**Federation of Stoke Hill Schools**

**FGB Meeting**

**Thursday 16th July 2026 at 5pm at SHINS**

| Agenda item number | Agenda Item | actions |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Welcome, apologies<br>Members present<br>Jade Earle, Katrina McGuigan, Jesney Toms, Jo Cook, Lucy Welsh, Emily Hearle, Andy Pheasant (online), Caitlin Searle, John Harvey, Jonathan Kirby, Tracy Adams, Nicky West, Yvonne Hammerton Jackson,<br>Alice McShaneHead of Educaiton, Inclusion and Learning SW<br>Declaration of Business Interests<br>Advice given by governors at this school is incidental to their professional expertise and is not being given in their professional capacity. | |
| 2 | Minutes of last meeting<br>Actions<br>YHJ to produce child friendly version of the Anti Bullying policy – carried forward | |
| 3 | Resources<br>• End of Year budget review<br>• Agree Budget for 26-27<br>• Licenced deficit and consequences<br>• IT support 26-27<br>• Staffing update<br>• Audit update to be agreed<br>YHJ gave a brief update<br>A new draft budget has been drawn up. Slightly better figures than before as number of pupils for September have increased.<br>Some funding for Teachers Pay Award from DfE but there will still be a significant shortfall.<br>Licensed deficit on a temporary basis is likely to be approved in September.<br>Following discussions in previous meeting about looking ay reducing the PAN governors agreed to approve the intention to make an interim reduction to the PAN for the years 27 to 28 and 28 to 29<br>IT support – 1 year contract agreed with Harbour<br>Staffing – one member of staff moving from SHINS to SHJS<br>Audit – circulated previously. Action plan agreed<br>H & S Audit – score of 100% awarded | |
| 4. | SIP update<br>Data wrap<br>SATS results received earlier today and are in line with predictions.<br>Scores for Greater Depth were better than expected as was the score for APAF. These were a really good set of results and YHJ said that they were a reflection of the hard work of Jamie and his team.<br>Phonics score better than national. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | GLD lower than national but this has probably been affected by a number of staffing issues during the year.<br>A full breakdown of the results will be presented at the next meeting. | |
| 5 | Next Steps<br>Future direction for Stoke Hill Federation<br>Alice McShane gave a brief overview of the current state of play in Devon and how it could impact Stok Hill<br>Stoke Hill is currently judged as being a strong federation with strong leadership and governance. She said it was good to see that the governing body were actively considering future developments rather than waiting and being forced into something at a later date.<br>Current climate for Education is full of uncertainty.<br>Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act has been passed but implementation is being carried out in stages<br>Local Government Reorganisation plans for Devon have just been announced. Not sure what thus will mean for services currently provided by Devon County Council<br>The School's Bill envisages that all schools will need to be in some sort of grouping in order to promote partnership working. Although the move towards academisation announced by the previous government has been removed it is not clear what from the proposed partnership working will take. There have been suggestions that local authorities could set up their own MAT but no further information on how this would operate at present.<br>Currently 130 maintained primary schools in Devon (abut 1/3 of total)<br>Number of possible models going forward.<br>LA MAT – Devon is waiting for further information from the DfE before putting forward proposals. This could be further complicated by LGR as it is not clear who will have responsibility for Education. Will there be 4 separate Education authorities? Or one large one to cover all 4 areas.<br>Schools Regional group are also starting to look at schools in SW and possible groupings.<br>The local authority is not looking to force schools to join a MAT unless an individual school is in a position where it is finding it difficult to sustain itself because of budgetary pressures.<br>Is there a timeframe for changes?<br>Not at present. The Regional group has only just decided to look at possible groupings of schools.<br>AM said that Devon had a quite difficult relationship with the South West Regional Board. It was based in Bristol so did not have detailed knowledge of education matters in Devon. A number of the members had not come from a background in education and were not aware of issues affecting schools such as Inclusion and SEND.<br>There is no timeframe at present for encouraging schools to convert to academy status. In the first instance the Board will consider schools that are viewed as struggling.<br>Although there is no timeline at present it is generally accepted that stand alone schools and small federations will find it increasingly difficult to be sustainable because of financial pressures due to aging buildings and issues related to SEND and Inclusion and so will be encourage to join with other federations or MATS. It may be advisable to wait for clearer direction from the DfE. | |

What impact will LGR have on support for schools?
Difficult to say at present. A number of existing MATS and some federations already operate across different local authorities,
Governors are in a strong position at present . Unless their school is in need of support and interventions there are no pressures to rush into a decision. If there are budgetary implications then a decision may need to be made sooner rather than later. However the primary consideration has to be on getting the best outcome for the schools and the children and staff.
AM left the meeting
YHJ then outlined main points for consideration from the schools point of view
Why change?

- Isolation costs money, expertise and creates barriers to school improvement
- 104 Maintained Primary School left in Devon vs 198 Primary Schools in MATS
- The increasing void left by the LA is becoming impossible to fill on our budget alone
- The budget is not sustainable unless we can find greater options to create better value for money
- Increasing needs and higher expectations / Inclusion – White Paper
- The direction of travel! – White Paper / LA MATs
- Questions to ask ourselves: Is the LA still value for money? Are we fighting a changing tide? What will an LA MAT look like?

A lot of the content of the White Paper is now being implemented. It seems likely that Devon will look to establish a LA MAT but given that they are likely to fail OFSTED again when SEND provision is reviewed later this year, is this a viable option?

What are the options?

- A) Stay as we are and weather the storm, We not sure this is even an option – LA established MAT? - this will mean we have to make significant cuts
- B) Grow the Federation – Join an LA established MAT and stay within the maintained group ish
- C) Join a Trust – we still may need to make some cuts, but there will be more options to 'reallocate' staff

Can we afford to wait until the proposals for a Devon MAT are presented? If we wait too long then the cuts we have to make may be even deeper.

YHJ and governors have visited other schools to look at Federations and MATS.
Exe Valley Federation is a group of 11 fairly small village schools. Total number of pupils is similar to number of pupils at Stoke Hill. John Joliffe is Executive Head teacher, but is also Head of School at one of the schools, Silverton. Some of the schools have received low Ofsted ratings.
He has expressed concerns over the levels of support he is actually receiving from DCC. He is open to working with Stoke Hill but it could be an unequal partnership. Stoke Hill could provide expertise in SEND and Inclusion but what would Stoke Hill gain from partnership with Exe Valley?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Three Rivers – federation of 2 schools – Clyst St Mary and Stoke Canon. They are also looking for support with SEND. Also expressed concerns over lack of support from DCC.<br>St Sidwell's forced to join MAT following financial difficulties and is now a member of St Christophers MAT. Report of visit circulated previously.<br>Schools are grouped in hubs and share expertise.<br>Lots of tips given on what to look for when joining a MAT.<br>Trinity School, Newcourt<br>Joined ACE MAT following Requires Improvement rating from Ofsted.<br>There had been fears over a loss of autonomy on join a MAT but this has not happened<br>Whipton Barton joined Ted Wragg MAT following Ofsted inspection.<br>Three options to consider<br>1 Stay as we are<br>2 Join another federation<br>3 Join a MAT<br>Need to think of the children at Stoke Hill and consider what will be the best outcome for them.<br>Do nothing is not an option, mainly due to financial pressures on the budget. There has been a reduction in the services provided by DCC which is having an impact on provision for children. Would this still be an issue if we joined with another federation?<br>Joining a MAT. Concerns over loss of autonomy but this would depend on which MAT we joined.<br>After much discussion governors voted unanimously to explore the option of joining a MAT. There was one abstention.<br>YHJ said she had already held discussions with staff to inform them that these options were under consideration. It was agreed that staff would be informed of the decision to explore joining a MAT as soon as possible. | |
| 6 | Governance<br>Election of Chair/CoChair/Vice Chair<br>JE and KM agreed to continue as Co Chairs. They aid that this arrangement had worked very well during this year.<br>There was discussion as o whether to have Co Vice Chairs. JT said she was happy to continue as Vice Chair. JC said she would give some thought over possible acting as Co Vice Chair.<br>It was agreed that JE and KM would be CoChairs for the next academic year and JT to be Vice Chair.<br>Link governors for 26-27.<br>These would be decided during September's meeting | |
| 7 | POLICIES:<br>Safeguarding Policy – new policy to take effect from 01/09/26. DG to add in names of Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Lead governor.<br>Capability Policy<br>GDPR:<br>Data protection Policies<br>FOI Policy<br>Information security policy | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | School records management policy<br>All policies agreed. | |
| 8 | Dates of next meeting<br>17th Sept – Housekeeping<br>22nd Oct – T & L focus | |