

Draft Minutes for Meeting of the Governing Body of Ladysmith Federation					
Date / Time	22 nd March 2022 17:30		Location	Ladysmith Infant and Nursery School	
Attendees	Initials		Attendees	Initials	
James Hewlett	JH	Co-opted Governor	Andy Thornhill (attended remotely)	AT	Co-opted Governor
Karen Bates (Co-chair)	KB	Co-opted Governor	Charlotte Hartland	CH	Staff Governor
Mark Wilkinson	MW	Executive Headteacher	Annie Fletcher	AF	Co-opted Governor
Amy Grashoff (Co-chair)	AG	Co-opted Governor	Tom Butcher	TB	Co-opted Governor
Greg Hawkins (Vice Chair)	GH	Co-opted Governor			
Present					
Jo Gawler- Collins	JGC	Clerk to Governors	Dave Broad	DB	LINS Head of School
Neil Williams	NW	LJS Head of School	Lorraine Carter	LC	Federation Business Manager
Apologies	Initials				
Jill Green	JG	LA Governor	Sarah Melhuish	SM	Co-opted Governor
Emma Brennan	EB	Co-opted Governor			

The Meeting was quorate.

Ref	Discussion, Action or Decision
1.	Apologies for Absence
	JG sent apologies due to personal reasons. EB and SM sent apologies due to sickness. Approved: Absences approved by Governors
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests invited and declared
	No interests declared
3.	Finance and Resources
	Questions had been submitted by governors prior to the meeting. TB's Questions

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	<p><i>Would you be able to give some explanation of the capital spend budgets for 20/21? Both LJS and LINS budgets looking to overspend - with more spending this month, could you clarify where this spend is going?</i></p> <p>LC Reply The minus figure that you see in 'Capital' is an underspend. There is no planned expenditure for capital yet, however it is likely that the underspend from both schools will be used to purchase a conservatory for the nursery either in the next financial year or in 23/24.</p> <p>TB Question <i>The assumption in the forward looking budget is that costs will increase in line with inflation, but that budget remains relatively static (I appreciate that this is the same as last year and how you have to present it). Despite this, it is great to see a balanced budget out to 24-25. I am wondering if in reality what will happen is income will increase at least somewhat in line with costs? So, if the budget is successfully executed, can we continue to maintain a surplus at a similar level to what we have seen at LJS over the last few years? If this is the case, is there an opportunity to spend slightly more of the surplus to address some of the priorities at the schools?</i></p> <p>LC Reply 2022/23 is the last year that the government announcement of an increase in school funding is in place so there is no clarity as yet as to where Education sits in Government spending priorities for future years. There are no guarantees that funding will increase in line with inflation. Therefore, we would be only guessing as to what figure to put into the budget for income going forward. We have been told to expect a 10% decrease in primary age population until 2030 and some areas in Devon are already experiencing a 20% decrease. At present we have not seen numbers fall in the Infant school but we may do going forward. The outcome of an Ofsted inspection could also impact on numbers going forward. We are being advised to hold back some of this year's funding for future years.</p> <p>MW said that there is a plan to be discussed later in the meeting regarding increasing the capacity for school improvement.</p> <p>AT thanked LC for the benchmarking information. AT said he will meet with LC regarding benchmarking after the Easter holidays and then feedback to governors</p> <p>Action required: AT to meet with LC after the Easter holidays to discuss benchmarking</p> <p>LC asked if governors had checked the SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard) and whether there were any questions regarding this. No questions were tabled.</p> <p>Approved: Governors voted to approve the SFVS documents for LINS and LJS.</p>
4.	<p>Governor Recruitment and Skills Audit Governing Body Updates</p>
	<p>MW said that he will be forwarding the letter seeking parent governors this Friday 25th March to all parents / carers.</p> <p>AG and KB informed the meeting that JGC has resigned as Clerk to Governors with effect from the end of term. This means a new Clerk to Governors will need to be recruited.</p>

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	<p>GH said that the he is awaiting just a couple of replies from governors for the skills audit. GH said that already it looks as if the skills required for a governing body are already covered.</p>
5.	Headteacher Report
	<p>Governors had submitted questions prior to the meeting which MW answered during the meeting.</p> <p>AT's Questions <i>Pupil wellbeing – considering we are showing a half term for Spring it looks like we are trending up or at least equivalent to Autumn terms and these are very high compared to summer. Could we discuss how much of a concern this is and what can be done to help support the school?</i></p> <p>MW said that they are definitely seeing an increase across the federation in the number of wellbeing incidents that are being recorded. MW said there are a number of systems in place to support pupils, as outlined in the Pastoral Support section of the Headteacher Report. Staff absences are continuing to remain high so it is difficult to ensure that all these actions are able to happen on a consistent basis.</p> <p>MW said that at the Infant School, there is a rise in the number of children struggling with low levels of well-being, especially in Year 2 where the attainment levels are low but the expectations have risen. Additional support / strategies are being discussed, including shortening inputs to allow for focussed interventions, the reintroduction of breakfast club for key individuals and lunchtime support via a 'Thrive lunch' option. Some families are accessing support through Early Help.</p> <p>MW said they have been without the specialist LINK (Thrive) practitioner all year due to Covid until Christmas; and then due to staff shortages from January. This is due to begin again before Easter, initially prioritising Year 2.</p> <p><i>Self-evaluation – appreciate the honesty here. What would be the implications of a 'Requires Improvement' judgement from Ofsted? Do we need to flag or notify anyone, is there additional funding available to help?</i> <i>I understand that Read, Write, Inc is a fundamental part of the strategy to improve are there other areas and what support do you and the team need?</i></p> <p>MW said that DCC (Devon County Council) via Julie Stevens are already aware and are providing support. They have received additional funding of £25,000 and will be asking for more at the next meeting which is on 5th April.</p> <p>MW said that they are being supported by Julie Paddick for EYFS (Early Years and Foundation Stage) and Stephanie Burke for Maths. Other areas for development remain as set out in the SIP (School Improvement Plan) but this looks like it will need to become a 2-3 year working document.</p> <p>MW said there isn't currently the capacity to develop the rest of the curriculum while prioritising RWI (Read Write Inc) and keeping the school functioning on a day-to-day basis.</p>

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	<p>MW said that he is due to propose a one-year staffing change which will increase capacity to lead improvement. The implications of a RI (Requires Improvement) judgement would depend on the outcome of individual areas e.g. if they consider that ‘leadership and management’ has the capacity to raise standards / whether or not safeguarding is good or better.</p> <p><i>Safeguarding - this looks concerning but I will leave to those with more relevant experience to consider</i></p> <p>MW said that there is a noticeable increase in the current number of pupils who are involved in child protection. However, this is not necessarily higher than it has been in the past – it can be cohort specific. MW said they have noticed an increase in the amount of families that require support and this is putting a large strain on school resources.</p> <p><i>Budget: Could you explain the high needs block?</i></p> <p>MW explained that the high needs block is money that received by the School to support children with additional needs – these often have EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans). The amount that actually comes in often varies depending on how many children are admitted with existing EHCPs or new EHCPs are put in place for current pupils. AT asked whether there is an excess of funds to support this. MW said that it is negative as the need doesn’t always match up to the funding provided. DB said that LINS (Ladysmith Infant and Nursery School) has a difficulty with this as it takes time to build the evidence to apply for an EHCP but in the meantime support is required.</p> <p>GH’s Question <i>As a follow up to Andrew's question - specifically which area's do you think would lead to the Infant school receiving Requires Improvement?</i></p> <p>MW said that in the LINS Self Evaluation Form (SEF), from July 2021 all categories of education (Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and management and Early Years Foundation Stage) have been graded as ‘Requires Improvement’. Whilst LINS has seen much improvement across all of the areas, it would be difficult to argue ‘Good’ for any of them yet. MW said that ‘Quality of Education’ is the area in need of most development at present. Further improvements in this would allow the argument for ‘Good’ under Leadership and Management.</p> <p>AG’s Questions <i>How do you plan to measure the impact of Read, Write, Inc (RWI)?</i></p> <p>MW explained that there are regular assessments every 6-8 weeks for all children, carried out by a trained assessment team. This ensures consistent, reliable data and helps to track progress of all children and ensure groupings are accurate. The children progress through the programme using a ‘stage’, not ‘age’ philosophy. This ensures that any gaps are identified and addressed. This also highlights any children falling behind and these children will be supported.</p> <p>MW said that in the longer term, the impact will also be seen by measuring the proportion of children working at ARE (Age Related Expectations) across all year groups within reading and writing.</p>

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	<p>In the short term, the impact of the programme has already been seen on the children’s writing. They are able to apply their phonics with greater confidence and accuracy and are attempting more ambitious vocabulary. Letter formation continues to be an area for development but again, progress is evident within books. Year One have reported a decrease in reluctance to write as they build confidence and the tools they need to write.</p> <p>TB’s Questions <i>Persistent absence rates - is the increase in these numbers (38% and 32%) just pupils self-isolating with COVID (i.e. off for 10-days out of a 60ish day term) or is there a more complex issue underlying?</i></p> <p>MW said that the increase is linked to Covid in general. This is mostly with pupils isolating but in some cases of younger children with parents isolating.</p> <p>JH asked whether there was any idea how much longer staff absence will continue to be an issue. MW said a lot of people are taking absence for the 10 days. It will only be possible to see the level of impact when there is no requirement to be off work.</p> <p>NW said that a knock-on effect of staff covering other staff, is staff wellbeing.</p> <p>KB’s Question <i>Covid / Remote Learning. How well is this working and do we know if pupils are accessing it while self-isolating? I have had comments from some parents that they are finding that no regular work is being set or they are not clear how to access. Given the high levels of self-isolation would it be a good idea to have an information sheet available setting out how to log in and what sort of work will be set each day?</i></p> <p>MW said that in LINS, systems are set up and parents are able to access, although there is a need to remind staff to be consistent.</p> <p>In LJS, remote learning is working better in some year groups than others. This is due to the competence and stability of the staff in that year group. Concerns with some teachers have been raised individually during the appraisal process.</p> <p>MW said that typically, a parent informs the School of a positive case in their family and this gets logged on the tracking system. All teachers have been asked to call parents to check in on the first day and ask how they will be accessing Google Classroom. From day two, in theory, there should be work posted on Google Classroom. All children have previously logged onto Google Classroom. Issues with logging on has been down to ICT support altering passwords in a lesson and children not remembering. This will not be happening next year. Additionally, with the Google platform, many families have their own Gmail accounts which have caused logging on problems.</p> <p>MW said that work set should be as closely aligned to the work set in class as possible. Whilst an entire day worth of content may not be posted, the expectation is that English, Maths and a non-core subject to be provided for. As mentioned, staff absence does not help this. It has, in some year groups, fallen to one individual to post work day-to-day.</p> <p>KB said that she has been aware of some parents not understanding whether there is available work when learning remotely. MW said that this is on the radar.</p>

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	<p>TB asked whether there is a timetable for a 'Good' rating for LINS. MW said that the has a plan which involves allocating some school budget to release some members of existing staff out of class to work on different elements to support DB and NW. MW said that it is a one-year plan to address the areas of SEF (self-evaluation form) i.e.. Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and management and EYFS. MW said that this plan can be achieved and keep the school in budget of £6,000 for Year 3. MW said the plan will require some staff to work across both schools and this will this will help bring both schools together, add capacity and further increase collaboration. TB said that utilising the budget for this plan is a good idea, rather than retaining the budget.</p> <p>GW asked that if the plan will get the school in the right place over a year, can this be introduced more quickly. MW said that introducing more swiftly would go over budget and they cannot implement a strategy that will put them in the negative for Year 3.</p> <p>TB said that this will address the challenges identified via the self-assessment. TB asked whether there is a strategy for making the school attractive for new staff. NW said that he is intending to make the school an attractive option by putting in place a CPD (continuing professional development) strategy.</p> <p>Approved: Governors voted to approve allocating a portion of the school budget toward school improvement.</p>
6.	Teaching and Learning
	<p>JGC had circulated the governor visit templates with the meeting documents.</p> <p>TB said he has another safeguarding governor visit planned for this term.</p>
7.	School Improvement Plan (SIP)
	<p>TB said this document is updated and is in place and can be found on Microsoft Teams.</p>
8.	Admissions
	<p>The Nursery admissions policies for 2023 / 24 was not ready in time for the meeting.</p> <p>Action required: Defer the Nursery Admissions Policy 23 / 24 to the next FGB.</p> <p>MW said there has been a slight boundary alteration by DCC to the LJS and LINS admissions policies which should not have much impact.</p> <p>Approved: Governors voted to approve the LJS and LINS Admissions Policies.</p>
9.	Final Governing Body Meeting Minutes 26.01.22
	<p>Approved: Governors voted to approve the FGB Meeting Minutes for 26th January 2022.</p>
10.	Review Term Dates 23 / 24

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	<p>Action required: The term dates were not available in time for the meeting and will be deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>JH asked if there could be an alternative way of presenting term dates on the school website.</p>
11.	Matters Arising
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGB 26.01.22 <p>3. Governor Roles and Responsibilities, Recruitment and Skills Audit AG and SM have been communicating regarding SM undertaking the lead area for 'Community, Staff and Parental Links'. AG advised that SM is happy to undertake this lead role.</p> <p>MW said the letters requesting parent governors will be sent this Friday 25th March to parent / carers.</p> <p>11. Training TB has shared information from the latest Governance Briefing.</p> <p>12. Governor Visits The governor visit paperwork is now in place.</p>
12.	Policies: -
12.1.	Federation Charging and Remissions Policy – Appendix – Nursery Terms and Conditions
	<p>AT was happy to approve the policy and wondered whether voluntary contributions could be encouraged. AG said this couldn't be justified with a surplus budget.</p> <p>Approved: Governors voted to approve the Charging and Remissions Policy including the Nursery Terms and Conditions Appendix</p>
12.2.	Federation Online Safety Policy
	<p>Action required: This is deferred to the next meeting as it was not ready in time for the meeting.</p>
12.3.	Federation Lettings Policy
	<p>Approved: Governors voted to approve the Federation Lettings Policy.</p>
12.4.	Federation Data Retention Policy (Federation Record Retention Annual Review Checklist and Record Retention Schedule)

Ref	Discussion, Action or Decision
	Approved: Governors voted to approve the Federation Data Retention Policy (Federation Record Retention Annual Review Checklist and Record Retention Schedule)
12.5.	Federation Equality Policy
	Action required: This is deferred to the next meeting as it was not ready in time for the meeting. MW is due to meet with EB regarding the policy.
12.6.	First Aid Policy
	A change was tabled regarding the job title referred to through the policy. Approved: Governors voted to approve the First Aid Policy including the change tabled.
12.7.	Federation Early Career Teacher Policy (NQT)
	Action required: This is deferred to the next meeting as SM was not present to recommend.
12.8.	Federation Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school
	Action required: This is deferred to the next meeting as EB was not present to recommend.
12.9.	Federation Designated Teacher for Children in Care
	Action required: This is deferred to the next meeting as EB was not present to recommend.
12.10.	Separated Parents Policy – new Policy
	Approved: Governors voted to approve the Separated Parents Policy
13.	Training
	No governors had attended training since the previous FGB meeting on 26 th January 2022. TB advised that Leadership Training he was due to attend has been cancelled due to lack of numbers and he has rescheduled to July.
14.	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 4th May 2022 FGB (Resources and Finance) 5.30pm @ LJS
	Meeting Closed at 7.00pm

Signed.....

Dated.....