



Believing and Achieving Together to be The Best We Can Be

Meeting of the Full Governing Board of OTTER VALLEY FEDERATION					
Date/Time	31 st March 2025	Location	Feniton C of E Primary School		
Attendees	Initials		Attendees	Initials	
Amanda Fulford	AF	Executive Headteacher	Sarah Walls	SW	Foundation Governor Finance Lead
Daphne Sherwood	DS	Foundation Governor Staffing Lead	Simon Richards	SR	Parent Governor
Claire Polverino	CP	Foundation Governor Parent & Community Lead	Mark Humphries	MH	Foundation Governor Safeguarding Lead
Eddie Smith	ES	Parent Governor SEND & Inclusion Lead	Jamie Lawrence	JL	Foundation Governor School Improvement Lead
Alex Pryor	AP	Co-opted Governor	Lydia Cook	LC	Ex Officio Governor
Present					
Jess Benger		Clerk to Governors	Nikki Myers	NM	Federation Business Manager
Apologies					
Pete Button	PB	Staff Governor <i>Head of School</i>			
Absent					

Ref	Discussion, Action or Decision	Owner/ Decision	Date Due
1.	Opening Prayer LC opened meeting with a prayer		
2.	Apologies for Absence/ Absences Sanctioned Pete Button – Work Commitments Absences sanctioned	Absences sanctioned	
3.	Declaration of Interests invited and declared None declared		
4.	Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting: 10 th February 2025 Minutes circulated prior to the meeting.	Proposal: to approve the minutes of the	Agreed by all present

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	Proposal: to approve the minutes of the meeting of FGB Meeting 10th February 2025 and signed by the chair Agreed by all present	meeting of 10.02.2025 as a correct record and signed by the chair	
5.	Matters Arising from the minutes not on the agenda		
	None noted		
6.	Questions arising Federation Budget Report and Finance Lead Governor Report (ACB) Reports circulated prior to the meeting and will be added to the minutes as an appendix. Nikki Myers joined the meeting to offer other information.		
6.1	Budget Monitor reports for Spring Term (governors need to have seen these) SR asked for a rationale as to why we were predicting that we would be in budget deficit by the third year, three years ago and asked why this was the case. It was noted that NM has done a great deal of hard work to increase cost savings and reduce expenditure. LC asked about funding for the increase in pension payments and increase in NI payments – as of April 2025. NM reported that we have received grants from central government towards these increased costs. Due to the transfer to the BromCom system in the last term there is a delay in reporting on some information. NM reported that she received a trial balance from DCC last Friday and so has managed to carry out a bank reconciliation. There will continue to be upheaval as the new system settles in but NM confirmed that she has factored all outstanding invoices and accruals into the new budget for 2025/26.		
6.2	Agree Service Level/ Buy Back Agreements 2025-26 - Headteacher Performance Management Buy-In Report distributed as part of the budget pack. One of the main discussion points was whether we were getting good value for money from buying-in the Headteacher Performance Management Buy-In from DCC which costs £700 per annum. Meeting discussed the options available and noted that the money is in the budget for what ever decision is made. Action: Report back on arrangements for Executive Headteacher Performance Management at July 2025 FGB The meeting reviewed the curriculum development budget is steadily reducing and ES queried whether this was having a detrimental impact on curriculum. AF explained that we have shifted in the last five years from curriculum development to curriculum support (predominately online resources) and this budget has increased by £1000. NM flagged that the staff wellbeing expenditure that is an additional cost of £4000. NM stated that the buying-in of this service does really support staff and reduces staff absence. The meeting asked for further information on how this reduces absence and whether the cost of covering staff absence was more expensive than buying in the service. AF stated that no, staff cover would be		

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	<p>less expensive but that feedback from staff is that they really appreciate having access to this service and they are regularly using the advice and professional support services. This is available for all staff, whereas previous service was only for teachers. It was felt that we really want to continue providing this service as it supports staff wellbeing and reflects the ethos and values of the federation.</p> <p>Approved</p>		
6.3	<p>Approve Staffing Structures 2025-26 Reports distributed prior to meeting as part of the budget pack.</p> <p>ES flagged up the increased cost of of MTAs at TSJ. NM reported that we have new pupils with EHCP funding requiring TA support which is fully funded. MTA hours have been being covered by casual hours. The budget set better factors in the costs.</p> <p>SW asked what was the impact of these ongoing vacancies on the provision of education and support. AP noted that as of September 2025 the resources of two TAs currently working at Feniton will be moved over to TSJ because that is where the level of need is. Feniton will feel the impact of this, but it has to happen.</p> <p>MH highlighted that all federation staff need to be aware that they are on a federation contract and therefore can be requested to work at either school. AF gave feedback reasons given as to why some staff have chosen to leave employment at the federation and this has not been a dislike of the school but more to do with distance to travel and availability of additional hours.</p> <p>AP noted that one challenge is that we have high levels of need at TSJ but we do not have the space to put in more and more TA support because there is no space for one-to-one working.</p> <p>The meeting discussed the level of need at TSJ and being a victim of our own success being supportive of vulnerable and high needs children.</p> <p>AF stated that the likelihood is that in future we will be making staffing cuts year on year due to funding not keeping inline with rising costs and lower birth rates. SW noted that the community in the area has a perception that Feniton School is full and cannot take more pupils, which is not the case in certain age groups.</p>		
6.4	<p>Approve Federation 2025-26 Budget and Three Year Forecast Proposal: to approve the federation 2025-26 Budget and three-year forecast Agreed by all present.</p> <p>JL asked that as we are seeing a pattern of reducing income and increasing costs is there a tipping point where we will have to make very hard decisions. AF noted that this will be discussed later in the agenda as we are already making preparations.</p>		
6.5	<p>Approve Feniton FSU 2025-26 Budget and Three Year Forecast</p>		

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	<p>ES highlighted we need to continue monitor the rent contribution from the FSU throughout the year.</p> <p>Proposal: to approve the Feniton FSU 2025-26 Budget and three-year forecast Agreed by all present.</p>		
6.6	<p>Approve TSJ FSU 2025-26 Budget and Three Year Forecast ES asked whether the budget setting had allowed for the FSU budget to balance. NM confirmed that we have to manage to balance the budget and include rent payments to the school budget share from the wraparound care and the FSU</p> <p>Proposal: to approve the Tipton St John FSU 2025-26 Budget and three-year forecast Agreed by all present.</p>		
6.7	<p>Approve Feniton Extended Provision 2025-26 and Three Year Forecast AF still trying very hard to start up extended provision at TSJ but is struggling to recruit anyone to staff the service. She is receiving some interest from parents but there is not a great amount of interest.</p> <p>AF reported that with Feniton Extended Provision is now at capacity and if we continue to have demand for places we will have recruit additional staff.</p> <p>MH noted that AF has had to step in and support Extended Provision at times but has done this to support to the staff and has enjoyed this. The service is not reliant on AF staffing the sessions.</p> <p>Proposal: to approve the Feniton Extended Provision Budget 2025-26 Budget and three-year forecast Agreed by all present.</p>		
6.8	<p>Approve SFVS Submission 2024-25 Proposal: to approve the Otter Valley Federation SFVS Submission 2024-25 Agreed by all present.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to submit SFVS Submission to Devon County Council</p>		
7.	<p>Questions & matters arising from the Personnel Lead Governor Report (ACB) Report circulated prior to the meeting. The discussion focused on DBS renewal cycle, which is currently set at a three year renewal</p> <p>Proposal: DBS to be carried out on recruitment and transfer to a new job role. Renewal of DBS check to be carried out every 5 years Agreed by all present</p> <p>Action: AF to update policy and circulate to all staff.</p>		
8.	<p>Questions & matters arising from the Safeguarding Lead Governor Report (ACB) Report circulated prior to the meeting and will be added to the minutes as an</p>		

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	<p>appendix.</p> <p>The meeting discussed the need for governors training for Safer Recruitment. This can be done via National College online.</p> <p>Proposal: to approve the removal of the Road Safety Policy from the Policy cycle Agreed by all present</p>		
9.	<p>Questions & matters arising from the Premises and Health & Safety Lead Governor Report (ACB) Report circulated prior to the meeting and will be added to the minutes as an appendix. No questions arising.</p>		
9.1	<p>For Information Health & Safety Review Reports for Feniton and Tipton St John Circulated prior to the meeting for information.</p>		
9.2	<p>Adoption of a Statement of Commitment towards a Federation Climate Action Plan This initiative is being led by Exeter Diocese who are understanding that there are limits to funding and they are applying for grants to support property improvements. The other part of the initiative is how this embedded into our curriculum ensuring children learn about climate change and our impact on our environment.</p>		
10.	<p>Questions arising from Written Update from Admissions Committee (ACB) Report circulated prior to the meeting and will be added to the minutes of the meeting as appendix. No questions arising</p>	Noted	
11.	<p>Questions & matters arising from Governor Monitoring Reports MH gave a verbal update on monitoring visit he did prior to SIAMS inspection.</p>		
11.1	<p>Further governor monitoring opportunities Monitoring opportunities for the Summer term circulated for information. Governors signed up to carry out these monitoring opportunities ideally to be done in conjunction with their lead governor reporting.</p>		
12.	<p>Governance & Leadership</p>		
12.1	<p>SIAMS Final Report and Feedback from Senior Management Teams Report now published. It was a really positive day and the children had brilliant things to say. All the work that PB and the CAT team have done on the R.E. curriculum was noted.</p> <p>The two areas for development within the report were around spirituality which is an area that we have identified we want to develop.</p>		
12.2	<p>Feedback from Schools Partnership Working Training and ongoing conversations SW and AF have started to have conversations with other maintained schools in the Local Learning Community (LLC) and we are carrying out more joint</p>		

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	working activities including moderation. And we are looking towards developing future opportunities		
12.3	Governor recruitment Still need to recruit a parent and a foundation governor.		
12.4	Governor Responsibilities/ Lead roles Simon to become Finance Governors Sarah W to do School Improvement Remove Jamie from Send & Inclusion Jamie to double up on Safeguarding with Mark H		
12.5	Update on recruitment - Head of School We have recruited a new Head of School at Feniton, we had 6 strong candidates which we shortlisted down to four for interview. It was a thorough recruitment process. We have recruited Louisa Mansfield from Sibury Primary School. We have an induction plan for the second half of the summer term. Action: look at staff governor role in Autumn term		
12.6	Update on Tipton St John Relocation We will receive no decision of funding from East Devon Council until mid May and we have now are in a period of political sensitivity Devon County Council will not move anything forward until Mid May Action: AF and SW to contact DCC and request we move forward with the formal consultation after the period of political sensitivity. Discussion centred around what would happen if East Devon District Council (EDDC) offered us the funding. We would have another discussion at FGB if this became the case.		
13.	Policies to Approve		
13.1	Finance Policy 2025 Amendment Federation Business Manager to have the same financial levels of sign off as Heads of School		
13.2	Governors Expense Policy 2025 Approved		
13.3	Health & Safety Policy 2025 Report circulated prior to the meeting and will be added to the minutes of the meeting as appendix. No questions arising.		
14.	For information – Policies approved by lead governors Charging & Remissions Policy 2025 - Finance Lettings Policy 2025 – Finance		
15.	Governing Board Correspondence None noted		
16.	Date of next meeting FGB Meeting 12 th May 2025 – Tipton St John		

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The meeting closed at 20:55			