



MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF ABBEY COURT SCHOOL

MINUTES

Date: 20.05.2025

Time: 11.00 a.m.

Location: Abbey Court School, Rede Court Site

Clerk: Cathy Poole

Attendees: Jane Heyes – JH (Chair)
Jon Carthy – JC (Vice Chair)
Vicky Aspin – VA (Headteacher)
Claire Richards – (CR)
David Field - (DF) (via Zoom)
Tim Muggridge - (TM)
Chloe Knight - (CK)
David Lane - (DL)

Apologies: Barry Kemp (BK)
Matt Powell (MP)

In attendance: Cathy Poole (CP) – Clerk

A	STANDARD ITEMS	ACTION
A1	Apologies: Barry Kemp (BK) Matt Powell (MP)	
A2	Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest relevant to this meeting.	
A3	Minutes of the last meeting Minutes from the last meeting held on 11 March 2025 were verified for accuracy and confirmed as approved.	
A4	Matters arising: Careers – MP completed monitoring form which has been circulated. Skills Audit – DL outstanding. He confirmed he had completed and returned to school. VA/Clerk to follow-up.	VA/Clerk

	<p>Filtering and Monitoring (online safeguarding) – still waiting for end filter from Medway. VA circulated information to the meeting on current procedures – to be uploaded to governor’s section of the website. Daily and weekly tests are undertaken and if any breaches detected these are reported to Medway.</p> <p>Therapy Review delayed report should be available for the next meeting.</p> <p>Health & Safety Review – DL to undertake.</p> <p>Review of Instrument of Governance – Clerk had reported review to the Area Governance Officer who confirmed that the instrument is valid and would only be reissued by her if any changes were made.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>VA</p> <p>DL</p>
B	Leadership Matters	
B1	<p>The Headteacher Report had been made available to Governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the link to the Staff Survey did not function and the Staff Absence statistics displayed incorrectly. These documents were circulated at the meeting and will be added to the Governors’ section of the website.</p> <p>Student absence: noted the huge increase in medical appointments 497 to end of April 2025. This related to MCH delays associated with computer systems. Regular meetings are held with the Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Referrals for Placement – 61 received since January 2025. Noted that each referral takes 2 – 3 hours to review. This equates to 15 working days.</p> <p><i>JH asked if Governors needed to take any action at this stage. VA felt that this was not required currently but would keep the Board apprised of the situation on a regular.</i></p> <p>Staffing: noted that there are currently 14 TA vacancies for September.</p> <p><i>JC commented that the lack of the announcement of a pay award for support staff made a difficult situation more challenging. JC asked about current avenues for advertising.</i></p> <p><i>VA confirmed Jobs Go Public (Gold Member), Kent Teach, Mid Kent College.</i></p> <p><i>JC asked if Social Media was used. VA confirmed not currently. JC suggested looking at Social Pilot.</i></p> <p><i>TM suggested contacting 6th Form schools from May onwards.</i></p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>VA</p> <p>VA</p>

	<p><i>TM to put VA in touch with Natasha to discuss their School based Teaching Programme.</i></p> <p>Staff Survey: Governors received the report. To review and bring back any comments to the next meeting.</p> <p>Noted that the number of questions had been significantly reduced and time is given on training days to complete.</p> <p>Parent Engagement: Cooking Sessions had been held as a way of introducing parents to each other – good take-up.</p> <p><i>JH asked if the school was happy with the take-up. VA confirmed that they were and were very focused on continuing. Noted that they were working to engage other groups of parents as it tended to be the same groups supporting events.</i></p> <p>The Parent Survey will be undertaken at Parents Evening in June.</p> <p>School Development Plan evaluation: circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><i>JH stated how impressed she was with the amount of contact with other schools and organisations in classrooms, clubs and outside events. This shows the real breadth of the school.</i></p> <p><i>VA commented that the farm highlighted how many of our students respond to the opportunity to transfer skills.</i></p> <p><i>DL commented on the weekly growth of the Young Farmers Group.</i></p> <p><i>JC noted that the Subject Lead for RE was on maternity leave and questioned whether this was covered.</i></p> <p><i>VA confirmed that this role was held by the Deputy Heads during her absence. A Keeping in Touch Day had been arranged with the subject lead.</i></p> <p>Noted the date for reaccreditation of the Carnegie Mental Health and Well-being award was booked for 22 May 2025.</p> <p>Health & Safety Report: <i>DL commented this was well set out and easy to read. JC asked about the increase in ambulance involvement. VA confirmed this was for those students who have very unstable medical conditions.</i></p> <p><i>JH suggested presentation on Tapestry in the new year. This is the system of recording student progress.</i></p> <p><i>JH asked for the Board's thanks to be passed on to those staff who above and beyond when supervising residential visits, Duke of Edinburgh etc.</i></p>	<p>TM/VA</p> <p>All Governors</p> <p>VA</p> <p>VA</p>
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	<p>LAC & PLAC Report Report received by the Board for the period 2/9/24 to: 15/5/25 (Terms 1-5 2024-25)</p> <p><i>JH thanked VA for her very comprehensive Headteacher report.</i></p>	
C	POLICIES	
	<p>The following policies had been reviewed and were ADOPTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asthma Policy (New) The school has been working closely with the MCH School Nursing team to devise an Asthma Policy to become an 'Asthma Friendly School'. This has meant implementing a new policy and procedures for the way in which we support pupils with Asthma. This is in line with government guidance on supporting pupils' medical needs and we hope to be successful in being awarded the 'Asthma Friendly Schools award' in the very near future. Attendance Policy DF commented on the very long paragraph 7.4. VA to review. DF asked if there is a trigger to review persistent and severe absence. VA confirmed the definitions are set by DFE. VA looks at attendance on a daily basis as does the Attendance Officer to review patterns of absence. No set time frame – case by case basis. Behaviour & Bullying Policy Emergency Management Plan Employee Code of Conduct Invacuation Lockdown and Evacuation Policy Noted that invacuation/lockdown is not practiced by students but all staff receive training. Staff Development Currently Performance Management takes place in Term 6. JC confirmed that his school set Teaching Staff Performance Management in Term 1 and review in Term 6. Support Staff Term 2. TM confirmed that his school undertake Teaching Staff Performance Management from September – December. VA to review Abbey Court schedule with a possible move to the Autumn. 	<p>VA</p> <p>VA</p>
D	Finance	
D1	<p>Pupil Premium – noted that Pupil Premium funds support the work of the Farm. The funding for the animals comes from the Trust.</p>	
D2	<p>Sports Funding – Sports Funding covers the costs for the riding instructor and the Rebound Therapy trainers.</p>	

D3	<p>Three Year Budget Plan 2025/2026</p> <p>Presentation from Clare Thurman-Newell, Finance Officer – available in the Governors’ section of the website.</p> <p>Noted that the school end of year position is over the 8% allowable rollover. Reasons for this have to be submitted to Medway.</p> <p>Noted that some funds (£670,000) outstanding were not paid to the school until the last day of the financial year and were therefore unavailable to spend prior to that.</p> <p>Budget for 2025/2026 formally approved by FGB.</p> <p>JH commended the Finance Officer for a very thorough report. She is aware of her additional work with VA and that of her team. JH recorded a vote of thanks to the team for all the additional work required on the budget preparation.</p>	
E	GOVERNING BODY MATTERS & STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES	
E1	<p>Governance Review</p> <p>The Local Authority had commissioned a desk top Governance Review. This had been triggered by a predicted budget deficit.</p> <p>Report to be circulated to all for information.</p> <p>Clerk to review recommendations and discuss further with JH.</p>	Clerk Clerk/JH
E2	<p>Governor Induction</p> <p>TM received induction plan. TM to liaise with JH/VA as appropriate.</p>	TM
E3	<p>Governor Training</p> <p>JC undertaken Data Protection Training on 19 May 2025 with Westbrook Trust</p> <p>JC undertaken Prevent Training on 8 May 2025 with Home Office</p> <p>Clerk to update training schedule.</p> <p>DF having difficulty accessing NGA training – Clerk to resend log in information.</p> <p>JC said he had been contacted by the school about a DBS query. VA to follow-up.</p> <p>Online training 2024/2025</p> <p>DL outstanding – Health & Safety</p> <p>JH outstanding – Management of workload and wellbeing; the governance role</p> <p>CK outstanding – Your Organisation; understanding school structures</p> <p>MP outstanding – Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <p>Training Evaluation: noted that the NGA drops down on training specifically for Special Schools. JH will look at the overall NGA training being provided.</p>	Clerk Clerk VA DL JH CK MP JH
E4	<p>Governor Monitoring</p> <p>Term 5</p> <p>DL Writing/Health & Safety outstanding. To combine in one visit.</p> <p>CK – general school visit and tour – VA suggested attending early before the next Governor’s meeting.</p>	DL/VA CK

	<p>JH/CK/CR – SCR Check – JH to liaise regarding dates.</p> <p>Term 6</p> <p>JH/DF to monitor FE Curriculum – to liaise regarding dates.</p> <p>DF Governor of the Term 6 – to liaise with VA regarding dates. Noted best day for DF is a Monday.</p> <p>DF to write for newsletter T6 – introduce himself, talk about involvement with the school, why he wished to become a Governor. VA to confirm number of words and deadline date.</p> <p>Noted that DL/MP find difficulty in handling some of the monitoring roles.</p> <p>JH to review the workload with VA with a view to make the process a bit more manageable for everyone.</p>	<p>JH</p> <p>JH/DF</p> <p>DF/VA</p> <p>JH</p> <p>DF</p> <p>VA</p>
E5	<p>NGA Skills Audit</p> <p>To be updated for next meeting.</p>	JH/VA
E6	<p>Clerk Appraisal</p> <p>JH to undertake in September 2025.</p>	Clerk
E7	<p>Items for Improvement Plan 2025/2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 3 – no movement currently. Continue to invite Councilors'/MPS. • LOC • Governance Review • Review of Governors Workload/supporting documents • New Inspection Framework 	JH/Clerk
E8	<p>IT – two factor identification</p> <p>Noted that two factor ID currently being investigated to ensure security levels are raised.</p>	
E9	<p>Board Meeting Dates 2025/2026</p> <p>To be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.</p>	Clerk
G	CONCLUDING MATTERS	
G1	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmed that DL is now a member of the Board of Trustees. • Governors to record all visits to school. • Very successful Farm Open Day, 800+ in attendance. <p>Meeting closed at 12.50pm.</p>	All Governors
G2	<p>Date of next Meeting:</p> <p>Tuesday 1 July 2025, 11am – Cliffe Road (Mtng 6)</p>	

CP:21/05/2025