

## The Governing Body of Steeton Primary School

**Meeting of Wednesday 22 March 2023**

### MINUTES

**The meeting opened at 6.03pm**

Attendance	
<b>Governors</b> John Cooper – Executive Headteacher (EHT) Adam Longden Adam O’Neill Claire Redman – Head of School (HoS) Emma Wainwright (Chair) Sue West	<b>Others</b> Helen Osman (Clerk)  <b>Apologies</b> Amjid Ahmed (potential co-opted governor) Stefan Mills

Documents			
A. Executive Headteacher report 22 March 2023	Item 63/22		<i>Issued 21-03-2023</i>
B. Persistent Absence report	Item 64/22		<i>Issued 22-03-2023</i>
C. Joint Committee Terms of Reference 10-03-2023	Item 66/22		<i>Issued 22-03-2023</i>
D. Collaboration Agreement 10-03-2023	Item 66/22		<i>Issued 22-03-2023</i>
E. Federation Working Group Terms of Reference 10-03-2023	Item 66/22		<i>Issued 22-03-2023</i>
F. SEN Update January 2023	Item 67/22		<i>Issued with agenda</i>
G. SEND report to Governing Body March 2023	Item 67/22		<i>Issued with agenda</i>
H. Governor visit report – Sue West 23 and 30 January 2023	Item 70/22		<i>Issued with agenda</i>
I. Governor training report – Sue West 07 March 2023	Item 70/22		<i>Issued with agenda</i>
J. From Read 2 Write to Writing For Pleasure	Item 71/22		<i>Tabled at meeting</i>
K. Minutes of Spring term Link Governor meetings:	Item 72/22		<i>Issued with agenda</i>
• Quality of Education 27-02-2023			
• Behaviour, Attitudes & Personal Development 22-02-2023			
• Leadership & Management 27-02-2023			
• Parent & Community Involvement 24-02-2023			
• Early Years 22-03-2023			
L. Federation discussion paper	Item 73/22		<i>Issued with agenda</i>
M. <a href="#">School Development Plan   Steeton Primary School</a>	Item 75/22		<i>Link issued 18-03-2023</i>
N. <a href="#">School Self-Evaluation   Steeton Primary School</a>	Item 75/22		<i>Link issued 18-03-2023</i>
O. Admissions and Attendance policy handbook	Item 76/22		<i>Issued 18-03-2023</i>
P. Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) return to LA 2022-23	Item 78/22		<i>Issued 18-03-2023</i>
Q. School Prospectus	Item 82/22		<i>Tabled at meeting</i>

Summary of Actions			
Action No.	Action	Person	Deadline
18/21	EHT to explore scope for the website version of the Ways of Working diagram to enable the use to see the content of each element by hovering over it with their cursor. [ <i>Deadline amended at FGB 02-11-2022</i> ]	J Cooper	14-12-2021
21/21	EHT to provide to the next LG/QE meeting a summary of support provided to Year 6 cohort throughout their time at Steeton	J Cooper	21-07-2022
04/22	Emma Wainwright to return completed Annual Declaration of Pecuniary Interest form to the school.  School to provide hard copy via child courier	E Wainwright  C Redman	URGENT
50/22	EHT to amend reference to “Clr Duffy” on page 12 of the Governance, Conduct & School Information policy Handbook to read “Emma Wainwright”.	J Cooper	31-12-2022

53/22	All governors to review their contacts to identify potential Co-opted Governors	All	Ongoing
62/22	Governors to attend school monitoring events in the Summer term; school to provide the dates	All	Summer 2023
73/22	EHT to prepare for the Resources Committee meeting on 26 April 2023 a proposal or the HoS to become substantive Headteacher and for cover arrangements in case of her long term absence for the days not worked by the DHT.	J Cooper	18-04-2023
81/22 (i)	Chair to review governor training to ensure all have undertaken the training and development appropriate to their statutory and other roles.	E Wainwright	30-04-2023
81/22 (i)	EHT to provide to members of the Resources Committee details of the NGA training on financial governance	J Cooper	30-04-2023
82/22	Chair and previous Chair to attend meeting with LA Teaching & Learning Review team at 2.15pm on Wednesday 29 March 2023	E Wainwright, S West	29-03-2023

#### 59/22 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

1. Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Stefan Mills and from Amjid Ahmed, potential Co-opted Governor. The Head of School (HoS) advised that the Executive Headteacher (EHT) had been held up at a partner school but would join the meeting shortly.

#### 60/22 Notification of other urgent business and requests to vary the agenda order

2. No other business was notified and there were no requests to vary the order of the agenda.

#### 61/22 Declarations of interest in items on this agenda

3. There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda for this meeting.

#### 62/22 Minutes of meeting of 14 December 2022 and matters arising

- **The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting**

Matters arising			Status
Action	Action		
18/21	<i>EHT to explore scope for the website version of the Ways of Working diagram to enable the use to see the content of each element by hovering over it with their cursor. [Deadline amended at FGB 02-11-2022]</i>		<b>Ongoing</b>
	The HoS said that the school's ICT provider had been asked to arrange this but had not yet done so.		
21/21	<i>EHT to provide to the next LG/QE meeting a summary of support provided to Year 6 cohort throughout their time at Steeton.</i>		<b>Ongoing</b>
	Planned for the LG/QE meeting on 05 June 2023.		
89/21	<i>Faculties to explore the scope to seek Arts Council accreditation for the school's Arts and Crafts offer. [Deadline amended FGB 14-12-2022]</i>		<b>Closed – to be brought forward Spring 2024</b>
	Governors agreed that this should be considered in the Spring term of 2024 in conjunction with partner schools.		
04/22	<i>Emma Wainwright to return completed Annual Declaration of Pecuniary Interest form to the school.</i>		<b>E Wainwright</b>
	The school would arrange for a hard copy of the form to be delivered to E Wainwright by child courier for signature and return to the school office.		

John Cooper joined the meeting at 6.08pm

05/22	<p><i>Governors to participate in Autumn 2 monitoring activities according to availability: [Deadline amended at FGB 02-11-2022]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Book Look</i></li><li>• <i>Pupil Progress Meeting</i></li></ul> <p>E Wainwright had attended a Book Look. S West had attended a SEND meeting.</p> <p>A Longden, S Mills and A O'Neill would attend monitoring events in the summer term: the HoS would provide dates.</p>	<b>Closed</b>
50/22	<p><i>EHT to amend reference to "Cllr Duffy" on page 12 of the Governance, Conduct &amp; School Information policy Handbook to read "Emma Wainwright".</i></p> <p>Not yet amended.</p>	<b>Ongoing</b>
53/22	<p>(i) <i>Chair to communicate the Co-opted Governor vacancies to the local community.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>EHT to follow up with Chair/SL her potential governor contact in Steeton.</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>All governors to review their contacts to identify potential Co-opted Governors.</i></p> <p>Completed. Governors would continue to seek to identify potential co-opted governors.</p>	<b>Ongoing</b>

## Standing and other reports to the Governing Body

### 63/22 Executive Headteacher's report – Document A

4. Governors noted the EHT's report with thanks.  
Budget
5. The EHT said that he had discussed with the Bursar and the Bradford Council School Funding Team (BC/SFT) the increase in the projected budget deficit for 2022-23 from -£54k to -£93k, caused by unfunded national pay increases and increased energy costs. BC/SFT was willing to licence a deficit for two years, provided that the school abided by its agreement to reduce the deficit to -£47k in 2023-24 and to bring it into surplus by the end of 2024-25. He had made clear that if the projected budget did not hold, the school would be expected to take urgent action to restructure. Governors considered this fair: the local authority had already provided an additional £0.25m to the school in response to the GB's concerns about the impact of being required to maintain a PAN<sup>1</sup> that was significantly higher than the LA's forecast of pupil numbers.
6. The EHT said that the draft budget for 2023-24 and the three year budget projection had been discussed with BC/SFT. It included provision of £75k for energy costs – this was an increase of two thirds of the 2022-23 cost. Government advice was that energy costs would reduce by 50% but that the saving might be needed to fund national teacher pay increases.
7. Governors agreed that increase in the budget deficit for 2022-23 was disappointing, particularly in light of the efforts of the GB and school to take all possible steps to manage the budget position, including securing a reduction in the PAN from September 2024 and elimination of a layer of management. The decision of government not to fund national pay increases and the increase in energy costs had thrown the budget plan off course: schools were not funded to hold contingencies to cushion such financial shocks. Governors

<sup>1</sup> PAN – Published Admission Number

noted the risk that the draft budget for 2023-24 might include insufficient provision for the 2023-24 pay increase, since the scale of the increase was as yet unknown, but that the school was taking account of all available advice and guidance to make the best possible estimate. The Resources Committee could monitor the budget particularly closely.

8. **Asked** whether the school would be able to restructure rapidly if its budget plans did not hold and the reductions in the deficit did not materialise in the next two years, the EHT said that it would, though not without an impact on pupils. It would be important to work closely with the LA on this, because the school would need support in the form of the LA meeting any redundancy costs.
9. **Asked** to what extent the school could expect to make savings as a consequence of federation, the EHT confirmed that there would be scope for savings in due course, particularly in back office functions and shared purchasing. These savings would not, however, be immediate: systematic realisation of the benefits of joint purchasing and cross-federation efficiencies would depend on the appointment of a finance professional with relevant skills and experience, and the Federation Working Group was recommending a measured approach to the appointment of this professional to ensure that it first secured sufficient savings to fund the post. The intention was that these initial savings would be achieved through cross-federation working on back-office functions and the work that Sandy Lane's Bursar was currently undertaking with the three business managers to identify savings on current contracts and Service Level Agreements.
10. **Replying to questions**, the EHT confirmed that the school's financial position would be improved considerably by the reduction of the PAN in September 2024: this had already been factored into the draft budget. The Chair said that, in anticipation of the PAN reduction, newer staff had been appointed on fixed term contracts.

#### Attendance

11. Governors noted that attendance was above the national average and **asked** whether this was cohort-related, reflecting the departure of the previous Year 6 cohort. The EHT said that it was not: rather, it reflected a reduction in attendance nationally.
12. The Head of School added that attendance at Steeton had typically been 96% to 97% prior to Covid. Now, when children were unwell they would be absent for the whole week where, prior to Covid, they would have been absent for one to two days. **Asked** whether this was due to parents being more accustomed to children being at home, or to fear for their children, school leaders thought it had more to do with low aspiration and poor job prospects: if a child's parents or older siblings were on Universal Credit, it was harder for them to see the point of education.
13. The Link Governor for Behaviour, Attitudes and Personal Development (LG/BAPD) said that the Inclusion and Welfare Officer (IWO), whom he had met at the recent LG/BAPD meeting, had a detailed understanding of the reasons for all non-attendance and was highly active in supporting attendance.

#### 64/22 Report on Persistent Absence – Document B

14. The EHT reported that Persistent absence at Steeton was 21/61% compared with the national average of 22.3%. Governors noted that the detailed breakdown in the agenda paper demonstrated the statement of LG/BAPD under the previous item that the IWO knew the reasons for all non-attendance. It was clear that she knew every Persistently Absent child and their stories. It was also clear that most children classed as PA had been absent due to holidays in termtime and genuine illness, rather than continual and persistent absence. The HoS agreed, but added that there was one child whose attendance was particularly challenging.
15. Governors considered that the school continued to take all possible steps to address this important and intractable issue. It looked forward to receiving information about the help that government and the LA had undertaken to provide for attendance.

#### 65/22 Report from Resources Committee meetings of 18 January and 08 March 2023

16. In the absence of Chair/Resources, the Governing Body took the minutes of the last Committee meeting as read and noted that the key issues had been covered in the Executive Headteacher's report.

#### 66/22 Report from the Joint Committee meeting of 27 January 2023 – Documents C to E

17. The minutes of the Joint Committee were taken as read.
18. **The Governing Body approved** the following documents, as amended and recommended by the Joint Committee:
- The Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee
  - The Terms of Reference of the Federation Working Group
  - The Collaboration Agreement

#### 67/22 Termly report from Named Governor for SEND – Documents F and G

19. The Named Governor for SEND (NG/SEND) was pleased to report that the school had won an appeal against a decision to refuse an EHCP<sup>2</sup> application. Another EHCP application had been reassessed and she was optimistic that it might be successful. Including both of these, the school would have five pupils with EHCPs. Governors welcomed this demonstration that the appeals system worked and the benefit to the families concerned, and thanked staff for the significant work involved in submitting and supporting an EHCP application and appeal. They congratulated the HoS and her team for managing to accommodate the needs of five children with, or in the process of obtaining, EHCPs with so few support staff: this was an example of how the school made effective use of its resources to offer the best possible experience to its pupils within the very limited budget.
20. NG/SEND said that the LA had now allocated a specialist teacher to the school. **Replying to questions**, she confirmed that this specialist teacher arrangement was instead of the Hub, and explained that the benefit of the change was that the school could develop a relationship with this single point of contact, who could in turn develop their understanding of the school and the needs of its pupils.
21. The specialist teacher had undertaken monitoring of standards for inclusion of SEND pupils: in the majority of cases she had said that this was “evident” or “very evident”. She had taken photographs of two classrooms to use as examples in the LA's training portfolios, which was greatly to the credit of the class teachers.
22. NG/SEND reported that there had also been positive developments in training: the school could do as for training to address specific themes, and there was scope to do the training on a cross-partnership basis, facilitating cross-fertilisation of ideas.
23. NG/SEND had attended an assembly at which a child who had previously been very inattentive had behaved well and had sat in line with the class. Intensive play therapy had had a significant impact on the behaviour of this child, who had undergone significant trauma. **Asked** whether this therapy had been facilitated by the school or by CAMHS<sup>3</sup>, she said that it had been arranged by the school's IWO: a therapist had worked with staff and a colleague with the child in question. **Replying to questions**, the EHT confirmed that the draft budget included provision for this kind of support for children.
24. NG/SEND reported that a child with profound disability was now working at Age Related Expectation (ARE) in Reading and Maths; the child was being trained in touch typing to enable progress in Writing.

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<sup>2</sup> EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan: Introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014

<sup>3</sup> CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service: CAMHS supports children and young people from pre-school years up to 16 years of age, (or up to 18 years of age if still in school) where there are severe and long standing concerns about emotional well-being and behaviours

25. Standing desks were being promoted by a member of staff: it was pleasing to see such passion and commitment, particularly in a member of staff who was on a fixed term contract and might therefore be excused for being less committed to the school than permanent colleagues.
26. Governors commented on the school's holistic approach to meeting the needs of its more vulnerable pupils, for example by providing support to deal with trauma.
27. NG/SEND had undertaken a monitoring walk with the Head of School and SENCo. She had seen teachers handing out revision outlines to children.
28. The Government had now published the long-awaited SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan. NG/SEND concurred with the view of the NGA<sup>4</sup> that it was disappointing: the intentions were good, but most would only start on a pilot basis at the end of 2025 – too late to be of benefit to many children at Steeton now. **Asked** whether the plan included anything to improve the learning outcomes of SEND children, NG/SEND said that it did not – the actions were all to do with process.
29. NG/SEND said that Bradford had not been successful in securing any of the funding allocated for thirty-three specialist schools.
30. Governors thanked NG/SEND for this update. While the national picture was not encouraging, they were reassured by her account of the high quality of support that the school continued to provide for its most vulnerable children, with absolutely minimal staffing.

*[Clerk's note: Since the meeting, the Chair has written to the SENCo to thank her for the positive contribution and significant impact that she and her team were having on Steeton's pupils.]*

31. The EHT said that Niall Devlin, Bradford Council's Head of Service for SEND, had spoken at a Headteachers' meeting on 09 March 2023 about the Ofsted inspection of SEND Services. Five Areas for Improvement (Afls) had been identified:
  - Poor communication between stakeholders across the education, health and care services.
  - Variable quality of EHCPs, including plans that did not fully describe the lives of children or their needs and that were not up to date.
32. Inconsistent delivery by the health visiting and school nursing services. The School of Nursing was keen to improve and planned to issue questionnaires to determine the needs of children. Governors were surprised to learn that the school nursing service still existed.
  - Assessment, treatment and diagnosis took too long.
  - Education, health and care services did not work together well leading to poor commissioning of services.
33. The Head of Service (SEND) had also made the following points:
  - There were currently 5,638 children in Bradford with an EHCP (second only to Birmingham, with 10,000) and more than 1,200 applications for new EHCPs per year. This had required a large-scale recruitment process which had taken up a great deal of LA time.
  - The LA had appointed eight Annual Review Officers (AROs) to triage the Annual Review paperwork: Four would be in place in April and the remainder by the end of the year.
  - A new post had been created: Complex and Vulnerable Needs Officer. This post was located in the monitoring, reviewing and assessment arm of the SEND service.
  - Additional administrative officers were being recruited to follow up complaints and review responses to complaints.

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<sup>4</sup> NGA - National Governance Association



- Feedback to the SEND service from SENCOs was that they were overworked and stressed: the workload involved in conducting annual reviews of 5,638 EHCPs was significant for SENCOs as well as AROs.

#### 68/22 Note any safeguarding incidents since the previous meeting

34. The HoS said that, as reported to the resources Committee meeting on 08 March 2023, an intruder had been found on-site. He had been removed, the police had been involved and there appeared to have been no ill intent. The school had taken the actions described at that meeting and set out in the minutes.
35. On 14 March 2023 a member of staff had reported a suspicious character in the school carpark, looking into windows. The police had spoken to the person concerned, who had been looking for cigarette butts. No further action had been taken.
36. The HoS reported that the PCSO had been helpful in both incidents.

#### 69/22 Report on Chair's actions and correspondence

37. The Chair reported that she had been approached informally by a parent who was concerned that the school did not have sufficient Teaching Assistants. The Chair had explained the challenges presented by school funding and the parent, who worked in the public sector, had understood the school's position. She had also discussed the parent's approach with the school, which had contacted the parent. The Chair considered such conversations with parents to be useful opportunities to widen understanding in the community about school funding.
38. The Chair informed the Governing Body that Eastburn Junior and Infant School had joined the group of local primary schools that planned to join the Moorlands Learning Trust.

#### 70/22 Report on Governors' visits, training and development – Documents H and I

39. Sue West had undertaken training on mental health and wellbeing, which had focused on the promotion of positive behaviour and staff wellbeing. She had been able to discuss positive examples of how Steeton approached both behaviour and wellbeing and felt that Steeton's practices compared well with those of the other schools present. She noted that, while Steeton's behaviour policy seemed more authoritarian than some others, the school had a great deal of support in place for both pupils and staff. In terms of staff wellbeing, the actions discussed in the training had already been put in place at Steeton.
40. The HoS said that, as discussed with Link Governors, the Inclusion and Welfare Officer was undertaking Senior Mental Health training and would review the behaviour policy in light of that training. Behaviour in school had improved so that the previous, rather authoritarian approach was no longer necessary or appropriate. **Asked** whether the core model of behaviour management would be changed when the policy was revised, the HoS said she envisaged that the system of Green, Amber and Red warnings would continue but that the policy would include a greater emphasis on the support available in school.

#### School performance, planning and impact

#### 71/22 Review the impact of the move from Read Write Inc to Reading for Pleasure – Document J

41. The HoS said that the title of this agenda item should read: "*Review the impact of the move from Read 2 Write to Writing For Pleasure*". The school still used Read Write Inc for the teaching of Phonics.
42. The HoS explained that Writing For Pleasure took a new, research-based approach to the teaching of Writing. The tabled paper (*Document J*) showed the feedback from the lead moderator, who had started the assessment of each child by listening to the storytelling voice in their pieces of writing. She had commented positively on the school's bold approach to writing and how the creativity of the school's books added to the narrative voices of pupils.

43. In Early Years and the supported Key Stage 2 classes, where children were not ready to write at Age Related Expectation, the school had adopted Drawing Club<sup>5</sup>, the play and story-telling focus of Drawing Club linked the Early Years curriculum to Writing For Pleasure.
44. **Replying to questions**, the HoS confirmed that the development of Writing For Pleasure was an example of the partner schools working together.
45. The EHT highlighted the use of working wall and governors welcomed the last set of three bullet points on the tabled paper:
- Define “success” in terms of the point of the writing and not by the presence of the ingredients alone.
  - Plan always with the purpose central to the outcome.
  - Use grammar for its impact, not for its own sake.

They agreed that the voice and achieving the purpose of the writing was more important than the number and placement of semi-colons.

46. The HoS said that the Writing For Pleasure approach had been adopted to address the issue at both Steeton and Sandy Lane that Writing outcomes had deteriorated since the introduction of Read 2 Write in 2015 in response to the new National Curriculum and had remained stubbornly low despite high quality teaching. The focus on grammar and story planning had led to “writing by numbers”, with little imagination and no sense of purpose or pleasure. As the images on the right of the paper showed, the Writing For Pleasure approach was leading to more creative work in books. Governors agreed: they had all seen examples of high quality and imaginative writing in children’s books at Link Governor meetings.
47. A governor who was also a parent of children in school said that the impact of Writing For Pleasure was clear at home: the school provided story cubes and her children made up stories based on the pictures on the cube: sometimes, they preferred to do this rather than have a bedtime story read to them. That kind of confidence was hard to engender in children.
48. Governors looked forward to seeing the impact of Reading For Pleasure in pupils outcomes.

**72/22 Monitor the impact of School Development Plan: reports from Link Governor meetings – Documents K**

49. Governors noted the minutes of colleagues’ Link Governor meetings with thanks. They had referred to those meetings throughout the discussion tonight. Governors highlighted the following points:
- The books that the HoS had shared with governors at the meetings had clearly showed the distance travelled by pupils, the high quality of their work and the evident pride that they took in it.
  - The Early Years floorbook shared at the Link Governor (Early Years) meeting had captured evidence of work that was largely based on play and discussion, enabling governors to see the progress made by the school’s youngest children. They could also be shared with parents and be used to help children remember what they had done and develop their confidence.
50. Governors agreed that, in future, they would each note one or two key points from their Link Governor meetings to bring to the attention of colleagues at the next Governing Body meeting.

**73/22 Update on development of federation proposal – Document L**

51. Sue West, who represented the Steeton Governing Body on the Federation Working Group (FWG) with John Henkel from Sandy Lane, Chris Whiley from Myrtle Park and the Executive Headteacher, said that the FWG had met several times during the Spring term to develop thinking on how the proposed federation

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<sup>5</sup> Drawing Club – an approach to Early Years literacy that draws on the imagination of the child to enrich their language skills and develop their fine motor skills. Developed by Greg Bottrill, a former Early Years Lead and Assistant Headteacher



would work in practice and consider the timeline. It had agreed a working title for the federation for convenience, but a better name would be desirable.

52. The Resources Committee had discussed potential funding arrangements for the federation at its meeting on 08 March 2023. The FWG saw scope to achieve savings through joint purchasing and economies of scale. It envisaged that the federation would appoint a finance professional in due course to help maximise these savings and efficiencies, but was conscious of the need to avoid committing to the cost of a finance professional and then failing to realise the anticipated savings and therefore recommended taking a measured, step by step approach.
53. Sue West said that the FWG had reviewed the timetable initially proposed by the Governing Bodies of federating from 01 September 2023. It had concluded that, while this was technically possible, it did not leave sufficient time for full discussion with governors, staff and parents prior to formal consultation. The FWG therefore recommended that a federation date of 01 January 2024 be targeted, and the discussion paper included a timeline that reflected this.
54. The EHT agreed with this summary. The FWG did not recommend radical change at the outset. The discussion paper outlined some options that the Federation Board might consider in future for the benefit of all schools, for example by clubbing together to purchase resources (eg a minibus) that none of the schools could afford individually. The intention was that the federation should be cost-neutral at the start, moving to making savings.
55. The Chair considered that the scope for the schools to work together to make best use of financial and other resources was important. As the Federation matured, it might find that investment in one of the schools would enable it to develop in a way that improved the financial position of the Federation as a whole. An example might be the contribution that Sandy Lane's new Nursery was making to the improvement in its overall financial position. Steeton had previously explored the scope to open a Nursery but had been refused permission to do so by the LA: it might be that considered again in light of the references in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget statement to wraparound care and the extension of 30-hour free childcare to children from 9 months old.
56. **Asked** about the process that had led to the discussion document, the EHT said that the Clerk had prepared an early draft on the basis of a discussion with him. He had commented on that draft and the paper had then been through several iterations with the FWG.
57. The Governing Body reviewed the discussion paper in detail.

#### *Section A – Name of Federation*

58. Governors suggested that the name of the Federation needed to reflect the spirit that underlay Steeton and partner schools' approach and made them special:
  - Innovative and creative development of teaching and learning based on careful research of the barriers to our pupils' learning
  - Not being afraid to do things our own way if that is what our research shows is right for our children
  - A focus on developing our children's cultural capital
  - Magic Mondays, and the Pupil Offer- making learning fun and engaging
  - Reading For Pleasure, Early Years, Writing For Pleasure
  - Passion and excitement
  - Collaborative but distinct: Together but different
59. Governors discussed the scope to invite staff, parents and pupils to suggest ideas for the name and the timing on which this might be done:

- agreeing a strong favourite for the name prior to launching informal discussions would show confidence and a clear sense of direction;
- leaving the name open and inviting suggestions would give staff, parents and pupils more sense of ownership.

### *Section B Vision statement and core aims/principles*

60. The EHT advised that, while the visions of Steeton and Sandy Lane were well defined and had been embedded in the schools, that of Myrtle Park was newer.
61. Sue West said that the FWG was very clear that, while it expected federation to bring financial benefits to the three schools, this was not the main driver. The principal benefits would be the extension and strengthening of the existing partnership between the schools and the opportunities it provided for pupils and staff.
62. **Asked** whether parents needed to know that the school had considered becoming an academy but decided that this was not the right way forward, the EHT said that this would be addressed in the consultation document.
63. Referring to paragraph 17 of the discussion document, governors suggested that a further argument for federation was that it would help to stabilise the innovative and creative approach of the three schools against a background of rapidly changing political priorities and influences so that practice could be secured, continually improved and given time to demonstrate impact.

### *Section C Governance Structure: Development Body*

64. The EHT said that the WG proposed that each school's Development Body would ratify its Self Evaluation Form (SEF), School Development Plan (SDP) and opening budget, which would then be presented by the EHT to the Federation Board for approval. It envisaged that a single Federation Resources committee would replace the individual school Resources Committees.
65. Sue West said that the size of the Development Bodies would depend on decisions yet to be made about the extent to which Link and Named Governor roles should be carried out at Federation as opposed to school level. The Clerk said that some other governors had suggested that Link Governor areas such as Behaviour, Attitudes and Personal Development or Leadership and Management had enough in common across the schools that the Link Governor roles in these areas could be held at Federation level, with the Federation Link Governor and EHT holding meetings with the three Heads of School. In other areas, where the issues were more unique to each school, there could be Development Body Link Governors.
66. Governors were concerned not to lose the benefits of the very successful Link Governor arrangement.
- Though time-consuming for both governors and school leaders, the Link Governor role was the most interesting and rewarding aspect of being a governor and the area in which they each felt they contributed most to the school.
  - It gave governors real insight into how the school and curriculum operated and enabled them to gather first hand evidence to validate and bring to life the information presented by school leaders on all areas of the SEF, and to contribute in a meaningful way to the development of the SDP. They did not wish their role to be reduced to simply reviewing SEF and SDP documents prepared by school leaders.
  - Ofsted would want to speak to the governors of each school rather than to the Federation Board, and the knowledge and understanding they gained as Link Governors gave them – including the Chair – confidence to answer Ofsted's questions.
  - The LG/Behaviour and Attitudes meetings devoted some time to issues around attendance, which were specific to each school.

- The HoS was increasingly using the Link Governor meetings to develop the experience of staff in being held accountable for their areas of work and give them opportunities to practice articulating their areas of the curriculum. Governors fund these discussions with staff helpful in allowing them to experience and understand the curriculum and the work to support and develop pupils in a richer way than reports from the EHT and HoS allowed.
  - Link Governors' work with the school made them more visible to staff and pupils: no-one batted an eyelid when governors entered their classroom, for example on learning walks.
67. Governors saw more scope for some of the statutory Named Governor roles (Safeguarding/Child Protection, and Looked After Children) to be held at Federation level: SEND differed sufficiently between schools that this NG role would [probably need to be held at Development Board level, though clear reporting arrangements would be essential to enable the Federation to be sure that it was meeting its statutory responsibilities.
68. For these reasons, the Governing Body urged caution in proposing arrangements that might weaken the relationship between link governors and the individual schools, even if this meant that the Development Bodies might need to be larger than would be required if more Link Governor roles were carried out at Federation level. The EHT thanked governors for this clear and helpful feedback on how strongly they valued the LG roles.

#### *Section D Committees*

69. Replying to questions, the EHT said that the FWG proposed he should attend the Federation Resources Committee on behalf of all three schools: one of the aims of federating was to minimise the time that Heads had to spend on resources and other administrative work to enable them to spend more time on leading teaching and learning.
70. Asked about the membership of the School Development Committee, the EHT said that the FWG envisaged that it would be made up of the EHT, the three Heads and one or more Federation Governor(s).

#### *Section E Heads*

71. The HoS declared a potential interest in this section of the discussion and would withdraw if a conflict arose.
72. The EHT reminded governors that, like the Heads of School at Myrtle Park and Sandy Lane, Claire Redman was a Head of School rather than a substantive Headteacher: the EHT was the substantive Headteacher for all three schools. This meant that, when his hour reduced from 1.0 to 0.6 fte as previously agreed, the three schools would be without a substantive Headteacher for two days per week. PACT HR, which provided HR advice for all three schools, had suggested the options set out at paragraph 36 of the agenda paper.
73. Noting that the Deputy Headteacher (DHT) worked part time (0.6fte), governors considered how the school would manage if the Headteacher were absent long term. Governors thought there might be scope to redeploy a Deputy Headteacher from another school in the federation to cover the days when Steeton's own DHT was not working.
74. The GB asked that the EHT put to the next meeting of the Resources Committee a proposal for the HoS to become substantive Headteacher and for cover arrangements in case of the absence of the substantive Headteacher for the days that the DHT did not work.

#### **Action: EHT**

#### *Section J Sharing of budgets, facilities and other resources*

75. The EHT said that the FWG envisaged that a topslice from each school's budget would allow the Federation to pay centrally for costs – such as his salary and the Clerking contract – that were

currently split between the schools. As previously discussed, work was in hand to identify cross-Federation savings and efficiencies. Paragraph 64 of the discussion paper set out options that the Federation might consider in future.

76. Governors were attracted to the creation of a Federation Development fund (option d) to enable the schools to purchase collectively items that they could not hope to afford on their own, such as minibus or Virtual Reality learning resources. Governors considered that this element of the federation proposal would be particularly attractive to parents and asked whether it would be made clear in the consultation document: the EHT said that it would, though the consultation document would also make clear that schools would retain control of their own budgets.

#### *Section L Staff appointments*

77. Governors agreed in principle with the view of the FWG that staff should not be forced to move to another school within the federation. They thought, however, that there should be an expectation that more senior staff would be willing to move to another school on a temporary basis, for example to avoid the need to bring in an interim leader.

#### *Section P Expansion: how many, how fast, and how to manage it.*

78. Governors agreed with the FWG's reference for growth to be organic, as described at paragraph 82(a) of the discussion paper.

#### *Annex F – Timeline*

79. The Clerk summarised the key points of the proposed timeline:
- Summer 2 half term: Discussions with governors, staff parents –
  - Summer 2 Governing Body meetings: approval of the consultation document
  - Autumn 1 half term: Consultation (launch in 1<sup>st</sup> week of term)
  - Autumn 2 half term: Separate and joint GB meetings to consider consultation outcomes and make decision
  - 01 January 2024 – launch of Federation
80. On the formal consultation, Governors who were parents of children in school considered that the points of most interest to parents would be:
- whether federation would involve any cost to them (eg new uniforms); and
  - whether it would be better for their children.
81. The Clerk said that the FWG planned to produce a clear, straightforward consultation document addressing these points and to support it with:
- further information and a Frequently Asked Questions page on school's website; and
  - consultation meetings at the three schools.
- **The Governing Body unanimously agreed** that:
- a) it wished to continue with the proposal to federate, subject to further detail and consultation;

- b) subject to the agreement of the GBs of partner schools, the EHT should embark on informal discussions of federation with staff and then parents in the summer 2023 term;
  - c) it was content to approve the discussion document as the basis for further work, including development of a consultation document; and
  - d) it approved the project timeline, including the proposed federation date of 01 January 2024.
82. Governors would send any further comments on the discussion paper to the Clerk, who would feed them into the ongoing work of the Federation Working Group.
83. **The Governing Body agreed** that Emma Wainwright should be the reserve member of the FWG in case Sue West was unable to attend a meeting.
84. The Governing Body thanked the Federation Working Group for its work to date.

## Review policies and other key documents

### 74/22 Approval of Curriculum and SEND policy handbook

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Curriculum and SEND policy handbook, commenting that it was very clear and a great improvement on the various separate policies that it replaced.

### 75/22 Approval of School Development and Self Evaluation policy handbook – Documents M and N

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the School Development and Self Evaluation policy handbook.

### 76/22 Approval of Admissions and Attendance policy handbook – Document O

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Admissions and Attendance policy handbook.

### 76/22 Approval of Parent and Community Involvement strategy

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Parent and Community Involvement strategy as appended to the agenda for this meeting.
  - a) Consider recommendation: that the Parent and Community Involvement Link Governor group should lead on promoting the school to the parents of potential new pupils.
- **The Governing Body unanimously agreed** the recommendation.

### 78/22 Approval of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) return – Document P

85. The Clerk reported that the Resources Committee had recommended, by means of a Decision by e-Mail process, that the Governing Body approve the Schools Financial Value Standard return as set out in the agenda paper.
- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Schools Financial Value Standard return for 2022-23.

## Governing Body business

### 79/22 Appointment of Co-opted Governor

86. The GB did not feel it appropriate to appoint Amjid Ahmed as a Co-opted Governor in his absence but signalled its intention to do so at the next meeting.

### 80/22 Review Governor vacancies

87. As discussed at Item 62/22 above, governors would continue to work their networks to identify potential new Co-opted Governors.

#### 81/22 Termly review of the GB development plan

88. The Chair would, with the support of the previous Chair, ensure that governors had undertaken the training appropriate to their statutory and other roles.

**Action: Chair**

89. The EHT said that the NGA training package included a one-hour training course in financial governance that it would be useful for members of the Resources Committee to undertake – he would circulate details to members.

**Action: EHT**

#### Closing items

#### 82/22 Urgent other business referred from Item 60/22 above – Document Q

90. The HoS said that the LA would undertake a review of the school, as requested, on Wednesday 29 March 2023. Also as requested, they would include in the review a meeting with governors, between 2.15pm and 2.45pm. Governors agreed that the current and previous Chairs should attend this meeting.

**Action: Chair, previous Chair**

91. The HoS tabled Document Q, the new Prospectus. She was disappointed with the quality of the printed document, which was not consistent with the high quality of the content. Governors took her point but were delighted with the content, which was clear, attractively presented and gave a great sense of the school and its values and ethos, not least through the excellent photos. Governors liked that, unlike many school prospectuses, it did not read as a list of instructions to parents.

#### 83/22 Date of Next meeting

92. The next meeting would be held at 6.00pm on **Wednesday 10 May 2023** (in person)

#### xx/21 Closure of meeting

93. **The meeting closed at 20.27pm**

**Helen Osman Governance Services**  
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