

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



Minutes of the **Board of Governors** hybrid meeting held in the Kangaroos Classroom, on Monday 29th January 2024. The meeting started at 6.08pm.

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)	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

(✓ those present) (v = virtual attendance)

Minutes

No.	Item	Action
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Governor Meeting – Opening Section Chaired by Julie Summerhayes (Chair of Governors)

G40/23 Spotlight

There was no spotlight presentation at this meeting.

G41/23 Welcome

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

a) Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for the meeting. One governor attended virtually on Microsoft Teams.

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

b) Declarations of Interest

None

G42/23 Head teachers report

The Head teacher began by saying that the attendance figures were good in mainstream and next year's Christmas show was booked again at Millfield for the 18th December 2024. The safeguarding audit has been done and was sent to the Safeguarding Governor and highlighted children looked after data. There are 6 looked after children currently. Current persistent absence is 15.7% which is down from 2021-2022 but is still higher in specialist provision than in mainstream.

No.	Item	Action
	<p>Mainstream attendance is 96%. There are four classes in Specialist Provision which fall under 90% currently. The behaviour data is stable. There were 67 concerns involving 37 children up to 27 October 2023 and 110 concerns involving 60 children up to 22 January 2024. This is compared to 274 concerns involving 91 children at the end of last year.</p>	
	<p>A governor asked about the dates for reporting. The governor reminded the meeting that half termly reporting had been requested for the Head teacher's report. The Head agreed to producing the safeguarding data on an half termly basis.</p>	
	<p>Regarding the safeguarding audit it was noted that the Nursery must report significant injuries to Ofsted. The Safeguarding Adviser Katherine Hollinghurst had been helpful to the Head teacher, Business Manager and Safeguarding Governor. The audit asked good questions and requires the academy to show evidence for what it's reporting and should be treated as a working document. It needs to be completed by Wednesday 31st January. The Head teacher will share the document with governors and it can be put on the governors secure area of the academy website.</p>	BW/Sci
	<p>There are challenges around recruiting teachers currently. There were also four leavers in December 2023 and some positions may not have a direct replacement.</p>	
	<p>Regarding the Academy Development Plan Outcome 1 – Quality of Education is on track. Ofsted praised the Specialist Provision and are sharing what the academy is doing in terms of best practice through Alison Jefferies. Regarding Outcome 2 there's nothing worrying about the data. Persistent Absence has fallen from 22.3% last January 2023 to 13.4% this year.</p>	
	<p>A governor asked what had contributed to the fall in persistent absence. The work with families is helping, issues are being handled without so many extreme meltdowns from the children. Adrian Ballard has been working on wellbeing and Upper KS2 have been running an in school breakfast club in school time to support children and to play games.</p>	
	<p>Lots of children are struggling with mental health issues and the academy may not have reached through to the family as yet. The academy is focused on team working with tenacious persistence to support families and will try to improve on the support provided. An ELSA has been appointed today which will help this.</p>	
	<p>There has been a reduction in exclusions only half a day since October 2023. Although the challenges are still there, the support practices and relational practices are embedded and highly volatile situations can be brought down more often than not. There are still some challenges in Year 5 and the team is doing relational work with them. Some operational changes have made improvements to this though there can still be flash points in unstructured</p>	

moments. Some of the children have experienced trauma and the academy is well informed in supporting these issues. Specialist Provision staff are particularly well informed but mainstream also have knowledge. It is testament to incredibly experienced team doing a terrific job and an Early Career Teacher doing a great job.

A governor asked about long- term support for children with high needs.

The academy responds to each child providing interventions to suit their needs. For example, the child may be offered time in forest school, or have Speech and Language support or be assessed for the ADHD pathway. Teaching Assistants provide a valuable source of support for children through their time at Brookside and we are sorry to have lost an experienced teaching assistant in Year 5 recently when she left the academy.

A governor asked what's being done to support children with trauma in background.

The academy provides for an ELSA and mental health assessments. Though it was noted it can be hard to support victims of trauma as the cause is not always known. A Talkabout intervention is currently being used to support children who find it hard to stand up for themselves, don't want to be noticed and can sometimes swim under the radar. There's a need to do more referrals to mental health services and there more work to do from the SEND and SENDCo side in working with families. The ELSA left in December but there is a new one coming in and the PFSA has been supporting pastoral aspects of academy life whilst the ELSA role has been vacant.

A governor asked whether the support for children was joined up?

The process usually starts with a teacher raising concerns. This would be discussed by the Executive Leadership Team / Designated Safeguarding Leads at a Safeguarding Meeting to find out and discuss what's involved and what the action needs to be. Everything comes centrally through the Safeguarding team so from that perspective it is joined up.

Business Section (BUS)

Chaired by Alex Tedford (BUS Lead)

BUS 08/23 Finances

A) Financial Update – Month 3

The Business Manager highlighted the key aspects in the Month 3 report and cashflow forecast for the year ahead:

- There are huge swings in months 1, 2 and 3
- There was an error in month 2 – an additional 387,000 of funds was included twice

- There may be a bigger swing in nursery when the grant and fees income will arrive is difficult to predict

Nursery is getting to capacity for September 2024 already. Friday is the only day with any availability for babies and toddlers though there is some capacity still in the pre-school age range.

Month 4 may look better with Specialist Provision funding expected but this hasn't been seen yet and if or when it will arrive is hard to predict.

Staffing commitments are ever changing. Leavers may be replaced with something different which may have a different cost implication.

Currently the academy is looking at a £96,000 deficit with a £300,000 carry forward.

A governor asked about the change in government funding for schools in the near future?

The government plans to spend £2.1 billion less on schools. It is currently consulting with schools. Brookside has not yet had notification of change to its government funding.

A governor asked about expected change to nursery funding?

There's funding for parents who are working for 15 hours a week. This shouldn't affect the school but parents' capacity to pay for childcare. The Nursery has 3-year-old and 4-year-old places for September but hasn't got any 1-year-old and 2-year-old places left currently.

BUS 09/23 Staffing

a) Staffing Update

There are challenges for recruiting teaching staff currently. Two Specialist provision teachers are leaving at Easter. One post has been advertised since November and there has been no known interest in this. Regarding point 3 of the Risk Register this has been updated to include the new vacancies but the mitigations won't improve this satisfactorily - it is still challenging. Training nursery staff isn't an issue for the academy due to the links with Strode College. Operationally we have had to draw on available staff to cover classes recently. A recruitment agency has been called to find out about cover for Specialist Provision in the Summer Term. The reputation of teaching as a profession has a negative rhetoric currently. There are not as many applicants as there were in the past.

A governor asked about retention and extra opportunities for staff development and career progression.

No.	Item	Action
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The academy does support staff in career progression. Team Leads or middle leadership positions are an example that. The academy also uses exit interviews to reflect on what improvements could be made.

Average staff turnover was noted to be around 10%-12%. There was nothing of concern to report about current leavers.

A governor asked whether being the MAT would help the staffing situation?
The MAT would help with staff development and being a bigger organisation. Current staff haven't raised any worries about joining the MAT and have said positive things about some of the expected benefits.

A governor asked how the academy attracts people to work at Brookside?
The academy is looking forward to working with the next round of Early Career Teachers and the Head teacher will be working with Exeter University regarding leadership and this will hopefully encourage a links.

Regarding recent staff appointments Claire Hirst has been appointed ELSA and will start on the 17th February. The Supply Teacher in Moles will continue until Easter and the Summer Term as well if needed. The Cover Teacher Emma Wilkins who does 2 days a week is leaving so the academy needs to find a replacement for the Early Career Teacher time for three teachers and an Enrichment Session.

b) Organisation chart

The updated chart was shared with the Governing Body before the meeting but there are changes to make again already.

BUS 10/23 Premises

a) Capital Projects

The Business Manager reported on some upcoming projects:

- The Baby Room needs improved storage rooms. Removing sanitary ware to allow for an organised storage area and additional changing places. This work will hopefully take place during Easter which would mean a reduced amount of relocation time.
- The Baby Room also needs an entrance porch area.

The Head teacher said he did not feel under pressure to spend the carry forward before joining the MAT in September so plans to spend the money could be well planned. There are several current ideas for spending capital expenditure which could be developed:

- Transport vehicles, either large cars or Minibus Lites which don't need a D1 licence to drive, could reduce the alternative provision

No.	Item	Action
	<p>expenditure. The academy would look to employ a designated driver to be employed to transport children to the shops and other alternative provision locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cupboards in Specialist Provision is an ongoing issue requiring repair and renewal. <p>A governor noted that having academy owned transport was cost effective and younger drivers are less keen to drive full size minibuses. Drivers for the academy would have a choice to do the role as it was recognised that not all staff would want to drive for the academy.</p> <p>The Head teacher noted that there was no real accountability or understanding of the impact for the children of the current £60,000-£80,000 annual expenditure on Alternative Provision.</p>	
	<p>A governor asked whether the vehicle proposal passed the threshold for the Business Committee and if so whether there could be some financial modelling. The Head teacher agreed to do some financial modelling to be shared with governors.</p>	BW
	<p>The last minibus was sold approximately three years ago. If you've passed your driving test before 1st January 1997 the D1 endorsement is automatically on your licence.</p>	

BUS 11/23 Health and Safety

a) Health and Safety Update

The Health and Safety Governor is coming in to monitor a fire drill on the 18th March.

A governor asked about lockdown drills?

It was noted that lock down drills are not currently a statutory compliance issue but the academy is aware of the need to know procedures for lockdown and to practice them. There is information about Lockdowns in the staff handbook. A governor asked for a drill to be considered.

BW

BUS 12/23 Themed Policies

a) Policy Grid 2023/24

The policy grid was shared with governors before the meeting.

b) Policies for approval

There were no policies for approval at this meeting.

No.	Item	Action
Governor Meeting – Final Section Chaired by Julie Summerhayes (Chair of Governors)		
G43/23	<u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u>	
	<p>The Headteacher and Vice-Chair had made amendments to the minutes prior to the meeting and these were circulated with the board.</p>	
	<p>The minutes of the 15th January 2024 were proposed for approval by Brian Walton and seconded by Jenny Moore. All approved. For: 9 Against: 0</p>	
	<p><i>[Governors not present at the meeting abstained from approving the minutes)</i></p>	
G44/23	<u>Papers for Information</u>	
	<p>There were no papers for information</p>	
G45/23	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	<p>a) MAT update</p>	
	<p>There was nothing new since the last meeting, two weeks ago, regarding joining the MAT. The academy has looked at staffing and will meet the Trust again in two weeks to discuss non-staffing costs. The academy has engaged a solicitor. It was noted that the SIMS contract renewal is due on the 1st April 2024 and will need to be renewed for a year. It was felt that staff are feeling good about joining the MAT and the Head teacher will talk to Peter Elliott about what needs to be communicated to parents next. As the Academy is a Single Academy Trust, consultation to join a Multi-Academy Trust is not required. The Academy is waiting for the Regional Schools Directorate to sign off the final three issues and begin the formal process.</p>	BW
G46/23	<u>Governors Visits and Training</u>	
	<p>a) Governors Visits' to School</p>	
	<p>Julie Summerhayes visited to meet with the Head teacher for the regular meeting.</p>	
	<p>To book individual visits to the school contact the Head teacher's Personal Assistant.</p>	
	<p>b) Governor Training</p>	
	<p>There was no governor training reported in the meeting.</p>	

No.	Item	Action
	The Business Manager has done the Designated Safeguarding Lead Briefing and the Head teacher will be doing the Designated Safeguarding Lead training at the end of the week.	
G47/23	<p><u>Procedural matters</u> Admission Committee minutes 30.11.2023 The minutes of the Admission Committee meeting were shared before meeting. The chair of the Admissions committee said there was no change to admissions arrangements as it is not that point in the cycle. The first round of admissions for September is slightly over subscribed. The capacity is 60 children. The decisions are based on catchment and siblings, then catchment.</p>	
G38/23	<p><u>Any Other Business</u> Wellbeing Link Governor</p> <p>The governors elected Stuart Clowes as Wellbeing Link Governor.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Governor asked about Safeguarding Training for In-Year Staff Starters. The Head teacher arranges two or three additional sessions for new starters during the year and they receive Induction when they start. The Safeguarding Governor said the iHasco level 2 online training is valuable. The Academy uses National College online training as well though it's still important to cover local information for safeguarding.</p>	
	Jenny Moore and Jonathan Sansam left the meeting at 7:34pm.	
<p>Audit Committee Chaired by Alex Tedford (Business Lead)</p>		
BUS13/23	<p>Internal Scrutiny</p> <p>a) Data Protection Summary Audit This audit was expected at the last Business Meeting but the academy hadn't received it at that point. The Vice-Chair asked whether the academy had a Cyber Security policy and for it to be shared with the governors. The MAT does buy into the Somerset DPO support. The Business Manager reported that there would be a change in IT support after Easter. A governor asked for the technical details on filtering and internet provider under the MAT from Easter.</p>	<p>SCI</p> <p>SCI</p>
BUS14/23	<p>Risk</p> <p>a) Risk Register The Vice-Chair and Admission Committee Chair met with the Head teacher to discuss the risk register. The Risks are colour coded and risk rating controls have been added to. There's a new risk recognising there could be poor data in any given year. Recruitment has improved slightly on the ratings as has the Head teacher and Business Manager leaving which is off set if the academy is part of the MAT. The Head teacher will look again at the control ratings as controls should mitigate the risks. He welcomes governors objective perspectives. The governors said well done to the Head teacher for working</p>	BW

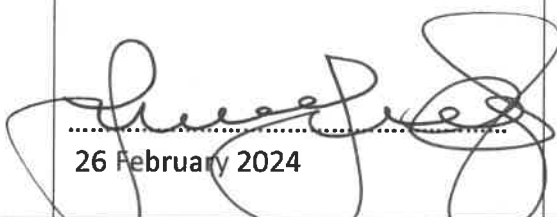

No.	Item	Action
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on the register and that it looks in good shape. There's a good return on investments.

The Business manager noted that the academy had written out to staff to give them awareness of asbestos risk at the academy and the Health and Safety Governor asked whether there was an Asbestos Register in place.

G39/23 Date, time, and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors will be on Monday 26th February 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.

Signed on behalf of the Governors of Brookside Academy  26 February 2024	Signed on behalf of the Area Lead  26 February 2024
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With no further business, the chair declared the meeting closed at 7:51pm.

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
G32/23	Elective home education 2 not 4 in LA data analysis Dec 2023	BW	29/04/2024
G42/23	Head teachers report – Safeguarding Audit 2024 is to be shared with governors and put on the secure area of the academy website.	BW/sci	26/02/204
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
G45/23	Head teacher to talk to Peter Elliot regarding when and how to communicate with parents about joining the MAT.	BW	25/03/24
BUS13/23	Cyber Security Plan to be shared with governors.	SCi	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

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

