



# The Genesis Federation

Name:	<b>The Genesis Federation Full Governing Board Meeting</b>
Date and Time:	<b>25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 4pm</b>
Venue:	<b>Virtual meeting – Microsoft Teams</b>
Present:	Chair Hilary Barton (HB), Vice-Chair Ian Bryan (IB), Andrew Button (AB), Marian Ham (MH), Deborah Ongley (DO), Chrissie Johnston (CJ), Vanessa Tomlinson (VT), Paul Redstone (PR), Lison Smart (LS), Simon Thurston (ST), Emma Hogg (EH). The meeting was quorate for the duration. <i>(Noted that there was no Clerk available for the meeting as the post was still vacant, and the meeting was recorded for transcription purposes.)</i>

## MINUTES of MEETING

1.	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies and Opening Prayer</b></p> <p>The chair welcomed all to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Rhiannon Chillingworth. Marian Ham led the opening prayer.</p>
2.	<p><b>Declaration of Business Interests</b></p> <p>There were no business interests declared, but Paul Redstone declared he was a candidate for the Conservative Party in the forthcoming County elections for an area which included Peasmarsch and Beckley.</p>
3.	<p><b>Board membership matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The resignation of Helen Watts as co-opted governor on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 was recorded.</li> <li>Paul Redstone was voted as an Associate Governor in November 2020, but there was now a Co-opted vacancy due to Helen Watts' resignation. PR was confirmed by the board as Co-opted member.</li> <li>Chair reminded the board that there are two foundation governor vacancies, and MH has recommended two new governors. Revd. Teresa Munro is a retired teacher and was also part of the Rye Ministry at Iden and Playden. She was also the ex-officio governor at St Michael's School, Playden. Robin Redsell is a retired architect and very involved at Kings Church, Hastings. Both applications are currently with the Diocese.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting, Action Table, and matters arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Minutes of FGB meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020</b> <p><b>Page 1: Item 3</b> : IB said that the wording should be that he "agreed to stay on for one further year" not for a term. HB said this would be amended</p> <p><b>Page 2: Update on Flying Start Lease:</b> LS said Flying Start have now been sent the lease and it's in the hands of the solicitor.</p> <p><b>Page 2: Beckley TA Consultation:</b> ST reported that he had been in the process of managing a re-structuring due to budgetary constraints, which reduced the TA's hours. However, towards the end of last term one of the TA's found a post elsewhere., which has resulted in the other 4 TAs remaining on their contracted 30 hours.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge:</b> CJ asked whether ST would be communicating this to parents as there had been speculation on who might replace that staff member. ST reported that he had sent a letter to parents explaining that a member of staff had chosen to move on and</p> </li> </ul>

	<p>suggested that if Parent Governors that were approached by any parents, they should direct them to ST who would explain the situation.</p> <p>Chair asked if the parents knew about the reduction of ST's hours due to start after Easter. ST replied that he had not yet done as he didn't want to cause any anxiety and uncertainty, but was open to guidance from the GB. CJ commented that parents would definitely notice the change. Agreed that ST would draft a letter for the Chair to include his hours, working at home, additional SENCO hours, and additional leadership experience for SG as senior teacher.</p> <p><b>Page 8: Strand 2:</b> Curriculum Briefing on Ofsted focus on intent, implementation and impact. HB reported that VT was going to use her experience as an Ofsted Inspector to lead on this area and will work with LS and ST. Noted that Ofsted are not expected until 2022 at the earliest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Action Table</b> Governors considered items outstanding on the Action Table, which was updated.</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>Chair's urgent actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair reported one action. ESCC asked if latest Risk Assessment had been approved by the Governing board. They were told that it had been approved by the Chair and Vice Chair and that the Governing Board would be looking at it at today's meeting.</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b>Leadership Team reports</b></p> <p><b>Risk Assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revised Risk Assessments for both schools were discussed, and LS confirmed that the main change to previous was that staff could wear masks if preferred especially in spaces where social distancing was not possible. This applies to both schools.</li> <li>• LS pointed out that this isn't a problem in Peasmarsch as there is lots of space around the school.</li> <li>• PR asked a question about how the RAs are colour-coded. They also discussed the severity and likelihood grades used to calculate outcomes.</li> <li>• AB commented on some of the definitions of severity and likelihood and felt that for some items we are rating some items that we have no control over. For instance, we can influence the risk of someone catching Covid in school, but we cannot influence the outcome. LS &amp; ST said that they are following the ESCC template, and AB felt that the matrix isn't entirely appropriate to the Covid situation. LS agreed that ESCC had used their usual template rather than a Covid specific one.</li> <li>• AB also commented that for section 6, both schools had the almost the same wording but have different assessments. LS replied that the wording was based on ESCC model, and assessment is based on each school's situation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Peasmarsch Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LS said it was a successful return to school and there wasn't a need for a full recovery plan this time around; pupils just wanted to get straight back into their learning. For the majority, it has been positive. As we expected, a few pupils needed an individual provisional timetable to manage their return. There were challenges for Reception pupils as they re-adjusted to being part of a much larger group. KS2 pupils were provided with more activities and resources in the playground than was usual and this proved very successful in reintegrating them socially. The children said they found this very therapeutic and helpful.</li> </ul>

- **Governor Challenge:** PR asked whether the children are as tired now after 3 weeks in school as they were when they first returned.  
LS said they were more tired now due to the cumulative effects of being in school and the intensity of it.
- **Governor Challenge:** Vice-Chair asked if there were new behavioural issues since the return?  
LS replied that there had been a few instances. There have been two Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) in the last few weeks with behaviour issues, for example, inappropriate language. Some pupils have experienced significant challenges in the family home during lockdown and the impact of this is being seen in school. There have been a number of referrals made to external agencies as a consequence.

#### **Beckley Report**

- ST also reported a successful return, with most children delighted to be in school. Attendance has averaged 98% with 100% in the last few days. There was a very similar response from the children as at Peasmarsch. Some children were euphoric to be mixing with their friends again, but are now very tired. Some of the younger children who attended throughout lockdown have found the re-adjustment to a full school difficult because they had less physical space and less personal attention from the adults in the classroom. One or two had been a bit teary on the gate, but have now settled down. DO (who is the TA in Reception) agreed with this. ST has also had parents in to talk about concerns over behaviour, with 2 pupils with adapted timetables.
- ST also reported that the learning stamina of the pupils was another challenge as this takes time to build up. The paradox is that children and staff are tired and need their Easter break, but the children are just getting into routine of being in school and going on a break would disrupt this. But overall, it is very positive.

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#### **SDRP Update**

##### **Beckley Report:**

- ST commented that the school has had to identify the priorities for the remainder of this academic year out of the key areas he identified in the initial plan, and that due to the pandemic, we will be unable to achieve everything.
- **Strand 1 - Vision and Leadership:** ST is prioritising further integration of the school vision into everyday school life and to support the rebuilding of the whole school community to further embed the new vision. Progress has been made even in lockdown e.g. daily video posts about the school vision. School has also introduced in school celebrations reward certs are based around the key strands of the vision.  
IB asked if the pen friendships initiative had been discussed with the parish council chair. ST responded that this has not yet been progressed but that the school still wants to do this.
- **Strand 2 - Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills:** ST commented that this is about developing robust systems of assessment to identify those areas of learning that need the most work for gaps to be closed. ST wants to rephrase this strand as it won't work in its current form and there needs to be a balance between the pace of recovery the expectations of what will be achieved during the remainder of this academic year.  
**Governor Challenge:** CJ said it would be helpful to establish a new baseline for showing where the pupils' attainment currently sits. and to have plan in place to track this going forward.

- ST explained that the assessments would be done over the next week and predicted that they will be very similar to where they were at the end of Term 2 (Christmas) or, in some cases, may have gone backwards. ST continued that although good learning took place during lockdown through high quality provision of work, that work can't be accurately assessed using the normal measures as the school doesn't know if it was independent or supported by parents. However, children have made progress as the quality of home learning work was strong in the books, pupil engagement was very high with 89.6% parents reporting that children were doing the online work, and we can see evidence of that, but to use it as an assessment would be flawed. The assessment process assumes that curriculum coverage has taken place and clearly it hasn't.
- **Strand 3: Character Development:** This is the school's priority - Character education to further develop a sense of unity and community.
- **Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together:** This is the school's priority - Good practice around inclusion to support mental health and emotional well-being.
- **Governor Challenge:** VT asked about whether information had been received from the LA or the DfE about any timings for a return to the formal assessment and reporting regimes.  
ST said that no information had been received but that the LA had confirmed there would be no formal assessment and reporting this year.  
LS reported that the LA are running training for teachers to support assessment and moderation this year and how this will be different to usual.  
EH attended the training and reported that ESCC do not wish schools to use terminology like working towards" etc but to say if the child had achieved the basics of that year group or if are they fluent in the subject. EH also said that ESCC had confirmed that next year's SATS for our current Year 5s would not be amended to take account of lockdown – they would be the usual tests.

**Peasmarsh Report:**

- LS talked through the priorities for Peasmarsh.

**Ofsted Focus Areas:**

- **Strand 1: Vision & Leadership:** Embedding the Christian values that underpin the already established school vision. Our vision is quite well embedded but we will values underpinning the vision and these will feed into the curriculum development work re-scheduled now that the school has returned after lockdown.
- **Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills:**  
2 – Curriculum Development - the work on re-establishing the Christian values will feed into the curriculum development as the two things are linked together.  
3 – Robust Assessment - Term 4 Assessments have been carried out with gap analysis to follow and then pupil progress meetings. The school is looking at some new assessment programmes for reading and spelling which are standardised against national scores. We have been sent some trial assessments and will look at Term 5 and if we use them, then they provide the data analysis for us, including groupings. There are costs involved and we will be talking to Beckley as well. We are also looking at a new management system.  
**Governor Challenge:** PR commented that in his previous experience, there could be issues in transferring historical data and that the workload involved in setting up the system could be more than was thought.

LS has discussed these issues with the Office Manager, and there would be a big workload for her. But teachers work will be minimised as it links in with ESCC system and the financial management system. This system would be fully supported by Schools ICT.

- **Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together:** The KS1 pupils identified as being emotionally vulnerable have been assessed and a nurture group for KS1 is starting this week. Staff have been trained to provide the specialist support required.
- **Strand 5: Dignity & Respect:** With regard to RHE, the termly overview has been continued, but certain of the trickier aspects have been put on hold programme as we haven't had time to get comfortable with them as a staff. It is important to ensure that these are high quality lessons and that staff feel confident about delivering them.

**SIAMS Focus Development Areas:**

- **Strand 3: Character Development:** This was a point identified in the last Ofsted inspection and this has been a whole school area of focus. All staff now have a target relating to this in their performance management about what it looks like to have a mastery curriculum and what it looks like to have pupils who are challenged and whether it looks the same for all.
- **Strand 6: Impact of Collective Worship:** Worship has started again but within the bubbles and it's been important to have celebration events.
- **Strand 7: The Effectiveness of Religious Education:** Sarah Blackman and Beccy King have been doing a lot of work on developing a range of assessment techniques for the beginning and end of RE units and have been very inspired by some of the training they have been on. They have also been developing knowledge organisers for RE across the Federation.

MH commented that at an RHSE update, they made reference to schools teaching some aspects of relationships education in terms 5 & 6, but left it to the schools to decide what is appropriate for their pupils.

LS responded that she and EH had a discussion in school today about what is appropriate, and she will consult with teachers as to what we will do.

MH asked if Beckley was doing the same and ST confirmed this. MH also commented that the PSHE Association has available resources.

- LS also mentioned that Peasmarsh has been granted funding of £200 per pupil from the National Tutoring Programme that the Government have put in place to support catch up. They are combining this with some Pupil Premium funding and hope to start using the tutoring programme from Term 5.

8. **Finance Monitoring**

- **SFVS approval**

AB, as Chair of Finance, presented both schools' SFVS forms for GB approval before submission to ESCC. These are standard forms and the main items to look at are the Checklist and the Dashboard. The governance section has been set the same for both schools as we have the same GB. If any answer was No, there should be an action plan, but both schools are mainly Yes. He reported that both schools have been benchmarked against other schools of similar size and this has shown that we come out very favourably compared to other schools, considering we are small schools. There is nothing in either report that stands out.

**Governor challenge:** CJ are the pupil numbers and corresponding data for 19-20 or for 20-21 financial years?

ST replied that all of this data is automatically generated by the LA based upon the census information for the previous year (19-20) and the subsequent data is calculated on a formula basis.

CJ asked if the teaching figure will change as a result of the SENCO having additional days next year?

ST confirm no, as it will be the same cost and LS added that SENCO is counted as leadership and is in the teaching figures.

There appears to be a formatting error in one of the Peasmarsh entries, but the Bursar had checked with ESCC and they know about this and it cannot be changed now.

It was agreed that both schools will leave the information about progress blank because there is no current progress to be recorded.

The SFVS for both schools was approved and will be signed by the Chair for the bursars to submit to ESCC.

- **Beckley End of Year Report**

AB presented the overall figures from the finance meeting the previous week. He reported that some grants had not not received from outside bodies, but some expenditure was not needed as a result of Covid. Therefore, overall, the school is in a healthier financial position at the end of the financial year, by around £18k, than had been expected. Therefore, there won't be a need to make a transfer from the School Fund to top up the budget.

- **Peasmarsh End of Year Report**

AB presented the overall figures from the finance meeting and reported that like Beckley, Peasmarsh is also in a healthier financial position due to Covid. The surplus carried forward is up from £79k to £122k, which is largely ring-fenced from grants that have not yet been spent due to lockdown. AB reminded governors that for the carry forward that is not ring-fenced, it is important that the sum doesn't exceed 8% of the overall budget.

Overall, the summary is that both schools are in a better position than expected.

PR: We didn't address services to schools – when are we going to do this?

AB: At the next finance meeting.

ST commented that Budget share is based upon number of pupils in school and this number is taken from the October census of the previous year, when Beckley's NOR was low. This has a big effect on the budget share. He has spoken to ESCC and due to the subsequent increase of pupil numbers at Beckley (around 10 or more children projected for September), ESCC have agreed to additional funding. Once the numbers are confirmed for September, they will release that funding.

HB asked if the change in calculating Pupil Premium from the January census to the previous October census had been taken into account.

AB replied that the change was included in the Peasmarsh budget and the Beckley bursar is aware of this.

Governors commended both Bursars for their work on the reports.

	<p><b>Finance Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB reported verbally on the Finance Committee Meetings of 18 Mar 2021, as the minutes had not yet been completed due to the Clerk Vacancy. The committee looked at the draft budgets for next year and they are both logical extensions of where we are now, and there are no real surprises. There are finance meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April before an FGB in April to sign off the budgets before submitting to ESCC.</li> </ul> <p>HB summarised that we have agreed SFVS, which does not have to be submitted until May, agreed the end of year statements which need to be submitted by the end of March, and have also nearly finalised next year's budgets which will be submitted in April/May. This has been a lot of detailed work and she recorded thanks to the finance team of Andrew, Ian and Paul as well as both Bursars.</p>
9.	<p><b>Standards Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HB explained the Standards team had been restricted during lockdown in not being able to do the usual monitoring visits to school. However, we did see the end of Term 2 data, after 2 terms in school, and discussed this at school meetings, and both Heads are producing data for Term 4 to present to the team after Easter. The standards team are meeting virtually next week to discuss how we might do a virtual monitoring visit.</li> <li>• The overall, very general summary for both schools, is that maths continues to show good progress but there are some aspects of writing, e.g. spelling and punctuation, that have dipped as a result of the first lockdown, which are presenting a challenge to both schools.</li> </ul> <p>CJ added that there were a couple of year groups who seemed to have some problem areas. She also commented that we spoke about children's progress in terms of them being 'on track' and of 'accelerating' progress. and this may not be applicable if the terminologies change as reported by EH.</p> <p>HB reported that full monitoring has proved to be a real challenge due to our not being able to visit schools. Looking at data is only a small aspect and doesn't present the full picture. Learning walks and book scrutiny, which have not been possible, are important to triangulate the information given in data. LS commented that monitoring is not only difficult for governors; it has been difficult for staff as well. VT added that the full picture of the disruption will only be seen at the end of year figures.</p> <p>HB said that whilst in-school teaching has been significantly disrupted, and the Governors wanted it noted that the standard for remote learning was excellent and wished to thank the staff for their hard work in providing such high-quality provision. Results from parent surveys in both schools supported this view.</p>
10.	<p><b>Safeguarding Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IB reported that at the end of February both Heads completed Governor questionnaires outlining safeguarding measures during lockdown and these questionnaires have already been sent out to governors. Schools also submitted their safeguarding audits to ESCC in March.</li> <li>• All staff and governors have updated their training on Prevent.</li> <li>• IB commented on some changes to GDPR which entails some updates for schools, including the Federation GDPR policy which is now out of date.</li> </ul>

11.	<p><b>Ethos Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MH carried out a Pupil Voice in each school on Ethos and Vision and she was really impressed with the quality of their knowledge and the enthusiasm of the children speaking to her about their schools, which was all the more impressive since some children might have found online meetings daunting.</li> <li>MH has attended training from the Diocese on SIAMS. As a result of this, the next Ethos meeting has been re-scheduled so that schools have more time to explore the resources and work through the SIAMS self-evaluation. Theoretically, Beckley is in the SIAMS 'inspection window' with Peasmarsch next year, although it is understood that all SIAMS inspections have currently been pushed back by about a year.</li> </ul>
12.	<p><b>Link Governor Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Mental Health and Well Being</b> HB attended an ESCC briefing on MHEW in small schools. This was a networking event but there were some suggestions. The briefing reminded governors to be mindful of the workload on staff in schools and the potential risk of staff feeling isolated. Both schools will be considering carrying out pupil surveys, staff and parent questionnaires about the impact of lockdown.</li> <li><b>SEND</b> As a result of lockdown, HB has not met with either SENCO but is planning to do so at the beginning of Term 5 once the Term 4 data has been analysed and will report to the July FGB EH described a dyslexia screening programme that has been bought at Peasmarsch to speed up pupil testing. ST described four learning support programmes that Beckley had begun to use or are trialling. They support children with issues of dyslexia, dyscalculia, mental health and emotional well-being.</li> <li><b>Health and Safety</b> HB reported that a lot of H&amp;S issues are covered within both schools' Risk Assessments which are reviewed regularly by the heads when ESCC updates the template. They are then monitored by the Chair and Vice Chair. The Key has a suggested list of questions that governors can ask heads, and IB has produced a questionnaire from these questions, and the heads complete them termly. There were no comments on the latest questionnaires.  PR asked if cleaning was recorded when completed, particularly the additional Covid-specific cleaning. LS and ST both said that all usual cleaning came under the existing remit of the caretaker, and additional Covid cleaning arrangements were recorded in the risk assessments, so there was no need for additional recording.  <b>Governor Challenge:</b> are both schools holding fire drills now that they are fully re-opened. LS and ST both confirmed this was the case.</li> <li><b>Other meetings with schools</b> There have been no other governor meetings or reports</li> </ul>
13.	<p><b>Policies for approval</b></p> <p>For full board approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Federation Complaints Policy</b></li> </ul>

	<p>The Complaints Policy has been updated after a complex complaint situation at Peasmarsh. The FGB approved the updated Complaints Policy</p> <p><b>For information - delegated to school Heads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Federation Prevent Policy</b> Governors asked that the most up-to-date model policy from the LA is used as the paper submitted here still contained some links to out-of-date documents. It was agreed this would be done.</li> <li>• <b>Federation Safer Recruitment Policy</b> – there were no questions or comments.</li> <li>• <b>Federation Whistleblowing Policy</b> - there were no questions or comments.</li> </ul>
14.	<p><b>Chair's Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FLT</b> - HB reported that fortnightly meetings with the two Headteachers and Vice-Chair had carried on through both lockdowns. The meetings always include an update from the Headteachers on how each school is managing the pandemic situation.</li> <li>• <b>Clerk Vacancy</b> – there have been 3 adverts for the Clerk vacancy placed in the local community and on ESCC websites. In addition to this, 8 local schools have been contacted to enquire about sharing the clerking services and with both parish councils. There was one enquiry for the vacancy which came to nothing. Advertising for the post will continue; however, in the short term, there will be a need for a locum. Governors were asked to encourage anyone they feel might be suitable, to apply for the post.</li> </ul>
15.	<p><b>Governor Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HB reminded governors that it is important for them to keep up with the latest training and that we have evidence to show this. The list of governor training circulated with the papers has subsequently been updated.</li> <li>• MH has undertaken some additional RHSE training and will send an update to both heads.</li> <li>• VT reported that she did some training for LGBTQ and Inclusion which was very interesting. LS added that this was an area that she and the staff found very difficult.</li> <li>• HB commented that VT was now working with Marian on RHSE as it was an area of her expertise.</li> </ul>
16.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>LS commented that East Sussex have issued a Neighbourhood Plan for Peasmarsh which is currently under consultation. Governors may wish to make comments but LS requested that any comments made are carefully thought through as development plans will have a potential impact on pupil numbers in rural schools.</p>
17.	<p><b>Impact of meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance submissions (SFVS and End of Year) approved</li> </ul>
18.	<p><b>Dates of next meetings</b></p> <p>HB reminded the board that an extraordinary FGB meeting is needed in April to approve the budgets. Date of 29<sup>th</sup> April at 4pm was agreed.</p> <p>Finance – 19 April FGB – 29 April FGB – 15<sup>th</sup> July</p>
19.	<p>The Chair recorded thanks to Jean Langridge, the Beckley Office Manager, who will transcribe this meeting in the absence of a Clerk.</p>