



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

Minutes of the **Board of Governors** hybrid meeting held in Kangaroos Classroom, on Monday 26th February 2024. The meeting started at 6.02pm.

MEMBERS

✓	Stuart Clowes	(SC)	-	Julie Summerhayes	(JS)	(Chair)
✓	Stuart Evans	(SE)	✓	Alex Tedford	(AT)	(Vice Chair)
✓	Helen Fisher	(HF)	✓	Brian Walton	(BW)	(Headteacher)
✓	Jenny Moore	(JM)	✓	Adi Whatling	(AW)	
✓	Jonathan Sansam	(JSa)	✓	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
✓	Carly Cross	(CC) Early Years Lead Teacher				

(✓ those present) (v = virtual attendance)

Minutes

No.	Item	Action
Governor Meeting – Opening Section		
Chaired by Alex Tedford (Vice Chair of Governors)		
G50/23	<u>Spotlight on Reception Class</u>	

Early Years Team Leader Carly Cross gave a presentation on Early Years Reception Class. The presentation focused on changes in the Reception Class since the last presentation to governors. An example timetable was shared and discussed. The teacher commented that it was a full timetable and it was sometimes a challenge to fit in everything that was planned for the day. The class are doing new timetabled activities during the week such as Funky Fingers. Where previously Funky Fingers was done throughout the day, there are now designated slots of 5-10 minutes where it is the sole focus. Dough gym was helpful for the children but the class is using squeeze balls instead of play dough as play dough deteriorates in time and it is hard to make homemade playdough for use every day.

A governor asked about the need for strengthening fingers.
A lot of children need to build their muscles as their pencil holding is weak. The Funky Fingers/Dough gym supports this need. It's done in class all the time as a priority. It's fun and the children don't realise their working on something.

No.	Item	Action
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As a follow on, a governor asked whether Year 1s did not have enough finger grip strength?

Children in Year 1 often do need to improve their pencil grip strength. If you test a child's pencil grip by tapping the pencil it is often the case that it will move indicating no strength in the grip. Younger children who are developing writing skills also need to make changes to the way that they hold the pencil.

Last term provided the first experience of whole class Forest School. Early Years focuses on outdoor learning but it can be hard to get outside due to the opportunities and the weather. Forest School provides an all-weather opportunity which is amazing. A really positive development.

Reception Class is also doing the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI). Teaching Assistant Deborah Redman is well trained and it's her third year leading on this and she's doing a great job. NELI has been Department of Education funded to date but the future for this funding isn't certain. The focus of the intervention is on building language skills and developing children's ideas.

It's a 12-20-week course and the results have been positive. One child when assessed at the start could only write a 3-word story. At the end of 12 weeks the scribe couldn't keep up with story which was expressive, and made good use of characters.

Currently the intervention is only being used with the three children who were identified by assessment. The class would like to see how it could be developed for group work or whole class work. Communication and Language development is the focus.

A governor asked whether NELI was an online scheme?

NELI is a paper-based scheme with paper resources and assessment which suits the current working style.

A governor asked whether NELI was just for Early Years or Year 1 as well?

The SENCO responded that it was just Early Years currently. There were trials of the scheme in deprived areas and it forms part of a high impact toolkit and is a good intervention from a SEND point of view for addressing language difficulties and building knowledge and skills.

No.	Item	Action
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A governor asked why children were struggling with their language?

The Headteacher responded that the answers were complicated and subjective. Children do seem to be spending more time with different carers, whether Nursery, child minders or Grandparents, on a weekly basis. More children seem to be doing longer days (8am-6pm) at Nursery. The SENCO said there was possibly less talk and more electronic time at home. The Headteacher said there was no evidence to suggest parents weren't reading to their children as much at this time.

Adi Whatling arrived and joined the meeting at 6:13pm.

After Ofsted's recommendation, the Class is showing more fidelity to the phonics scheme of work, Twinkl. Teaching Assistants are now following all the activities Twinkl provide. Each session is started with writing a sentence together and this is proving to be a positive strategy.

This year children are taking home reading words. At the beginning just three words and now up to eight words. The home reading words follow the sound phases in school and it's pushing reading forward. All staff are actively bringing reading into the school day during any activity. Some children will soon be offered spellings as well and this will tie in with Year 1 spelling lists.

Small whiteboards are no used by children sitting on the floor anymore as it does not encourage good posture, but they do have access to whiteboards on the tables if they want to have a go at trying a word or sentence before writing it in their books. Children can take their learning as far as they can and want to. Some children write the sentence and some children tell the sentence. Everyone in class do the PowerPoint at the start, after that it is differentiated. There's lots of reading for all levels. Lower ability work on Consonant-vowel-consonant words and blending while higher ability children develop a deeper understanding of the phase, rather than moving on to the next phase too quickly. The governors agreed that it was important to embed a depth of understanding and strength of knowledge. A staff governor commented that children enjoy being about to apply their knowledge once they've got it. The Early Years lead said the children were gaining confidence to talk using abstract words in sentences where they could.

Regarding Maths, the class was again focusing on depth and breadth of learning. The aim is to try to close the gap between the more able and less able. Previously the reception year classes had dipped into lots of different schemes for different aspects of the Math's curriculum, however they are currently seeing the benefit of sticking with one scheme, currently White Rose which provides starters, teaching slides and activities. The scheme takes small steps allowing solid mathematical foundations to be built, and addresses as many gaps in knowledge as possible. However, following a school visit which highlighted a new scheme, the Mastering Number NCETM

No.	Item	Action
	<p>scheme will be followed by the reception year from September. The Early Years Team Leader reflected that she was confident the children are secure in number, which is essential before the other aspects of maths fall into place. The Early Years lead also said subitising was an important aspect of maths.</p> <div data-bbox="312 427 1299 707" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>A governor asked what the strengths of the Mastering Number scheme were. The scheme is felt to provide a small step approach to allow all children to access and make progress. The SENCO agreed that there was lots of evidence to support breaking learning down into small steps. Number Sense did its job but it was very plain. Mastering Number does it well and has a child friendly look as well.</p> </div> <p>The single scheme ensures the teaching team stays on track. A staff governor said it's very easy for a low ability child to lose confidence and small steps would help prevent this. For more able children the teaching team can work with them one to one to take them further in depth without drawing attention and making an issue of it. The SENCO agreed that without small steps there's a danger of working memory cognitive overload, where the working memory doesn't transfer into long term memory correctly.</p> <p>The governors thanked the Early Years lead for the presentation and asked for the PowerPoint to be put on the secure area. Carly Cross thanked the governors for their time and left the meeting at 6.30pm.</p>	JW

G51/23

Welcome

The Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

a) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Julie Summerhayes who was working late.

With 9 of the 10 Governors present the meeting was quorate.

b) Declarations of Interest

None

G52/23

Head teachers report

The Headteachers report had been circulated before the meeting and the Headteacher asked if there were any questions.

A governor asked about high levels of unauthorised absences.

The Headteacher said there was still a not attending child. The local authority is aware of the situation. Alternative Provision is also in place.

Mainstream Year five is still showing on the behaviour chart and there has also been a first incident this year in Year 6. A new system for recording nursery behaviour is being developed.

The safeguarding audit has been put on the governor's secure area of the website.

The Headteacher shared the results of the staff wellbeing survey, which was a check to see how the academy was doing. The Headteacher will look to reduce the number of questions in the survey if it is repeated. There was a short read through the results and a discussion.

A governor asked what the sample size was for the comparison data?
The sample for mainstream was 598 schools and for special schools 166 schools were included.

Overall the results were positive, though there was a slight drop from September results.

A governor asked why the academy can't do flexible working time for staff?

The Headteacher responded by saying that the academy has all year round (AYR) contracts and this means when those staff take holidays it can leave the academy feeling understaffed. Monday morning briefings are a challenge to work out cover arrangements. With staff absence on top of annual leave it can be tricky to cover everything as it is, so flexi-time would add to these issues.

A governor asked whether the leadership team had had 360-degree appraisals?

The Headteacher said they had them a while ago. The leadership team is widening.

Specialist Provision and Inclusion Section (SPI)

Chaired by Helen Fisher (SPI Lead)

SPI05/23 Behaviour and Safety

a) Whole School Behaviour

This was covered by the Headteachers report. There was nothing else to report to governors on this section. The SENCO went straight to the Assistant Head's report.

SPI06/23	<u>Child Protection</u>	
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- a) Safeguarding update

There was nothing to report to governors regarding safeguarding at this meeting.

SPI07/23	<u>SEND/Specialist Provision</u>	
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- a) Assistant Headteachers Report

The Headteacher's report was shared with governors before the meeting.

The situation has changed regarding the first item in the report. Two specialist provision teachers are leaving at Easter and the academy had appointed a replacement Team Leader but this has not worked out. There's limited agency staff availability. Limited interest in either post. The academy is faced with looking for different solutions, perhaps reducing the provision to five classes.

A governor asked whether it was usual for teachers to leave part way through the year?

It's not uncommon. There's more mobility and job availability. Individual circumstances change and teachers have to give one term's notice.

The SENCO suggested incentives to entice people such a flexi-time would help. The Headteacher said it was about the culture in the academy as well that encourages people to come and stay. The safeguarding governor reminded the governors that the government have not yet met their recruitment targets for headteachers or teachers.

A governor asked whether it was necessary to limit intake, given the circumstances?

The Headteacher and SENCO are meeting with the Trust and the Local Authority imminently.

A governor asked whether a SCITT package or something similar would help recruitment?

The Headteacher said he was in contact with SCITT and there were two people who want to train at the academy. The academy has been successful with building nursery staffing levels through a similar idea. In school training does mean 50% of time out of class during the first year which does need to be covered.

No.	Item	Action
	b) Evidence for Learning / Curriculum	
	<p>The SENCO showed and talked through the Evidence for Learning website. The academy's use of the website was started from scratch and frameworks to assess the children have been put on there. The personal learning goals (PLGs) and Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) outcomes are on there. There are six-twelve-week review cycles. The children's PLGs align with the curriculum framework and evidence either copies written work books (for formal learners) or photos and videos (for pre-formal learners) can be uploaded. The next step is for parents to start uploading their own evidence towards goals.</p> <p>The framework links to the curriculum pathways in maths and English and is recorded in phases instead of years as a developmental journal. It can be aligned to the national curriculum easily as well.</p> <p>The SENCO talked through a couple of children's pages as an example.</p>	
	<p>A governor asked how it's been received by parents and carers? There's been a good reaction so far. Parents and carers like more opportunities to communicate with teachers and with this they can see what their children are learning in class. The academy uses the office email to contact parents. Teachers can also phone as and when necessary.</p>	
	<p>A few parents came to the workshops. Some find it difficult to attend. The record can be made into a book and sent home at the end of the year if wanted.</p>	
	<p>A governor asked whether more targets can be added once the existing ones have been achieved? Teachers are reviewing the PLGs and uploading them on a termly basis.</p>	
	<p>A governor asked whether the records move up the school with the child. Yes, the record is the child's record which accompanies them throughout their time in school and teachers are assigned or removed as and when necessary.</p>	
	<p>The local authority met with the SENCO after Christmas to discuss SEND processes in mainstream and there are bullet points, in the Assistant Head's report, to work on. The SENCO and Specialist Provision and Inclusion lead governor will consider the strands and work out how to get evidence to support the issues raised when they next meet.</p>	NN/HF

b) Alternative Provision

There was a lot of out of class behaviour last term but not at the same level as last academic year. Some children are benefitting from reduced timetables and alternative provision and a more bespoke approach. Staff are better at responding creatively with provision ideas to make it successful for the child. Where previously there may have been harsh consequence such as suspensions, behaviours are now being dealt with using relational approaches.

Forest school is working successful as an alternative activity for all children in school, led full time by a teaching assistant from specialist provision, whose been well trained. There's rotation in place for mainstream classes and also small group interventions taking place. This has been instrumental in the absence of an ELSA on the staff during the first spring term. A staff governor said the children in Year 4 have really enjoyed the forest school time. The Headteacher said it was lovely to watch the area growing. The SENCO said a shelter has been put up so the area can be used in all weathers and the facility is being used daily. A staff governor said that it had meant a significant change in Year 5 attitudes which at first thought it would be a time to mess around outside now recognise Forest school time as both purposeful and interesting.

SPI08/23

Themed Policies

a) Policy Grid 2023/24

The policy grid was shared with governors before the meeting.

b) Policies for approval

There was one policy, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy, for approval at this meeting.

The EYFS policy

Stuart Clowes proposed the policy be approved and this was seconded by Jonathan Sansam.

All present approved.

For: 9 Against: 0

Governor Meeting – Final Section

Chaired by Alex Tedford (Vice Chair of Governors)

G53/23

Minutes of Previous Meeting

No amendments were requested at the meeting. The minutes of the 29th January 2024 were proposed for approval by Brian Walton and seconded by Stuart Clowes.

All approved.

For: 9 Against: 0

No.	Item	Action
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[Governors not present at the meeting abstained from approving the minutes]

G54/23 **Papers for Information**

External SEND Website Audit

The website audit was shared with the governors before the meeting and there were no questions about it. It was good to see that all the expectations from the local authority regarding the SEND information on the website had been met.

G55/23 **Matters Arising**

a) MAT update

The Chair has met with the Trust Leader recently. The next step is to think about TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006' and its amendment in 2014) and the academy is working with solicitors. The Headteacher has written the second letter to parents about the MAT transition. There has been only one question raised after this from a prospective parent. The Trust Leader will attend an upcoming governors meeting.

G56/23 **Governors Visits and Training**

a) Governors Visits' to School

Helen Fisher – school visits for meeting with the SENCO and to be on an interview panel

Stuart Clowes, Lauren Whinton and Stuart Evans – School Walkaround afternoon today.

Julie Summerhayes – met with Headteacher

The governors on the Walkaround today asked for thanks to passed to the team for the time as it was really valuable.

To book individual visits to the school contact the Head teacher's Personal Assistant.

b) Governor Training

Stuart Clowes – PREVENT Training and Cyber Security Training.

Alex Tedford – Neuro-divergence in the workplace training. Looking at challenges and opportunities.

No.	Item	Action
G57/23	<p><u>Procedural matters</u></p> <p>a) Clerk's briefing The Clerk's briefing was circulated with the papers before the meeting and there were no questions asked about it.</p> <p>The board would like to know whether there are any training courses on National College or otherwise with resources for challenges regarding recruitment.</p> <p>The governors would like to know the paediatric first aid training ratio record.</p> <p>Regarding Cyber Security, the MAT is looking at the server for the academy. Governors would like to be included in the all staff Cyber Security Training when it is done.</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>BW</p> <p>JW</p>

G58/23 Any Other Business

Alfred Gillet Trust

The Alfred Gillet Trust is a local museum that looks after Clarks shoes artifacts. They created a scheme of work for the curriculum and asked the Year 5 teacher to be involved in developing their multimillion-pound refurbishment. Brookside were the only school to attend and it was a privilege to be involved in a local developing project.

No other business was raised.

G59/23 Date, time, and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors will be on Monday 25th March 2024 6.00pm **Kangaroos** Brookside Academy
(There will be the option to join this meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams)
All meetings will start at 6pm.

	<p>Signed on behalf of the Governors of Brookside Academy</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> 25 March 2024</p>	<p>Signed on behalf of the Area Lead</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> 25/3/24 <i>[Signature]</i> 25 March 2024</p>	
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With no further business, the chair declared the meeting closed at 8:00pm.

Action List

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom	Due Date
G32/23	Elective home education 2 not 4 in LA data analysis Dec 2023	BW	29/04/2024
BUS10/23	Capital Expenditure project financial modelling for Business Committee e.g. AP transport vehicles	BW	25/03/24
BUS11/23	Head teacher to consider carrying out a lockdown drill.	BW	25/03/24
BUS13/23	Business Manager to share technical details about change to MAT IT support after Easter including filtering information and internet service.	SCi	25/03/24
BUS14/23	Head teacher to review the Risk Register risk and control ratings.	BW	25/03/24
G50/23	Reception Class Spotlight to be put on secure area	JW	01/03/2024
SPI07/23	Consider how to evidence LA SEND in Mainstream bullet points	NN/HF	20/05/2024
G57/23	Are there any recruitment training/resources for governors to support the current recruitment challenge e.g. on national college	JW	25/03/2024
G57/23	Can the academy share the Paediatric First Aid ratio record with governors	BW	25/03/2024
G57/23	Please can governors be included in the all staff Cyber Security training	JW	25/03/2024

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

