

*'Living life to the full'.  
John 10:10*



## Tas Valley Church Schools Federation

Preston CE VC Primary and Saxlingham Nethergate CE VC Primary

### Full Governing Board Meeting

Monday 11 March 2024 at 5pm, Saxlingham Nethergate CE VC Primary

### Minutes

**Present:**

Diane Perry-Yates DPY (Chair of Governors)  
Matthew Walker MW (Executive Headteacher)  
Claire Crawshay CC  
Rebecca Orford RO  
Fiona Webb FW  
Claire Smith CS  
Tara Gillam TG

**Apologies:**

Katie-Rose Lightfoot KRL  
Lesley Allgood LA  
Daisy Sutcliffe DS  
Will Defoe WD  
Anne Fry AF

**In Attendance:**

Christopher Perry-Yates CPY (Governance Professional)  
Laura Knight LK (Head of School, Saxlingham)  
Jo Firman JF (Head of School, Preston)

Item No.	Item and discussion	Owner	Target Date
1.	<p><b>Register of attendance and apologies:</b></p> <p>Apologies had been received from Katie-Rose Lightfoot, Lesley Allgood, Daisy Sutcliffe, Laura Knight and Anne Fry. All other governors were in attendance and agreed to accept the apologies offered.</p> <p>The Governance Professional advised that the meeting was quorate.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Declarations of pecuniary interests:</b></p> <p>There were no new pecuniary interests declared.</p>		
3.	<p><b>Presentation on RE Curriculum:</b></p> <p>The governing board reviewed the presentation from the RE Lead. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>The RE Lead took the governing board through the report. It was highlighted that all children should be able to take part in discussions about different religions using their own experiences and knowledge. It was highlighted that RE was different to other subjects and was focussed on listening and discussion.</p> <p>RE was a multidisciplinary approach through three strands. Childrens books</p>		

<p>included different objectives that they would cover under the different strands.</p> <p>The enrichment opportunities were highlighted which included a trip to Norwich Cathedral. Every two years every child had the opportunity to have an RE trip. The local church events were also integrated into the RE curriculum.</p> <p>Governors noted that there was an overlap with mental health and as part of the enrichment provision there were midday mindfulness groups and there were quiet times and reflection times incorporated into the school days which was linked to RE which was also about having time reflect on their own thoughts.</p> <p>It was highlighted that there were currently 40 Acts of Kindness displayed in the school during Lent and children were recording their acts of kindness. Taking care of nature was another current focus linking to RE. In Years 4 to 6 there was an RE day each term; the current theme was linked to climate.</p> <p>Governors were advised that the school used the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and that tasks were adapted to the different cohorts. Monitoring of RE included book looks, pupil interviews and looking at progression of activities.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors advised that she had monitored Collective Worship with CC at both schools. Children had indicated that they liked reflection time giving them time to think and giving them strategies to cope with different scenarios. Governors agreed that promoting mindfulness from an early age was very positive. It was also agreed that it was important to be aware of capturing soft evidence that mindfulness helped the children.</p> <p>Q (FW): Is Christianity the majority of the curriculum, being C of E schools?</p> <p>A: It has to be 51% Christianity.</p> <p>Q (FW): Are the children taught the fundamentals of Christianity?</p> <p>A: All children receive a bible when they join the school and when they leave. They are taught about Christianity but in a way that allows them to interpret it in their own way. For Easter we are looking at temptation and sacrifice and they are identifying this with other areas of life. Theology, philosophy and human social sciences are the three strands that we look at different times of the year and in different year groups.</p> <p>Q (FW): Do you coordinate with Open the Book? Is this still carrying on?</p> <p>A: At Preston Primary we do at certain times of the year. Within Collective Worship we link in at certain times of the year.</p> <p>Governors thanked the RE Lead for her presentation and agreed that it</p>		
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	would be helpful to have an update at a future point.		
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting on 29 January 2024:</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 29 January 2024 were reviewed and approved as an accurate reflection. The minutes were digitally signed by the Chair.</p>		
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <p>The action list from the previous meeting was reviewed.</p> <p>All actions were noted as completed.</p> <p>Governors commended the organisation of the library relaunch at Preston Primary.</p>		
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Items for discussion under Any Other Business:</b></p> <p>There were no items declared.</p>		
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Executive Headteacher's report:</b></p> <p>The governing board reviewed the Executive Headteacher's report. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher highlighted that the Year 5 and 6 children were taking part in the Norfolk Flourish Survey. Additional staff CPD undertaken included mental health training, SEND Lego therapy training and Writing moderation. There were four teachers across the Federation who had embarked on an NPQ in Leading Teaching. Governors commended the number of staff participating in the NPQ programmes.</p> <p><b>Q(DPY): Will staff provide feedback on their experience with the NPQ training?</b></p> <p><b>A: They are all very excited and feel it is positive that the Federation supports their development.</b></p> <p>The governing board commended the SENDCo for her work in undertaking the SENDCo position.</p> <p><b>Q (FW): Attendance - what has been the response from the parents / carers with whom you have sought to engage?</b></p> <p><b>A: Mixed. Some parents have engaged really proactively whereas there has been no response from others.</b></p> <p><b>Q (FW): Staffing - will Harriet Hughes duties be covered between her departure and the end of the academic year?</b></p>		

<p>A: This has not been finalised but likely to be a combination of agency TA staff and overtime from existing staff.</p> <p>Q (FW): Suspensions at Preston; what gave rise to these?</p> <p>A: Persistent Disruptive Behaviour</p> <p>Q (FW): Are they related to the Prejudice Related Incident at the school. Did this or the incident at Saxlingham involve a child who had previously been involved in such an incident?</p> <p>A: Suspensions are not related to prejudice related incidents (these have not been at a level where a suspension was warranted). Incidents relate to different protected characteristics and were not directed at individuals from these groups. None of the perpetrators had been previously involved.</p> <p>Q (FW): SARs - can you explain the context of these?</p> <p>A: Parent/carers requested some specific information relating to their children. One parent had lost a document that the school had previously requested. SAR procedure was followed in full.</p> <p>Q (FW): Wraparound care - what has been the response to the survey for each school?</p> <p>A: Survey is still open at the time of writing. I am inviting some input from Norfolk CC Wraparound Care Project in analysing the data.</p> <p>Governors noted the pressure on school staff with the mobility in the pupil rolls.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Is the mobility a different to the current year?</p> <p>A: It does seem to be particular to this academic year.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors advised that the national press had picked up on the dropping number of children.</p> <p>Q (TG): Is there any support needed from governors regarding the wraparound childcare?</p> <p>A: There is a department in the LA who are in discussion with us. Now that we have further data, they will be able to offer further support and advice. The barriers we are experiencing are not specific to us alone. There is funding for settings to cover potential losses in the provision of wraparound provision with a view to having a sustainable model beyond two years.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that there were still question marks over demand for wraparound care.</p>		
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	<p><b>Q (TG): Why did Jack in the Box Nursery pull out?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b> This was thought to be due to demand.</p> <p><b>Q (RO): Have we had feedback from the wraparound survey?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b> These will be analysed and reported to the next meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the online payment system for parents had been implemented at Saxlingham. Governors commended the work undertaken.</p>		
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Safeguarding report:</b></p> <p>The governing board reviewed the safeguarding report section of the Executive Headteacher report and the action plan and online safety plan. A copy of these had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that the online safety plan was an integral part of overall safeguarding. The Executive Headteacher and CS had attended active bystander training about challenging sexism and sexist attitudes as well as inappropriate sexual behaviours which would be cascaded to all staff. These incidents would be logged separately to show that these were addressed.</p> <p><b>Q(DPY): Who would the information go to when logged?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b> This would be used for internal knowledge. As DSL we would look at the logs of all incidents of concern and identify trends and acting where trends and patterns were identified. We would then also involve external agencies and make referrals where needed.</p> <p>It was noted that all incidents were logged in the school and it was agreed that parents may not realise how much time was spent recording, monitoring and addressing concerns.</p>		
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP) progress:</b></p> <p>The governing board reviewed the updated RAG rated SIDP. A copy of this was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p><b>Q (FW): What measures are being taken to ensure that, as recommended by Ofsted, strategies for pupil engagement at Saxlingham are in place and their effectiveness can be evidenced - is VNET helping with this specifically?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b> No specific input from VNET. Learning Walks from SLT have already been completed (to be repeated in Spring 2024); Staff training through staff meetings and INSET – sharing good practice; Staff training regarding engaging pupils with SEND; Pupil voice conversations.</p>		

	<p>Q (RO): Was VNET membership highlighted in red for a particular reason?</p> <p>A: The subscription has increased slightly but was more comprehensive.</p> <p>Q (RO): You also indicated that support staff appraisals were outstanding?</p> <p>A: This was mainly office staff and the caretaker outstanding.</p> <p>The governing board reviewed the Self Evaluation Form (SEF). A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>Q (CC): Was it felt that an Ofsted was imminent at Preston?</p> <p>A: No, but we feel the need to update the SEF and be clear that everything is in place. Contextual changes have been added to the document.</p> <p>Governors noted that the administration and organisation of the supporting evidence at the Saxlingham Ofsted had been appreciated by the inspector.</p>		
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Resources reports:</b></p> <p><b><i>Budget Plan 2024-27</i></b></p> <p>The governing board reviewed the draft Budget Plan. A copy of this was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>Governors noted that the budget was very positive. The Executive Headteacher advised that the Federation was in a much more positive position. It was explained that the positive changes were that there were 3 children at Preston Primary who had received an increase in SEND funding equating to approximately £35k. These had previously been funded from the overall budget. There was also an uplift in delegated funds. Previous inflationary estimations had also been dramatically over-estimated.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher confirmed that an increase in hours for the SENDCo had been included in the budget in anticipation of the potential of her starting the national award. Additional TA support as also included.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the LA had removed the restriction on carrying over 8% of the budget. It was agreed that there was a need to be cautious before making any plans.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors advised that the Finance Support Officer (FSO) from County had sought advice to ensure that the budget figures were correct. Historical evidence had also been reviewed.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advise that in E19 the expenditure increased significantly in Year 2 which was due to an increase in residential costs due</p>		

<p>to there being two trips in the same academic year.</p> <p>Governors commended the budget management.</p> <p><b>IT WAS RESOLVED</b> to adopt the Budget Plan 2024-27. <b>Proposed: CS    Seconded: CC</b></p> <p><b>Q (FW): Would there be a benefit to Saxlingham to having solar panels?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b>     There is a small benefit at Preston Primary. We also do not yet know how much the LED lighting will impact on energy costs. This is something that we can look into.</p> <p><b><i>Budget Control Report (BCR)</i></b> The governing board reviewed the BCR. A copy of this was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p><b><i>Maintenance pot transfer</i></b> The governing board noted that the Budget Plan included a Maintenance Pot transfer of £3,000.</p> <p><b>Q(DPY): How much was in the maintenance pot?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b>     Approximately £35k.</p> <p><b>IT WAS RESOLVED</b> to transfer £5,000 from the budget into the Maintenance Fund. <b>Proposed: FW    Seconded: CC</b></p> <p><b><i>Schools Financial Value Standards (SFVS)</i></b> It was confirmed that the SFVS had been completed and accepted by the LA.</p> <p><b><i>Sickness insurance cover</i></b> The governing board reviewed the sickness insurance cover.</p> <p>It was noted that the Federation had Day 6 insurance for £9,348 and there had only been one day that could be claimed. A calculation had been made showing that there was £21k of supply costs and therefore Day 3 and Day 1 cover had been investigated. It was noted that the cost of Day 1 cover would have been more than offset by the insurance premium quoted at £23,999.70. This had been included in the Budget Plan.</p> <p>It was proposed that the governing board should agree to purchase Day 1 cover.</p> <p><b>Q (TG): Hae you looked at previous year's supply data?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b>     The level of sickness in previous years was approximately the same.</p> <p><b>Q (FW): Does this include support staff?</b></p>		
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	<p><b>A:</b> It does not include Teaching Assistants. We have separate cover for the office and caretaking staff.</p> <p><b>IT WAS RESOLVED</b> that the Federation should purchase the Day 1 cover (package A1) for £23,999.70 to be reviewed after one year. <b>Proposed: DPY Seconded: RO</b></p> <p><b>Latest financial RAG rating</b> The governing board reviewed the Autumn RAG report. A copy of this was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p><b>Q (FW):</b> The RAG monitoring report (items 10 and 10.1) seems to indicate that neither school has a school fund, but the draft Finance Policy section K refers to both schools having a school fund account. Is the same term being used to describe different things?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Both schools currently have a School Fund, which ultimately will be amalgamated into the main account. School Fund Accounts are run alongside the main account which contains the public funds of the school.</p>		
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Parent survey results:</b></p> <p>The governing board reviewed the staff survey questionnaire results. A copy of this was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p><b>Q (FW):</b> Is there any discernible difference in the responses from the two schools?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Not really.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that the results were broadly in line with the results from the previous year.</p> <p><b>Q (RO):</b> What percentage of families were represented?</p> <p><b>A:</b> It would be quite a high percentage.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that highlights included the fact that the parents were aware of the Federations vision and that parents knew who to speak to for information. The question about Collective Worship was one of the lowest responses although it was noted that this was an area that parents would be unlikely to know much about.</p> <p><b>Q (RO):</b> School has high expectations had dropped; was this a reflection on parents not feeling that their children were not pushed enough?</p> <p><b>A:</b> We need to think about whether any of these statements are interpreted differently. If there are some responses that we want to unpick then we could do this through the parent forum.</p>		



	<p>It was suggested that there were some nuances in the responses that could be picked out, which may be an issue relating to communication and interpretation. It was agreed to take this forward using the Parent Forum.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Chair of Governors to arrange a Parents Forum to discuss feedback from the Parent Survey.</b></p>	DPY	30/04/24
12.	<p><b>Update on Schools of Sanctuary:</b></p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that the SLT had discussed the Schools of Sanctuary project. It was felt that there was no capacity to undertake this, and it could form part of a future SIDP.</p>		
13.	<p><b>SIAMS:</b></p> <p><b><i>IQ4: How does the Federations theologically rooted Christian vision create a culture in which pupils and adults are treated well?</i></b></p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advise that the culture of te Federation community was that all were included. Prejudice related incidents are rare and steps were taken to deal with issues where there were trends and feed that into the way that the children were education either through Collective Worship or to individual classes.</p> <p>Governors noted that the number of suspensions was low and there were good relationships with the children who were subject to suspensions and they felt supported.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher highlighted that the Behaviour Policy had been updated to reflect the Christian Distinctiveness and ethos of the school. Restorative approaches and reflections were also used for children to think about their impact on other people. Relationships were an important part of the Federation culture.</p> <p>It was noted that staff wellbeing was supported by giving time in lieu for different tasks which part of a caring culture. The staff survey reflected that communication had improved greatly since the previous survey. Staff indicated that they felt involved in decision making processes.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that governor monitoring of mental health had provided an opportunity to see that children felt that their mental health was considered. Regular surveys were also allowing the SLT to look at historical trends.</p> <p>Governors noted that there were many opportunities for the children to be involved in the school communities. The curriculum was designed to broaden horizons and teach children to value diversity.</p> <p>Governors commended the responsibility that was being given to children. Anecdotal evidence was provided regarding those children who were assigned as librarians at Saxlingham.</p>		
14.	<p><b>Governor CPD:</b></p>		

	<p>CS advised that she had attended Cybersecurity Training. The presentation would be cascaded to all staff. The training had confirmed that the schools were already doing everything right.</p> <p>RO advised that she had undertaken Safer Recruitment training.</p>		
15.	<p><b>Governor monitoring:</b></p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that governor monitoring for SEND was arranged for 26 March 2024.</p> <p>TG agreed to undertake the role of EYFS Link Governor.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that another school had visited to observe EYFS provision and had been very complimentary.</p>		
16.	<p><b>Governing board correspondence:</b></p> <p>There had been no correspondence received since the last meeting.</p>		
17.	<p><b>Policy review:</b></p> <p>The following policies were reviewed. Governors commended the commentary that had been provided by the Executive Headteacher.</p> <p><b>a) Finance Policy</b> Governors reviewed the Finance Policy.</p> <p>Q (FW): Other than as an Appendix to the Finance Policy has the Governing Board Terms of Reference document been formally adopted. Is it based on an LA template?</p> <p>A: I left the appendix the same as I was not aware that there had been any changes.</p> <p><b>b) Health and Safety Policy and Commitments</b> Governors reviewed the Health &amp; Safety Policy.</p> <p><b>c) Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures</b> Governors reviewed the Recruitment and Selection Policy. This had minimal changes.</p> <p><b>d) Data Protection Policy</b> Governors reviewed the Data Protection Policy. This had minimal changes.</p> <p><b>e) Marking, Feedback and Assessment Policy</b> Governors reviewed the Marking, Feedback and Assessment Policy.</p> <p><b>f) Computing and eSafety Policy</b> Governors reviewed the Computing and eSafety Policy. The policy had been updated to triangulate with Keeping Children Safe in Education.</p>		

	<p>Q (CS): Do children sign the acceptable use of IT agreements?</p> <p>A: This is not included and we would expect them to follow the school policy.</p> <p><b>g) Bad Debt Policy</b> Governors reviewed the Bad Debt Policy.</p> <p><b>h) Staff Code of Conduct</b> Governors reviewed the Staff Code of Conduct. The policy had been updated to triangulate with Keeping Children Safe in Education.</p> <p><b>i) Bullying and Harassment Policy</b> Governors reviewed the Bullying and Harassment Policy.</p> <p><b>j) Red Book (Critical Incident Plan)</b> It was confirmed that the Red Book had been updated. An updated copy would be sent to the Chair of Governors.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Executive Headteacher to send a fresh copy of the Critical Incident Plan to the Chair of Governors.</b></p> <p><b>k) Circle Model Terms of Reference</b> Governors reviewed the Circle Model terms of Reference. It was agreed to adopt these via GovernorHub.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Governance Professional to circulate the Circle Model Terms of Reference for approval.</b></p> <p><b>IT WAS RESOLVED</b> that the above listed policies should be adopted <i>en bloc</i> subject to the minor changes agreed. <b>Proposed: CS    Seconded: RO</b> <b>All voted in favour with no abstentions.</b></p> <p>The Chair of Governors raised the need to discuss flexible working. It was agreed that this was something that needed investigation.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Executive Headteacher to investigate whether there was the need to have a Flexible Working Policy.</b></p>		
18.	<p><b>Any other business:</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>		
19.	<p><b>Items deemed confidential:</b></p> <p>There were no items deemed confidential.</p>		
20.	<p><b>Reflection: how have discussions today helped the children and school to live life to the full:</b></p>		

*'Living life to the full'.*

*John 10:10*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LED lighting had made a difference to the staff and children.</li><li>• The positive budget would mean more resource for the children.</li><li>• Hearing from the RE Subject Lead had been very positive and was showing that Subject Leads across the Federation were working closely together for the benefit of all.</li><li>• Parent questionnaires were providing a focus for improvement to live life to the full.</li></ul>		
21.	<b>Date of next meeting:</b>  22 April 2024 at 6.30pm, Microsoft Teams.		

Meeting closed at 6.55pm

**Actions:**

Item No.	Action Description	Owner	Target Date
11	Chair of Governors to arrange a Parents Forum to discuss feedback from the Parent Survey.	DPY	30/04/24