



East Reading Federation

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board

Tuesday 7th January 2025. 4pm

Present: Robert Howell; Laura Kerr; Dave Dymond; Chris Robinson; Katherine Fowler; Francis Jakeman; Adedayo Benson; Aaron Hatherley; Vincent Onuchi; David Colwill.

Apologies: Zoe Watling; Jonathan Dewsbury; Kris Jones.

In attendance: Alice de Croos (SBM ASPS); Liz Newton (SBM Redlands)

Clerk: Deborah Savage

Agenda Item	
	Section One: Procedural
1	<p>Welcome and introductions.</p> <p>The Clerk welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the East Reading Federation and introductions were made by everyone present.</p> <p>As a new Governing Board, the only initial members of the GB were the two staff with seats on the GB by virtue of their positions. These are the EHT, Robert Howell and the HoS, Laura Kerr. It was necessary to hold votes to co-opt and appoint other governors to the roles available. These votes were held by secret ballot and the order of the voting of governors was alphabetical by surname of those present. There was a brief summary of each person's skills and governor experience before each vote.</p> <p>DECISION: The outcome of the votes was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Adedayo Benson: Co-opted by unanimous voteDavid Colwill: Co-opted by unanimous voteDave Dymond: Co-opted by unanimous voteKatherine Fowler: Co-opted by unanimous voteAaron Hatherley: Co-opted by unanimous voteFrancis Jakeman: Co-opted by unanimous voteVincent Onuchi: Co-opted by unanimous voteChris Robinson: Co-Opted by majority vote. This governor has had approval from the LA to be the LA Governor. <p>Votes were also held to appoint those unable to attend the meeting to governor positions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kris Jones: Co-opted by unanimous vote

	<p>Zoe Watling: Co-opted by unanimous vote</p> <p>Jonathan Dewsbury: appointed to the role of associate governor by unanimous vote.</p>
2	<p>Appointment of a clerk to the federation GB.</p> <p>Dave Dymond proposed that Deborah Savage be appointed Clerk (now known as a governance professional) to the ERF Governing Board. DECISION: This was approved.</p>
3	<p>Election of a chair of governors for the remainder of the academic year.</p> <p>Chris Robinson proposed that Dave Dymond, who was willing to stand as CoG, be appointed and this was seconded by Robert and Laura. Governors were offered the chance to hold a secret ballot but opted for a show of hands instead. DECISION: Dave Dymond was appointed Chair of Governors by unanimous vote.</p>
4	<p>Election of a vice-chair of governors for the remainder of the academic year.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the appointment of a vice chair with a number of views expressed. A governor noted that having a vice chair from Redlands would be a good idea in case there was the feeling that Redlands, being a small school, would be swamped by the larger ASPs and feel side-lined. It was also noted, however, that the federation means that everyone represents all staff and pupils at both schools and should operate as one body from now on. However, it was noted that the VC position is ideally a succession role to be filled by a candidate that would be willing to take the role of CoG in the future. It was proposed that Chris Robinson be VC but he stated that it was not his intention to become CoG at the ERF in the future. It is noted that the Standing Orders allow for up to two Vice chairs to be appointed and also that not every governor was present at this meeting. It was also pointed out that female representation on this GB is low and that appointing a female to a VC role would be good for balance. Ofsted could arrive at Redlands at any point now, and having a VC who was more familiar with Redlands to be able to talk to inspectors might be useful, although governor involvement in an Ofsted inspection was a small part of any Ofsted visit and Ofsted would recognise that the federation is in its early stages and still settling in.</p> <p>DECISION: It was agreed to delay the appointment of one or more VCs until the next FGB meeting (due to be held 28th January 2025) so that those not present can be approached to discuss their willingness to stand. ACTION: discussions to be held with potential candidates.</p>
5	<p>Declarations of Interest.</p> <p>Those present were asked to declare any interest that may conflict with items to be discussed on this agenda. There were no declarations of interest made. Governors were informed that the annual declarations of interest made via each governor's personal record in GovernorHub transferred over to the new ERF GB GovernorHub site and those who had been governors with either school before did not need to re-declare. New governors and staff added to the Governor Hub would need to make this declaration. ACTION: those needing to declare their interests (or lack of any interest) to do so in GovernorHub as soon as possible.</p>
6	<p>Staffing structure for both schools and financial statement for both schools.</p>

	<p>The Federation staffing structure was shared with governors prior to the meeting, which laid out all staff including those that have a role at both schools. The meeting was informed that RBC have now confirmed that all future employment contracts would be Federation contracts. Governors were informed that this had been explained to all staff during the Inset day held yesterday and that there had been no questions or issues raised by staff. Financial statements on the financial positions of both schools on 31st December 2024 had also been shared with governors prior to the meeting. This is a requirement of Federation for transparency and governors asked no questions about the financial statements.</p>
7	<p>Update on approval of the IOG by the LA.</p> <p>Governors were informed that the LA had processed the IOG and a copy had been circulated to all governors prior to the meeting. This sets out the constitution of the Governing Board. Hard copies of this document with a physical seal are no longer produced by the LA – so the electronic copy is safely stored in Governorhub.</p>
8	<p>Review of reports on the discharge of duties by the two previous GBs.</p> <p>A report on the discharge of duties by the Alfred Sutton GB had been written and discussed at the last FGB meeting held by the ASPS board in December. An equivalent report was written by the Redlands CoG and both reports were circulated to governors prior to the meeting. There were no questions asked. It was noted that the assets of both schools had been noted and that any outstanding business from either GB would be transferred over to become the responsibility of the new federation GB.</p>
9	<p>Confirm transfer and secure storage of previous GB documents/minutes/papers.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that the electronic records of both schools that are stored in Governorhub are being moved to an archive folder in the new ERF site. This is taking some time as ASPS, in particular, has used GovHub since 2018 and there are a vast amount of records. Once the transfer has been completed, the two individual school govhub sites will be shut down. It was noted that there is a need to ACTION: locate the physical copies of documents held at Redlands as they have not used GovernorHub for as long a period of time as ASPS.</p> <p>Governor Question: Will our logins to GovernorHub change? Yes -eventually, but not in the short term. We plan to tender our IT support over both schools and adopt new federation email address which will be used in the future, but there is no timescale for this at the moment.</p>
10	<p>Ensure Federation confirmation letter to all staff/parents was sent out.</p> <p>Alfred Sutton held their EFGB meeting on 18th December, when governors voted to go ahead with federation plans. Redlands had held their EFGB the week before and also voted to go ahead with federation plans. The meeting was informed that on 19th December letters were sent all stakeholders informing them of the federation decision. This included all staff, parents and carers, local education establishments, the LA, local councillors and the MP along with suppliers to both schools. The Secretary of State was also informed, as is required by the process of federation.</p>
11	<p>Information on election of a staff governor.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that all staff over both schools will be contacted, asking for anyone interested in becoming the staff governor to put themselves forward.</p>

	<p>Conversations had been had with a member of staff who might be interested in applying. ACTION: Letter to be sent to all staff ASAP.</p>
12	<p>Information on election of two parent governors.</p> <p>The parent bodies of both schools need to be contacted in the same way, seeking interested parents & carers to put themselves forward. ACTION: Letter to be sent to all parents and carers ASAP.</p> <p>There are two parent governor seats on the board and depending on the number of applications received, elections may need to be held. This could take some time, so once DBS and overseas checks are made on successful candidates they are unlikely to be able to attend meetings until after the February half term.</p> <p>Governor Comment: It is important that we act quickly to recruit so that we are able to hear the parent voice.</p> <p>Governor Question: DBS checks are expensive – do they need to be redone for all of us now we are in a new GB? DBS checks for volunteers are free and there is no guidance that states that they need to be re-done. ACTION: We do ask governors to sign a Continuing Suitability form to declare that nothing has happened since a DBS check was made that would now disqualify them from holding the office of governor.</p>
13	<p>Agree any sub-committee structure and membership of each.</p> <p>A document outlining options that the new GB could adopt for running meetings for the rest of this academic year had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The two options are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retain the committee structure that existed last term 2. Hold only FGB meetings to which all governors are invited with each meeting having a particular focus as required (e.g. Finance or curriculum for example.) <p>There was some discussion on the pro and cons of each approach and it was noted that there would still have to be the statutory committees for Pay and HTPM and any that are called when required such as for hearing complaints & grievances and appeals. It was noted that upskilling people in areas that they may not be used to (such as school finance) might be easier with the FGB approach.</p> <p>Governor Question: does one system have more impact on admin resources over the other? No – there would still be the same number of meetings, but holding only FGB meetings might help governors get to know each other better and understand each other’s skills and experience. It might also help them gain knowledge of both schools.</p> <p>Comment: Where does only having FGB meetings leave us with completing the SFVS (financial statement) which is normally done by the chair of the resources (finance) committee? We would still appoint a link governor for finance that could do this.</p> <p>It was noted by the meeting that a 4pm meeting time might be an issue for some governors, but that discussions could be held to decide on the format and timings of meetings for the next academic year.</p>
14	<p>Financial Probity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Register of Business interests. ACTION: Governors were asked to check that their declarations (including a statement that they have nothing to

	<p>declare) is up to date and completed on GovernorHub as soon as possible.</p> <p>b) Register of Certifying Officers. A Register of Certifying Officers document for each school had been circulated in advance of the meeting. DECISION: These were approved by the GB.</p>
15	<p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).</p> <p>All governors who had signed to confirm that they have read this required document since 1st September 2024 did not need to sign again as their records were transferred over in GovHub. ACTION: any governors that do need to sign this declaration are asked to do so as soon as possible.</p>
16	<p>Governor Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The Governor Code of Conduct was circulated prior to the meeting and it was noted that it is slightly different from the one that ASPs governors are familiar with. This is because Redlands has active parents WhatsApp groups which are covered in this document by social media clauses. ACTION: all governors to read and sign to declare that they agree to abide by the Governor Code of Conduct.</p>
Section Two: Organisation of the Governing Board	
17	<p>Standing Orders.</p> <p>Standing Orders based on the existing ones were circulated prior to the meeting. A query was raised about the possible lack of a COG over the summer and early into September – so this document will be ACTION: edited and be put on the next FGB agenda for approval.</p>
18	<p>Decision Planner.</p> <p>A Decision Planner had been circulated in advance of the meeting, but it was decided that further work needs to be done on this document. ACTION: a revised Decision Planner would be on the next FGB agenda for approval.</p>
19	<p>Committee Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Committee Terms of Reference, based on existing TORs, were circulated before the meeting. These were for the following committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals • Complaints & Grievances • Head Teachers Performance Management • Nursery Admissions • FGB • Pay • Pupil Discipline • Steering committee <p>The main sub-committees had not been done (Resources; Curriculum and Community) as no decision had been made about these prior to this meeting.</p> <p>DECISION: The TORs for the above committees were approved.</p>
Section three: Policies	
20	Delegation of Policies.

	<p>A delegation of policies document, based on the existing one, had been circulated prior to the meeting. One governor expressed the view that work needed to be done on this document, ACTION: so it would be carried forward to the next FGB meeting.</p>
21	<p>Policies requiring Statutory Re-approval.</p> <p>a) Governor Allowances. It was noted that this document has not changed in some time, and that maybe allowances (such as mileage rates) might need to be updated. ACTION: This to be reviewed and carried forward to the next meeting.</p>
	<p>Section Four: Work Plan</p>
22	<p>Meeting schedule.</p> <p>A draft meeting schedule for the rest of this academic year had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Now that a decision was made during this meeting on the structure of the GB for the rest of this academic year ACTION: this can be edited to reflect tonight's decision and re-circulated to governors.</p>
23	<p>Roles and Responsibilities.</p> <p>Governors were reminded that it is a statutory requirement that GBs appoint link governors to some key roles including Safeguarding and Health and Safety. The schools also choose to appoint to other roles such as links with curriculum staff. This meeting sought volunteers to fill statutory link roles as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance: Adedayo • Health and Safety and premises at Redlands: Kris • Health and Safety and premises at ASPS: Dave D • Safeguarding at ASPS: Dave D • Safeguarding at Redlands: Chris • SEND: Katherine • PP/more able at Redlands: Aaron • PP/more able at ASPS: David C • Cyber Security: Ade and Kris <p>ACTION: Governors to consider other roles they might like to take on for discussion at the next FGB meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk to circulate link roles chart.</p> <p>It was noted that the dates in the meeting calendar for such things as H&S site tours are not fixed in stone, but are there as a reminder that these need to happen. It will be left to the link governors to arrange mutually convenient dates with staff for such visits. It was suggested that the Link for H&S at Redlands did the Site tour at ASPS and vice-versa as a way of getting to know the other school and gaining knowledge so that some cover for roles was available in case it was ever needed.</p>
24	<p>With RBC confirm new employment contracts will be with Federation ones.</p> <p>The SBMs confirmed that this has been agreed with RBC HR and in fact the first federation employment contracts have been issued.</p>
25	<p>Issues for Parents/Confidentiality.</p>

	There were no issues that needed communicating to parents and carers and none requiring confidential minutes.
26	<p>Any Other Business.</p> <p>Governor Question: Could we hold some meetings at Redlands? This meeting is being held in the ASPS community room – Redlands does not have an equivalent space so we would have to use a classroom and there is the issue of the non-availability of parking at Redlands.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that parking permits are available for staff from the LA but that there is a vast difference in the cost for a teacher to have a parking permit than for a member of support staff to have a parking permit.</p> <p>It was also mentioned that a Governor Day would be useful with governors given the opportunity to visit one school in the morning and the other in the afternoon.</p> <p>It was also agreed that carrying out a full board skills audit once the elected governors have joined the GB would be useful.</p>
27	Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 28th January 4pm in ASPS Community Room.

Meeting Closed: 5.40pm

Actions:

Action:	Responsibility:	Timescale:
Hold conversations with potential VC candidates	AB	ASAP
All gobs to check declarations of interest in GovHub are entered (including negative declarations) and correct	ALL	ASAP
Locate storage of physical Governance docs at Redlands	HoS/SBM	ASAP
Send letter re election of a staff governor to all staff in both schools	Clerk/SBM	ASAP
Send letter re election of 2 parent governors to parent bodies of both schools	Clerk/SBM	ASAP
All Gobs to read and sign Continuing Suitability form in GovHub.	ALL	ASAP
All governors to check that their KCSIE declaration on Govhub is up to date.	ALL	ASAP
All Gobs to read Governor Code of Conduct and sign agreement to abide by this.	ALL	ASAP
Standing Orders to be edited for discussion at next meeting	Clerk	28/1/25
Decision Planner to be edited for discussion at next meeting.	CR	28/1/25
Delegation of Policies document to be reviewed for discussion at the next meeting	CR	28/1/25

Governor Allowances amounts to be checked and this will be carried forward to next meeting.	DD	28/1/25
Meeting schedule to be edited in the light of decision made at this meeting and re-circulated.	Clerk	ASAP
All Govs to consider which link roles they may take responsibility for ready for discussion at next meeting.	ALL	28/1/25
Clerk to circulate updated link roles chart with those appointments made at this meeting.	Clerk	ASAP

Attendance at FGB meetings Jan-July 25 (1 meeting to date)

Dave Dymond	1 of 1 meeting
Robert Howell	1 of 1 meeting
Laura Kerr	1 of 1 meeting
Adedayo Benson	1 of 1 meeting
Vincent Onuchi	1 of 1 meeting
David Colwill	1 of 1 meeting
Zoe Watling	0 of 1 meeting
Chris Robinson	1 of 1 meeting
Katherine Fowler	1 of 1 meeting
Francis Jakeman	1 of 1 meeting
Aaron Hatherley	1 of 1 meeting
Kris Jones	0 of 1 meeting
Jonathan Dewsbury	0 of 1 meeting