item	Action
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**G25/23**      **Matters Arising**

**a ) MAT update**

The Chair has had a really positive catch up call with Peter Elliott the evening before Ofsted. Things are moving forward. The Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is focusing on the two Requires Improvement (RI) judgements to make improvements. The Director of Education is spending a couple of days in a school but she is still the Director of Education.

**A governor asked whether the MAT would proscribe teaching strategies?**

There is nothing to say proscription would be part of the teaching expectations. There may be some proscription about staffing levels at the beginning of the year which would be down to the Headteacher to negotiate.

There are benefits from joining a MAT, especially if LA services are reducing.

The regional schools directorate demanded additional information from the Headteacher and Peter Elliott. The board date is November 20<sup>th</sup>.

**A governor asked whether the Head had explained the context of Brookside data?**

The Head had produced a paper which was useful for the Ofsted inspection to contextualise the Brookside data.

A difficult Ofsted wouldn't have worked for the decision.

**A governor asked who was on the panel?**

MAT CEOs were on the panel.

The process is ongoing and Peter Elliott still meets with the Headteacher.

**A governor asked has anything come up that doesn't sit well?**

The two requires improvement judgements within the MAT are a concern.



No.	Item	Action
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**A governor asked do Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust still have capacity for us?**  
Yes they are only looking at Brookside currently.

**A governor asked about Provision Hubs... would Brookside children be able to access the provision hubs?**  
Yes. Alternative Provision cost is high. It would be more cost effective to run this in-house. AP could be integrated and children could be back in class and lessons. Special Schools are moving away from AP due to accountability issues and less time in school.

**b) Safeguarding Governor update**  
The safeguarding governor’s visit was delayed so will come to the next meeting.

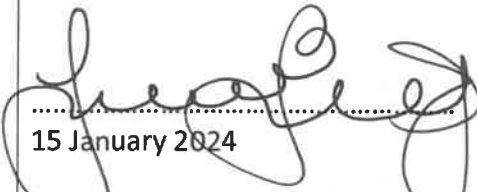

**A governor asked how does the situation affect Brookside? Are the reasons for wanting Brookside to join the same?**  
The reasons for wanting Brookside to join the MAT are the same. Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust are still engaged and there are benefits of joining in terms of support for safeguarding, finance and human resources.

**G26/23 Governors Visits and Training**

**a) Governors Visits’ to School**

No.	Item	Action
	<p>Alex Tedford - Ofsted visit and Clearance meeting            Stuart Clowes – Ofsted visit and Staff Disciplinary Hearing            Lauren Whinton – Ofsted visit            Julie Summerhayes – Ofsted visit, clearance meeting and, meeting with Head</p>	
	<p>The chair reminded the academy to schedule governor visits for the year.            The Head will talk to the deputy head about the pupil premium meetings to be arranged ahead and before the next meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> January.            To book individual visits to the school contact the Head teacher's Personal Assistant.</p>	<b>BW</b>
	<p><b>b) Governor Training</b></p> <p>Adi Whatling - safeguarding training and meeting with safeguarding adviser            Jonathan Sansam – Royal Shakespeare 4-day training course</p>	
<b>G27/23</b>	<p><b><u>Procedural matters</u></b>            There were no procedural matters to discuss.</p>	
<b>G28/23</b>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>            No further business was raised.</p>	
<b>G29/23</b>	<p><b><u>Date, time, and place of the next meeting</u></b>            The next meeting of the Board of Governors will be on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024            6.00pm <b><u>Oak Board Room</u></b> Brookside Academy            (There will be the option to join this meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams)            All meetings will start at 6.00pm            JSa left the meeting at 20:00</p>	
<b>Audit committee</b> <b>Chaired by Alex Tedford (Business Lead)</b>		
<b>BUS 06/23</b>	<p><b>Data protection summary Audit</b>            The Business Manager reported that the summary report hadn't been received from the county data protection adviser.            There was a Subject Access Request in progress.            Nothing further to report.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>A governor asked whether it was a risk that it hadn't been received?</b>              The academy has a good record with the county adviser and was good at self reporting.</p> </div>	<b>SC</b>
<b>BUS 07/23</b>	<p><b>Risk Register</b>            The draft risk register was shared with governors.</p>	

No.	Item	Action
	The governors asked that safeguarding be added to the risk register. There was a discussion about succession planning for capacity and wellbeing. There was a discussion about operational risks versus strategic risks. Two governors offered support in looking at the draft risk register.	<b>BW</b>

	Signed on behalf of the Governors of Brookside Academy   ..... 15 January 2024	Signed on behalf of the Area Lead   ..... 15 January 2024	
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With no further business, the chair declared the meeting closed at 20:26.pm.

**Action List**

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom	Due Date
G111/22	Look into capacity and needs preference issues for Specialist Provision	NN	
SPI01/23a	Share Behaviour data with governors	NN	26/02/2024
SPI01/23	Safeguarding Governor Update to next meeting	AW	13/11/2023
G22/23	Invite governors to Christmas performance	BW	13/12/2023
G26/23	Speak to Deputy Head about pupil premium governor visits	BW	15/01/2024
BUS06/23	Chase Data Protection Summary Audit from County.	SCi	29/01/2024
BUS07/23	Meet with governors to discuss Risk Register	BW	29/01/2024

Any business for the next Board of Governors meeting should be advised to the Chair of Governors.