



The Moorland Federation Full Governing Board
Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on Tuesday 3 February 2026
on Teams

Governors Present	Category	Also Present	Role
Frances Nicholson (Chair)	Foundation	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Rev Dowell Conning	Foundation		
Clive Franklin	Foundation		
Rev Ann Gibbs	Foundation		
Paul James	Staff		
Helen Jenkinson	Co-opted		
Daniel Moncrieff	Co-opted		
Hazel Mutter	Parent		
Naomi Philp	EHT, Ex-Officio		
Steven Pugsley	Foundation		
Patrick Watts-Mabbott	Foundation		

Item 1 – Quorum

- 1.1 The clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate (it remained so throughout).

Item 2 – Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Apologies were accepted from Hazel Mutter. Clive Franklin and Kim Garner were not present.
- 2.2 There were no new declarations of interest.
- 2.3 Rev Dowell Conning led governors in prayer.

Item 3 – Minutes of previous meetings (papers)

- 3.1 The Board approved the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 2 December 2025 and the EGM held on 5 December 2025.

Item 4 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker (paper)

- 4.1 The Board noted that all actions on the Action Tracker were closed apart from one relating to the exploration of funding opportunities to help make school transport more environmentally friendly.

Item 5 – Chair's Report

- 5.1 The Chair said how very pleased and proud she was with the professionalism, flexibility and bravery staff across the Federation continue to show despite the many challenges and uncertainties they face. This was also a tribute to the EHT's leadership. She asked for her comments to be passed on to staff.

Item 6 – Confidential item

The discussion on this item is recorded in Part B Minutes

Item 7 – EHT Report (oral)

KS2 Data

- 7.1 The EHT gave a KS2 data report for Dulverton Juniors and Langford Budville (data for the Federation's first schools and All Saints Infants had been provided at the last FGB). She commented that the two schools were so different it would not be meaningful to produce combined KS2 scores. She advised that Ofsted was now focused on Data and that they use information from Inspection Data Summary Reports (IDSR) when preparing for and during inspections. IDSR shows 3-year trends in key areas such as attainment, progress and attendance compared with national averages.
- 7.2 Neither school shows a positive 3-year trend in IDSR data, although [KS2 Data for Dulverton](#) does show an upward trend for 2025, at least in part due to a capable cohort. Work is still needed at Dulverton to improve Quality First Teaching and SEND outcomes but the cohort beat national expected outcome averages in some areas such as reading and maths (although unusually this is not reflected in combined scores). The EHT advised that Dulverton Juniors is a school with increasing SEND needs and poor attendance. Significant work was being done to address this, including through the RISE programme.
- 7.3 [Langford Budville KS Data](#) continues to reflect the school's history of being below national average at KS2. However, the EHT felt strongly that IDSR data did not reflect the true levels of progress made at the school. Many of the children joined the school with complex needs including high levels of SEND and had experienced trauma and disrupted education. Comparing their KS2 outcomes with those at other schools feels very unfair. For some children at Langford Budville to even attempt a KS2 SATS paper showed enormous progress since joining the school. This was to the great credit of the staff who were rightly very proud of the children's attainment.

Behaviour and suspensions

- 7.4 Since the last meeting, 4 pupils across 4 schools had received 6 suspensions giving an overall total of 14.5 suspension days. One pupil had accrued a total of 10 days and a multi-agency approach was being taken to address their needs. All 4 children have SEND needs. In all cases reasons for suspensions were damage linked to violence. The Federation's suspension protocols had recently been updated to make sure they are clear that suspensions should not be used for anything other than violence (although that approach was already being taken by the Moorland Federation).

Question: do we need to be clearer when recording 'damage' that this means damage that creates a considerable risk of harm to the child themselves, to other children or to adults?

Response (EHT): this is always made very clear in the letter to parents; it may be that the way incidents are recorded on the admin system needs to be clearer and I will check that.

ACTION: EHT

7.5 In response to a question from a governor, the EHT confirmed that safeguarding is always taken into account when a child is suspended.

7.6 One governor requested information about the numbers of children currently on part-time timetables, how many of those had gone beyond six weeks and how many were also accessing Alternative Provision bringing them close to receiving a full-time timetable. The EHT advised that the Federation's SENDCo had recently worked with Heads of School to review part-time timetables, shortening them where possible and making small incremental changes. She would bring a paper on this to the Board and also share the [SEND Action Plan](#).

ACTION: EHT

Attendance

7.7 The EHT advised that the Federation's attendance level was currently 92.3% against a national average of 93.4%. Persistent absence was 24% against a national average of 19.5%. Year 5 and 6 cohorts were of greatest concern, although percentages for small cohorts could be heavily impacted by small changes in attendance, children on part-time timetables and children in the Dulverton SEND unit. Attendance at Dulverton Junior School was only 88% but this would be addressed through an attendance review with an external adviser as part of the RISE programme and by a drive to increase the regularity of letters to/meetings with parents.

7.8 Authorised absence was 6.1% against a national average of 4.5% with leaders identifying complex individual circumstances rather than systemic issues and the SLT would be carrying out a review to see authorized absences are having an unnecessarily adverse impact on overall attendance figures.

7.9 Attendance for SEND and vulnerable pupils is below that of their peers, reflecting national trends and cases are addressed on an individual basis.

SEND and Inclusion

7.10 The [SEND Action Plan](#) had been updated, with a sharper focus on IEPs and identification followed by funding applications. Leaders are clear about priorities and are strengthening accountability to ensure provision leads to improved outcomes and reduces risk of exclusion.

Item 8 – Safeguarding

Safeguarding Audit (papers)

8.1 The EHT advised that she and the Safeguarding Governor (AG) had completed Safeguarding Audits for all the Federation's schools on governors' behalf and

submitted these to the Local Authority in advance of the 19 December deadline. AG advised that appropriate safeguarding systems are in place and staff at all the schools are aware of safeguarding procedures. However it was important that regular checks are carried out throughout the year to ensure this remains the case.

- 8.2 Governors noted the briefing paper on the audit and the action tracker which showed that the actions arising from the audits (all minor) had been completed.

Question: are you confident that staff recording safeguarding concerns on CPOMs bear in mind that records can be viewed by parents/carers and therefore use appropriate language?

Response (EHT): we have done a lot of work with staff on how to write CPOMs entries but I will consider how to ensure consistency across schools.

ACTION: EHT

Response (PJ): as Head of School I see every entry that staff at Dunster make and they are very good at asking for help with wording when required. Professional language is always used and kept under review.

- 8.3 One governor suggested that, where appropriate, consideration be given to writing to the child rather than their parent/carer since the record would eventually be theirs. The EHT was unsure how this would work in a school setting but would give it consideration.

Safeguarding Monitoring and Filtering (paper)

- 8.4 Governors noted the briefing paper on monitoring and filtering and that appropriate measures were in place to protect children when working online.

Other safeguarding issues (oral)

- 8.5 *There was one confidential item and this is recorded in the Part B minutes.*

Item 9 – Pupil Premium Grant (paper)

- 9.1 Governors noted the briefing paper on Pupil Premium and that Pupil Premium Strategy Statements for each school were now available on the Federation's website – <https://www.moorlandfed.co.uk/moorland-federation/pupil-premium>
- 9.2 HS, as Pupil Premium Link Governor, commented that she was hugely impressed with the amount of work that staff had put into making sure pupil premium grants are well spent.

Item 10 – Staffing (oral)

- 10.1 The EHT reported that Denise Lancaster would be retiring at the end of next term after 37 years teaching at Dunster School. Governors wished her well for her retirement.
- 10.2 Angela Hall, HoS at Timberscombe, had asked to move into a senior teacher role and, following discussions with HR, Alison Blackmore would be HoS at Cutcombe, Exford and Timberscombe from September 2026.

- 10.3 Jon Moise-Souch, HoS at Langford Budville would be leaving at the end of next term to take up a HT position. Whilst his departure would be a great loss to the school – and to the wider Federation – governors wished him well in his new position and expressed their enormous gratitude for everything he had done for the children at Langford Budville. The EHT said that Jon was very passionate about the Moorland Federation and very grateful for the opportunities he has been given to develop his professional qualifications.
- 10.4 Parents and other stakeholders would be informed of the HoS changes by the end of the week. Governors noted that these changes effectively resolved phases 1 and 2 of previously approved leadership restructuring proposals.
- 10.5 Governors noted that there would need to be a reduction in LSA numbers at Dulverton. Discussions were also taking place regarding SEND unit staffing.

Item 11 – Finance (papers)

- 11.1 Governors noted the briefing paper on the Month 9 position across the Federation. DM (member of the Finance and Pay Committee) reported that the first schools (which operate under one combined budget) were on a financially sustainable footing, although declining rolls would make this more challenging over time. The separate budgets for Dulverton and for Langford Budville budgets continued to carry significant deficits but it was expected that in-year deficits would move to a cost-neutral position over the next two years. He added that the Committee was confident from its scrutiny of the three separate budgets that they are managed appropriately. The EHT advised that a paper was being prepared to show chronologically how the inherited deficit at Dulverton had developed. High SEND costs at Dulverton had exacerbated the problem and governors noted that Additional Provision for one child alone was costing £74k pa.
- 11.2 Governors noted minutes of the Finance and Pay Committee meeting held on 27 January together with a supplementary report regarding the legionella risk at Langford Budville and Timberscombe. Pending quotes to remove and cap redundant water tanks interim risk mitigation measures have been put in place in line with current legionella management guidance.

Item 12 – Planning for Progress Spring Term (paper)

- 12.1 The EHT outlined proposals for spring term governor monitoring visits with a curriculum and inclusion focus aligned to the new Ofsted Inspection Framework. The visits would focus on:
- Pupil learning beyond Maths and English
 - Enjoyment of reading and reading culture
 - Depth of learning in a foundation subject
 - The experience and progress of a pupil receiving FSM or with SEND
 - The Single Central Record (standing item for governor visits)
- 12.2 It was agreed that governors would visit as follows and the EHT would put them in touch with Heads of School to arrange dates:
- St Dubricius – Paul James
 - Dunster – Ann Gibbs

- Exford – Julia Kingsford
- Cutcombe – Steven Pugsley
- Timberscombe – Patrick Watts-Mabbott
- Dulverton/All Saints – Helen Jenkinson
- Langford Budville – Helene Stainer

- 12.3 The EHT advised that the Federation's Schools Improvement Partner (SIP), Judith Barrett, would be visiting Langford Budville on 10 February and Dunster on 24 February. The Chair also advised that she would be visiting Langford Budville to hear the SIP's feedback and, as SEND governor, to discuss children with SEND and our provision for them.

Item 13 – Federation SEF (papers)

- 13.1 The EHT introduced the SEF (self- evaluation form) which sits at the centre of the Federation's improvement cycle. It is a live document which provides an accurate, evidence-based evaluation against the Ofsted Inspection Framework, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. It also directly informs the Federation Development Plan (FDP). Each school has a SEF and SDP which feed into the Federation SEF and SDP. This year Heads had experimented with different report formats and the EHT would be working with them to develop a consistent approach.
- 13.2 The Chair welcomed the EHT's assurance that the SEF and SDP for each school inform the Federation wide SEF and FDP and not the other way round.

Item 14 – Federation Development Plan (paper)

- 14.1 Governors noted the Federation Development Plan.

Item 15 – Statutory Policies Requiring Board approval (papers)

15.1 Governors:

- **Noted the statutory policy schedule**
- **Approved the Teachers' Pay Policy**
- **Agreed that there were no changes to the Admissions Policy for the Federation's VA schools for 2027/28**
- **Approved the Teachers' Appraisal and Capability Policy**
- **Staff Grievance Procedure**

- 15.2 With regard to the Governors' Behaviour Principles Statement, the Chair stressed the importance of governors trying to ensure that behaviours across the Federation reflect the principles set out in the statement. They could do this through a variety of ways including feedback from children and parents, identifying patterns in behaviour management and suspensions, considering how physical interventions are applied etc.

15.3 Governors approved the Behaviour Principles Statement subject to the following amendment to paragraph 3.5:

Any use of reasonable force ~~follows~~ **should follow** DfE guidance, is a last resort and must be proportionate, recorded and shared with parents.

Item 16 – Link Governor Feedback (oral)

- 16.1 The EHT reported that internet access controls had been modified in response to a pupil asking AI questions about suicide. The pupil was also being supported via safeguarding.

Question: is the new guidance on the use of phones likely to have any impact on the Federation given the ages of our children?

Response (HJ): we could include advice about appropriate use of mobile phones, screens etc in weekly school newsletters to help parents navigate the problems they cause. As schools we ought to be proactive in minimising the potential damage AI can cause to young brains. HJ agreed to draft a piece for newsletters and would send this to the EHT/LP.

ACTION: HJ

- 16.2 Governors noted the link to guidance on PE and Sport Premium on the agenda. PJ advised that the grant had been introduced to promote children's activity levels, their confidence in PE and sport and their overall health. In Somerset 24% of Reception children are obese, rising to 30% by the end of year 6. Research has shown that 80% of obese adolescents will be obese as adults. Schools receive £16k pa if they have 17 or more pupils, plus £10 per pupil; schools with 16 or fewer pupils receive £1k per child. The grant can be spent on a range of things including staff training, sports clubs and external coaches. Schools have to publish information about how they spend the grant and statements for each of the Federation's schools can be found on the website - <https://www.moorlandfed.co.uk/moorland-federation/pe-and-sport-premium>

Item 17 – Governor Services Update (paper)

- 17.1 The clerk drew governors' attention to the introduction of new guidance on the use of reasonable force which needs to be incorporated into school policies before it comes into effect from April 2026. PJ advised that he had attended online training on this topic prior to the meeting and would forward the slides to the EHT for information.

Action: EHT to update policy and related documents in line with April update and changes: [Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK](#)

Item 18 – Any other business

- 18.1 The EHT thanked JK for attending Monday's SLT meeting to discuss how to improve engagement with and between the Federation's various PTA groups. It had been a very productive meeting and the discussion would be continued at a further session.
- 18.2 The fundraising cycle ride undertaken by Heads of School Paul James, Jon Moise-Souch and Lucy Walker-Blair following the tragic coach accident in July 2025 would feature in the next Air Ambulance Magazine.
- 18.3 First Aid workshops will be run at Minehead Eye on 17 March, 2-5pm paid for by community fundraising following the coach accident.

18.4 There was no other business and Rev Helene Stainer led governors in prayer. The meeting finished at 9pm.

18.5 The next FGB meeting would be held on Thursday 30 April 2026.

Kathryn Lanning
Moorland Federation, Clerk to Governors