**Minute of the meeting of the Full Board of Governors of The Federation of Boskenwyn and Germoe Schools held at Boskenwyn on Wednesday 29 January 2025 at 6pm**

Present

Bertie Archer (Chair)

Dr Russ Monhemius (Vice Chair) [remote]

Paula Blackburn (Executive Head Teacher)

Nathan Bird

Jo Nicholas

Fliss Spiers [remote, from 7pm]

Lucy Yeomans [remote]

*Note that to accommodate time commitments the agenda was reorganised, leading to non-sequential items in this minute.*

\*\*1. **Apologies**:\*\*

- Apologies received from Naomi Penrose and Natalie Waters. Denise Rusga was accidentally not invited to the meeting due to an incorrect email address being used. Brian Toney intended to join but could not join using the remote link.

\*\*2. **Declarations of Interest**:\*\*

- No new declarations were made. Lucy clarified that she works for the Council, which has been acknowledged previously.

\*\*3. **Approval of Minutes**:\*\*

- The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. No major comments were made other than some incomplete actions. The minutes were approved. **ACTION**: List of policies for review and timetable to be prepared for next meeting (Bertie)

\*\*4. **Headteacher’s Update**:\*\*

- Paula shared a report on the recent visit to Seychelles, with a written report expected online soon. The upcoming Malawi trip in April for Germoe was mentioned.

- Paula attended the Educa Finnish Education Fair, making contacts for future international educational opportunities, including a programme for UK children in Lapland and a conservation project in Kuala Lumpur. Paula discussed the shift in Finland's education system, focusing on embracing technology while maintaining creativity, communication, and critical thinking skills and the importance of these skills for the future generation. Discussion followed on the balance between embracing emerging technologies like AI and ensuring the development of essential communication and emotional skills in children. It was agreed that we must focus on teaching the skills that AI cannot replicate, particularly emotional intelligence, communication, and creativity.

- The schools will introduce a "think tank" activity for Key Stage 1 children, encouraging creative and critical thinking through daily exercises. As part of this, a song playlist has been created with a song a week to be taught across Key Stage 1 and 2. This aims to improve emotional expression and communication through music. Staff were keen to implement these ideas immediately, with plans to begin the activities the following day.

- Bertie raised a point regarding the provisions from the school bill, specifically about breakfast funding and school uniforms. It was noted that the school doesn't have many branded items, so it is unlikely to be significantly impacted by the uniform regulations.

- Russ mentioned the importance of approving three key policies: the financial regulations, scheme of delegation, and the pay policy. These policies were approved by the Finance Committee in October but had not been formally minuted for the full governing body. It was agreed that the policies should be circulated to all governors for approval via email. Governors will have seven days to read and respond, confirming their agreement or raising any concerns. This will be noted in the minutes, and approvals will be recorded for future audit purposes. **ACTION**: All governors to respond with comments or approval for the financial regulations, scheme of delegation, and the pay policy.

- Bertie addressed concerns raised by a parent regarding the class size in Boskenwyn Class 1 (Reception to Year 2), which exceeds the prescribed ratio due to a combination of military placements and staff redundancies. The current class size is within regulation but still larger than ideal. It was noted that there are plans to address this, including exploring the possibility of using pupil growth funding to recruit additional staff, depending on intake numbers. The reception numbers will be confirmed in April, which will help plan staffing for the following year. There is also the potential to create a dedicated kindergarten space at Boskenwyn, contingent on reception intake numbers being between 10-12 children.

\*\*11. **Pupil Voice**:\*\*

- Jo mentioned that pupil feedback is gathered during circle time sessions in PSHE, where children can put concerns in a box to be discussed as a class. Paula added that there is feedback through the eco committee and school council, which report back to the rest of the school.

- Lucy suggested that in order to make pupil feedback more effective, it should be tied to specific areas of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), ensuring the feedback serves a tangible purpose. She proposed that the governing board could focus on getting feedback from pupils regarding specific aspects of the SIP to make it more actionable, and suggested involving children in aspects like recruitment, where appropriate, to further empower them in school decisions. It was noted that while pupil feedback mechanisms are in place, more focus is needed on ensuring feedback leads to action.

- Bertie shared suggestions received in writing from Naomi regarding enhancing pupil feedback, including: A feedback box and survey approach, similar to Ofsted-style surveys, to be used to gather insights from students; Ensuring that feedback is shared back with students in formats such as assemblies, fostering a transparent feedback loop; The importance of engaging students directly through governor visits to ask targeted questions, which can then be shared with the wider school community.

- Lucy proposed the use of cameras (iPads or digital cameras) for younger children to express their thoughts visually. Students could show their favourite places in the school or areas where they feel safe or worried. This approach could be particularly beneficial for pre-verbal children, ensuring their voices are captured and represented.

- The possibility of conducting exit interviews with students who leave the school was raised. Although current reports include a section on what students have enjoyed, there is no formal process of recording exit interviews.

- On the role of student representatives in capturing feedback, it was noted that while the schools do not currently have a functioning school council, class representatives might be a viable alternative. It was noted that school council members often represent a self-selecting, confident group of students, which may not capture the voices of quieter or less extroverted pupils. Jo highlighted efforts to target quieter students through nominations and staff-managed processes, ensuring that every student has an opportunity to contribute, particularly in a small school with limited staff resources.

- **ACTION**: Lucy and Naomi to discuss ideas for capturing pupil voice and bring proposal to next meeting.

\*\*9. **Health and Safety**:\*\*

- Paula reported on the recent health and safety management meeting at Boskenwyn. Following the similar Germoe audit, all required risk assessments were in place, though there were some outstanding areas for improvement. The health and safety logs were verified and found to be in order, with proper storage locations and management in place. A key finding was the lack of formal health and safety committee meetings involving governors, which was flagged as an area for improvement. It was discussed that a health and safety governor should oversee and attend regular audits. **ACTION**: Bertie to discuss with Brian his availability to continue to act as Health and Safety governor.

\*\*10. **Safeguarding**:\*\*

- Paula provided a detailed safeguarding update. Designated Safeguarding Lead updates have been completed, and several staff members have attended relevant training. Lucy highlighted some further upcoming training opportunities and inquired about access to supervision for managing the emotional load of this work.

- A safeguarding meeting is planned for 26th February at 13:30.

- Russ has completed Level 3 safeguarding training.

\*\*14. **Date of Next Meeting**:\*\*

- 19 March 2025 at Germoe, 18:00.

\*\*12. **Clerk update**:\*\*

- Paula understands that St Day may be closer to having someone trained to be a clerk for their governing board. **ACTION**: Paula to speak to the Head at St Day regarding the potential sharing of a clerk.

- If this doesn't work out, Russ will look into pricing from national companies that offer clerking services.

\*\*6. **Governance proposal**:\*\*

- Discussion on proposal from Bertie to streamline committees and focus on specific topics during particular meetings of the year. The role of link governors and the flexibility of the governing body to adapt to important issues at the appropriate times were highlighted.

- Challenges with statutory duties and ensuring all items are covered in meetings were noted.

- The board discussed the importance of having a clerk to guide the statutory agenda and were broadly supportive of deepening focus into areas the full body might not have previously had detailed discussion on, and continuing to improve effective governance.

\*\*7. **Committee meetings and governor role review**:\*\*

- Russ reported from Finance Committee that the People Growth funding has improved the financial outlook, and both schools are moving towards a break-even situation. The projected three-year budgets look positive, assuming pupil numbers remain steady. There is still hope that additional funding may be received from contingency funding, with an update expected in February.

- The governing body agreed that a review of roles will be conducted at next meeting, following updates to the list of governor roles. **ACTION**: Bertie to circulate list of governor roles.

Parent Governor Recruitment

\*\*8. **Governor elections and nominations**:\*\*

The board continues to seek additional parent governors at Boskenwyn. **ACTION**: Bertie to draft a request for new parent governors in the school newsletters.

- There was discussion around updating the distribution list for governors, including ensuring that all governors have access to the necessary communication channels. Denise is still active but had her email access temporarily revoked. This will be reinstated shortly.

**Actions**:

1. Bertie to prepare list of policies for review and timetable for next meeting.
2. All governors to respond with comments or approval for the financial regulations, scheme of delegation, and the pay policy.
3. Lucy and Naomi to discuss ideas for capturing pupil voice and bring proposal to next meeting.
4. Bertie to discuss with Brian his availability to continue to act as Health and Safety governor.
5. Paula to speak to the Head at St Day regarding the potential sharing of a clerk.
6. Bertie to circulate list of governor roles.
7. Bertie to draft a request for new parent governors in the school newsletters.