



Archbishop of York's CE Junior School & Bishopthorpe Infant School Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting held on 23rd November 2023 at 6pm at Bishopthorpe Infant School

Present: Fiona Phillips Tim Andrew (Chair)

Rachel Mullen (Vice Chair)

Simon Bray *left 19:35*Nicola Childs

Derek Angood

Emma Daker

Simon Sykes

Jane Flint

In Attendance: Kerry Davies, Executive Headteacher

Carol Pearce (School Business Manager) left 19:07

Ian Dolben (SYMAT Link Trustee)

Caroline Rigden (Governance Support Officer, Clerk)

1.	Welcome and Opening Prayer	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest	
	Apologies were received from Carley Ray, with consent.	
	Simon Sykes shared that his building company had been in AYJS to complete some works during the half	
	term holiday.	
	There were no further declarations of interest.	
3.	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	
	Nominations for the role of Chair were received for Tim Andrew.	
	No further nominations were received.	
	Proposed by Fiona Philips, seconded by Simon Sykes.	
	APPROVED: Governors unanimously voted for Tim Andrew to be recommended to SYMA Trust Board for	
	approval as Chair of AYJS-BIS Cluster Governing Committee.	
	Nominations for the role of Vice Chair were received for Rachel Mullen.	
	No further nominations were received.	
	Proposed by Tim Andrew, seconded by Derek Angood.	
	APPROVED: Governors unanimously voted for Rachel Mullen as Vice Chair of AYJS-BIS Cluster	

Governing Committee.

The Chair thanked Fiona Philips for all her work as chair of AYJS and the Cluster Committee, and also thanked Rachel Mullen for her service as Chair for Bishopthorpe Infant School until the committees merged.

The Headteacher also thanked Fiona Philips for all her support, especially during her first year as Executive Headteacher.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

Previously distributed.

Governors agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2023 were a true and accurate record of the meeting, and they were duly approved.

4.1 Action Plan

	Action	Update
1.	Tim Andrew to contact governors about the next steps for link governor visits.	On agenda, item 8.
2.	Headteacher to email a form for governors to complete and return to Ros Branton to confirm they completed the reading of KCSIE 2023	All governors except Nicola Childs (due to email issues) confirmed complete. Tim Andrew to re-share details with Nicola Childs

TΑ

4.2

Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda.

There were no matters arising.

5. <u>Discussion on the Scheme of Delegation and effective working with the MAT.</u>

The Chair opened a discussion with Ian Dolben, Chair of SYMAT Trust Board and link trustee to the governing committee, on the vision of the Cluster Governing Committee and two-way communication with the MAT.

The Chair thought the scheme of delegation was interesting with a change of language, and encouraging self-governance, subject to performance.

He asked what the vision was for how governing committees and the Trust Board should be working effectively.

Ian Dolben replied that the Trust needed to have effective arrangements in place at the governing committee level to hold the Headteacher to account, scrutinise data and results, and oversee finances. If further resources were required, these should be fed up to the Trust for support.

The previous scheme of delegation had been a bit clunky and over specific but was now simplified and clearer.

A governor asked whether the sizes of governing committee in the document were correct, as it did not match this committee.

Ian Dolben replied that the committee sizes included in the scheme of delegation had been examples rather than prescriptive, as it depended on the size of schools in a cluster as to the number of governors.

A governor commented that the level of detail within the scheme of delegation showed the delegated responsibilities of governing committees under eight areas and wondered was it for the governing committee to decide what the focus was from these.

Ian Dolben replied that the scheme had tried to be as broad as possible without being prescriptive, and if even if an area is not on the list it can still be covered under the remit of the committee. The decision matrix has some specifics, but the hope was that the model of governance would change over time to reflect what is occurring within the Trust and member schools.

The Chair asked that with the new reporting mechanism that had been put in place through the Governance Advisor, was this the formal way of reporting back to the Trust.

Ian Dolben replied that this was to ensure that any escalation from meetings was received by the Trust Board, but it did not stop other methods of communication. Trying to find the right route for feedback was for each committee to choose and could also use Headteachers and link trustees.

In regard to the reporting section on the agenda, some schools used it more than others, but it would remain so that all governors had the opportunity to comment.

The Chair asked, after the Town Hall meeting, what the feeling on Trust communication was and whether there was enough information coming from the governing committee.

Ian Dolben replied that the amount of information varied but acknowledged that there needed to be better communication between the two bodies but finding the right balance that would not increase workloads.

A governor asked whether the Chair's meetings would resume, as these had been useful.

Ian Dolben replied that these were hard to arrange but it could be of value to hold one every quarter and could be in person or virtually.

The Chair noted that the scheme of delegation had no information on how often this group would meet and suggested it could be at least termly, with dates set in advance for the year.

The Chair asked what the intention was for pupil and parent surveys, and whether these surveys could be tailored towards Primary Schools when used in those settings.

Ian Dolben replied that these should be planned well in advance giving time to ensure that the questions were relevant to the requirements of the school as well as the Trust.

A discussion followed about using third party surveys versus school's own as there should be enough information gathered in a single survey rather than needing to have one for the Trust and another for the school.

There was a concern raised about the survey supporting anonymised answers, as teachers could be identified due to the age/class of the pupils and feedback had been received that the Parent Survey had been very Secondary School focused.

Staff had felt that they could not complete sections of their Staff survey as they would be identified.

The Chair raised the concern that with the future consultation coming on the merger of the Infant and Junior Schools, that parents could experience survey fatigue if the potential demand for feedback surveys resulted in too many coming out and/or too close together.

The Chair asked about whether the governing committee would be empowered to pull the two school's visions together.

lan Dolben replied that the governing committee could work on the vision, which should align with SYMAT's vision.

The Chair commented that the governing committee were in a good place having had the recent inspections which could support vision setting for the joint schools.

The Chair thanked Ian Dolben for his answers to governor's questions.

6. Finance and Resources

Previously distributed: AYJS budget monitoring 2022-23, AYJS Management accounts 2022-23, BIS budget monitoring 2022-23, BIS Management accounts 2022-23.

The School Business Manager had shared the reports with governors and shared a summary of the end of year accounts for 2022-23 as a slideshow on screen in the meeting.

AYJS Year End 2022-23

There had been a planned in-year surplus in-year of £36k, with a carry forward of 131,658 in the Start Budget.

There had been further income from additional grants, MSAG (Mainstream Schools Annual Grant), trip income, and PTA support. The PTAs for AYJS and BIS had now merged.

Planned expenditure had been lower than expected, spending less on staffing and a contract having early release which saved money. There had been a plan for booking supply, which had also saved money.

There had been expenditure on the building, with roof repairs and new dining tables.

Staff insurance had had an increased buy in.

The end year was very close to budget with an in-year surplus of £34,820, with an overall carry forward of £129,675.

BIS Year End 2022-23

There had been a deficit set at £14k in the Start Budget. There had been an in year change due to the school joining the MAT, with the SBM sharing information about the funds on conversion.

There had been concerns about utility bills being higher at this setting.

At Year End there was a surplus of £8k, an improved situation by £22k.

This meant there was a carry forward of £77k.

Both sets of accounts were subject to confirmation of auditors, with verbal confirmation having been received earlier that day.

The School Business Manager highlighted that due to the DfE having given incorrect information, which had now been corrected, there would be a reduction in the GAG grant in the next year (2023 2024) which has been widely reported in the press.

The SBM discussed the impact of falling pupil roll and the figures from the October census which funding was based on. There were 104 pupils at BIS and 218 pupils at AYJS. These numbers were now lower due to movement, but the funding was set on the figures from the census. The census had given lower figures than had been in the Start Budget, with 9 pupils meaning a difference of approx. £45k.

The consultation on the reduction of PAN (Published Admission Numbers) for 2025-26 would lessen this vulnerability to swings in pupil numbers.

The schools had already moved to four and seven classes but there may be the need to look at a further reduction in the number. This would need to be handled carefully so the education of pupils, as well as the impact on families and the local community would also be considered.

A governor asked about whether capital funding was included in the budget.

The SBM replied that capital funding was pooled centrally by the MAT, with CIF bids being submitted to access this funding. There had been the successful bid for roof repairs, with the school having contributed only £28k to this work. There had been a further CIF bid for new boilers, but it had not met the threshold to get the funding with the boilers being in a satisfactory condition.

The MAT had supported the school on the RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete), as both schools had contained it, with both sites declared safe.

The amount of capital funding that was put into the pool from each school was around £6k, but the schools had received more back than put in so far.

There was a need to engage with the MAT as much as possible, looking at premises plans and the potential support available. There was a planned central inventory and audit of what equipment and resources both schools had, and how items could be reused across schools if not used in their original location led by SYMAT.

A governor asked when the schools merged, what work would need to be completed and what would the costs potentially be.

The SBM replied that the schools didn't want to lose the feeling that was currently in the infant school if they moved onto the junior site. It would need a lot of work and planning. There was a new premises manager at SYMAT who would be used to help support and develop plans with support from our property consultants, E3Cube.

A governor commented that the reports the SBM has shared were clear report and was there a way for governors to see on more detail on the information about these plans.

A governor commented that they had not been aware that capital funding had been pooled and was now a centralised resource.

Ian Dolben replied that capital funding was now on a needs basis, with each school to make a case. There was a robust process in place to apply for the funding and the CFO, Sam Bradford, would work with schools to develop these cases. There shouldn't be the feeling that schools will continue to miss out on the funding for more than a year.

A governor noted that communication with parents had not been good, with many not knowing what the benefit of being part of a MAT was. They were concerned about how parents would feel that some of the funding that should be earmarked for the school was going to the MAT. They requested that clear communication should come from the MAT so that parents would know a bit more about how things worked before further changes were announced.

Ian Dolben agreed that there should be some pre-emptive work going on and would think about how this could be communicated.

The Chair talked about the previous governing committee meeting, which the CEO had attended part of, and the discussions that had been had. The CEO had put the onus to work on the merger with the governors, with them deciding what should be communicated from the Trust.

Ian Dolben thought that parents would focus on the school that their children were attending, rather than expecting to hear from the MAT, with the school talking about the benefits of working with other MAT schools.

The Chair touched on the SYMAT 'Town Hall' meeting that had been held on the 15th November 2023, where it had been clearly explained at how the central services, covering, finance, HR, IT and premises. It could be worth sharing these benefits with stakeholders alongside the coming changes. This was not a visible benefit but was an underlying one.

The SBM added that having a bigger team of specialists available was useful but did need to be engaged with and ensure the most was being made of the services on offer. It was important that the schools made it clear that they were the MAT, not a separate body. It would be important how it was communicated to stakeholders to understand the reasons for changes that had taken place.

A governor asked whether the surplus should be spent now, as they were concerned that the money may be removed when the schools merged.

The Headteacher replied that the surplus would cover costs around staffing.

The SBM added that it was important to look at the non-finance aspects of the upcoming merger plans, as well as what the impact of a shared headteacher had on finances.

The SBM told governors that although there was a projected surplus, there were deficits in the three-year forecast, which would need to be considered when looking at how to deal with the challenges of a two-site school or one site school. They had met with the CFO and the possible costs of both options were cost neutral, so the non-finance reasons would need to be looked at carefully. This should be part of the work of the merger working group.

Carol Pearce left 19:07

7. Headteacher's Report

Previously distributed

The Chair asked that the Headteacher's report was taken as read and invited questions from governors.

The Headteacher wanted to thank all AYJS staff for the two inspections and the amount of work done. It had showcased some fantastic outcomes for children.

There was a new format for the SIAMS SEF and inspections to help focus on priorities identified.

The Chair asked the Headteacher about the School Improvement Plan, and whether there were any concerns on progress.

The Headteacher reported that changes to the curriculum were moving quickly. Support had been accessed from the Maths Hub for a mixed class and that the Maths Mastery approach was being brought into both schools with training from the Maths Hub. The SIP document shows the priorities for both schools, the decision had been made to make it one document so that progress was more easily tracked across both schools.

Writing had been highlighted as a priority across the MAT. No MAT wide work had taken place on this yet. There had been a Peer Review at Wheldrake with Thorganby Primary School with the Primary School Improvement Lead (PSIL) and the CEO, as well as another MAT Headteacher. They had looked at writing in the school and how support and best practice could be shared across the MAT.

A governor asked if Primary Schools in the MAT used the same resources.

The Headteacher replied that each school could choose their own schemes and resources. Some of the member schools were further on with curriculum development, The curriculum should be bespoke to each setting.

A governor asked if the MAT was supportive of this route.

The Headteacher replied that there had been a lot of work curriculum within AYJS and BIS, bringing staff together from both. The curriculum offer should be in place for an Ofsted inspection at BIS. They were currently using their three-year cycle, but the new curriculum would come into effect from September 2024.

A governor asked if there had been an action plan put in place after the AYJS Ofsted inspection.

The Headteacher explained that the SEF would be the place where plans developed, and these would be across both schools.

A governor commented that with writing being made a priority across the MAT would initiatives be shared ensuring that staff understood them

The Headteacher agreed that this was a possibility, but the school would be waiting for SYMAT to support in this area. The PSIL would help shape the priorities identified as needing support.

A governor asked if there was a Mental Health Lead at BIS.

The Headteacher replied that AYJS had already accesses Mental Health training that was funded by the DfE and that BIS is in the process to do this.

A governor asked if there was any feedback from staff about Ofsted and SIAMS.

The Headteacher replied that the report had been shared with staff at a meeting earlier that day. She had offered support to any staff who wanted or needed it.

The staff governor replied that there had not been many surprises in the report.

A governor asked about directed hours calendar.

The Headteacher shared that this was something that had been requested by Full time and Part time staff to be completed, to ensure that staff were not going over the directed (teaching) hours. The calendar included teaching time as well as extra responsibilities like parent's evenings. It would look at workload and wellbeing. This was currently being looked at by the SLT.

The Headteacher highlighted the upcoming events shared in her report and invited governors to attend, but please do contact her to ensure that there is space.

There was a Church service to be held on 13th December at 1:30pm which had been missed off.

A governor commented about the change to Parent's evenings at BIS, with staff being in the hall to talk to parents.

There was a discussion about the changes, and it was agreed that although it was a change for parents, that this was in place to protect staff.

A governor asked if there was a risk to private information being overheard.

The Headteacher confirmed that there was a small risk, but that the teachers were well spaced so this should not be an issue and parents were waiting in a different area to the appointments, which also minimised risk.

A governor commented that it was helpful to see upcoming events and asked if all governors could get sent whole school newsletters.

The Headteacher agreed.

ACTION: Ensure governors were added to the whole school newsletter subscription list.

HT

A governor commented that communications were improved and timely for parents.

The Headteacher had shared the Church SOAP, which had included the recent SIAMS inspection. It would be sent to the Church Distinctiveness Group at the Trust. The Headteacher would be joining the group. **APPROVED:** Governors approved the Church SOAP to be sent to the Trust.

The Chair and Headteacher had had a brief meeting with CEO, off the back of the last governor's meeting to think about finances and the merger. The idea would be to have options and phases to do, with the working group would be able to set the pace. The CEO had asked CFO to look at finances and produce a forecast.

The Chair stated that there was now a mandate to move the merger forward, through a working group. There would be an operational element to work through and strategic direction from governors, The Chair asked the Headteacher to decide what support was required and the working group would adjust to this need. There were many options to consider, around community impact, speed, capacity and financial constraints. All key decisions around the merger would be brought to the full Cluster Governing Committee.

The Headteacher was awaiting figures from the CFO to ensure that the finances were there before looking to see whether the merger was right for the families and children in the community served by the schools, and what impact this would have on the education of pupils attending both schools.

The Chair noted that the OFSTED Inspection report was available for governor's information and encouraged them to look at it in depth. Both the SIAMS (when received) and OFSTED reports would be formally considered at the next meeting.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for her hard work over the last few weeks during the two inspections that took place.

8. Governors

Previously distributed: Boards without committees, Link Governor list, How we govern document, Training Calendar.

CGC How we govern discussion

The Chair had shared the document so that all governors could refer to it and know what the expectations were. He had also shared the 'Boards without committees' information from Governor Hub. Governor roles were in two halves with half the time spent in meetings and the other half spent on link governor roles. There should be one meeting per term on link roles, as this was part of the monitoring responsibility. There were benefits to the whole governing committee by engaging with training and the commitment to focus in a specific area, becoming the expert on behalf of the committee. This had been highlighted from the questions asked during the SIAMS inspections, which had been tougher than the Ofsted ones.

The Chair emphasized that asking 'how do you know' that objectives were being met was an excellent challenge governors should be making. In sharing the documents, he hoped there was a clearer vision for how governors would work together as a team and in their individual link roles to fulfill governance responsibilities, following the creation of the new LGB. Developing the vision further around link and committee roles would be needed to move into more objective monitoring and challenge.

Rev Simon Bray commented that although this had been tried in the past, the SIAMS inspection had given the time to reflect that it was not about saying 'what do we know', but how do we evidence the monitoring that has been taking place. This would use the capacity of the governors to report back to the

full committee with detail and efficiency. He was aware that governors were busy, as he was himself, but there should be a commitment to the link roles. There should be time given during meetings to give a verbal report, as well as completing written reports. There should be expectations set between the roles and groups to ensure that the challenges were being met and evidenced.

The Chair highlighted that the Foundation governors were linked to SIAMS, with the inspection that had just taken place.

Rev Simon Bray left the meeting 19:35SB Kerry Davies stepped out 19:35

A discussion followed about having a group of governors focus on the School Improvement Plan, and how this work link in with named link roles. It was a hard area to try to monitor with no support or training to help governors develop skills to do this. However, taking one area as a focus per term could give the governing committee the evidence that monitoring was taking place. The governors who were allocated to this group should decide whether to pick individual areas to focus on or an area for all to look at in depth, and these choices would determine what visits would be necessary.

Kerry Davies returned 19:39

The Chair commented that it was right to get the level of monitoring correct and ensure that there was no crossover of work already done by the Headteacher or other link roles. There could be work completing gathering staff and pupil voice that could support reports that the Headteacher did. Support was available from Rob Pye, School Improvement Partner, who had reminded governors they were not the expert in every area but could build skills in understanding how to be objective and to monitor areas.

It was agreed that this would be a significant undertaking to monitor the SIP as a whole so more thought would be required on this.

Link governor roles

The suggested link governor roles had been shared, with governors being able to choose an area they were interested in.

Staff governors had been suggested they work on a new area of disadvantaged pupils, even though the school had low numbers currently, which the Chair felt was important to monitor.

Working group

The Working Group would be an ongoing group and it would take an unknown capacity depending on where in the process it was up to. Governors were asked to think about the time commitment they would be able to make. It was suggested that the Headteacher take point on the initial planning for the group and to lay out the vision for it.

Upcoming visits

Safeguarding, Pupil Premium

GovernorHub Knowledge accounts

The Chair explained that this was a resource available to all governors and encouraged them to sign up for it as it could help support their link roles.

ACTION: Chair (as Admin for the website) to invite governors to register as users.

TA

SYMAT Town Hall Update

The Chair gave a brief overview of the Town Hall and shared answers to questions he had asked. Finance and communication had been highlighted as concerns from all governors who attended.

The slides would be shared with all governors when made available, and there could be more similar meetings arranged in the future.

Training

The upcoming Spring training schedule had been shared and governors were encouraged to attend training that could support them develop as a governor or with their link roles.

9. Matters delegated from the Board of Trustees

Previously distributed:

Governor SEF

The Chair had shared a previous version of the Governor SEF, which had been for just AYJS. He asked the previous Chair for advice on completing it.

Fiona Phillips replied that she had asked governors to help completing sections that were relevant to their governor category and link roles. She noted it would be easier to update than create from scratch. The Chair would look to update this and bring it to the meeting in January 2024 and would cover both schools.

The Trust Minutes had been distributed for governors information.

A local governor representative was being sought for the Standards Committee, if anyone was interested they should contact Ian Dolben.

10. Matters to report to the Board of Trustees

The Chair would complete the form submitted via the Governance Advisor about the Ofsted inspection, SIAMS inspection, merger progress, feedback on Town Hall, observations made during the meeting, and surveys.

11. Any Other Business

The Headteacher had shared a letter that would be sent to parents from Tadcaster Grammar about the school bus arrangements changing, which could affect pupils choosing to attend the setting once leaving AYJS. .

Governors agreed that this information should be sent out to parents.

The Chair raised that there had recently been a government review of the implementation of changes mandated in the EYFS 2021 reforms, and that it would be appropriate for governors to receive an update on how the changes had been implemented at BIS.

The Headteacher explained a lot of work had taken place to implement this and felt it was now a strength. The Headteacher discussed that the current EYFS lead would be willing to discuss the changes. Some changes had been made on the curriculum for EYFS. How has the implementation. A lot of work went in.

The Chair wanted to express thanks to the staff for their dedication and work, especially during the

recent Ofsted inspection. He raised the issue that wellbeing after the inspection should be a focus. The Headteacher had been looking at wellbeing, including the amount of directed time that staff had. She had offered support to staff following the inspection.

There was a brief discussion about what could be offered to staff to support their wellbeing and that governors could discuss this at the next meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEM: Staff Wellbeing.

Ian Dolben said the Trust acknowledged the work and effort that had gone into both the Ofsted and SIAMS inspections.

It was noted that the Online Safety Policy had not been included at this meeting. The Clerk would send out the recent update, highlighting the personalised section that had changed in the Trust policy.

ACTION: Email Online safety policy highlighting changes to governors.

CLERK

12. Dates of next meetings

18th January 2024

29th February 2024

25th April 20224

20th June 2024

Meeting closed at 20:12pm

Action plan from meeting held on 23rd November 2023

	Action	Item	Person	Date
1.	Chair to resend email on safeguarding actions and reading KCSIE 2023 on behalf of the headteacher, for outstanding governor to complete and return to school.	4	Tim Andrew	By end of term
2.	Ensure governors were added to the whole school newsletter subscription list.	7	НТ	ASAP
3.	Chair (as Admin for the website) to invite governors to register as users.	8	Tim Andrew	By next meeting
4.	Email Online safety policy highlighting changes to governors.	11	Clerk	Included next meeting

Items for future agenda

Staff Wellbeing.