



The Moorland Federation Full Governing Board
Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026
on Teams

Governors Present	Category	Also Present	Role
Frances Nicholson (Chair)	Foundation	Ruth Smith	Observer
Rev Dowell Conning	Foundation	Lizi Pravato	Chief Operations Officer
Kim Garner	LA		
Rev Ann Gibbs	Foundation	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Paul James	Staff		
Helen Jenkinson	Co-opted		
Julia Kingsford	Parent		
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 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Ruth Smith who was observing with a view to possibly joining the Board. Ruth outlined her background in school education and finance.
- 2.2 Apologies were accepted from Clive Franklin and Rev Helene Stainer.
- 2.3 There were no new declarations of interest.
- 2.4 Rev Dowell Conning led governors in prayer.

Item 3 – Minutes of previous meetings (papers)

- 3.1 The Board approved minutes of the following meetings:
- a) FGB – 3 February 2026
 - b) EGM – 3 March 2026
 - c) EGM – 17 March 2026

Item 4 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker (paper)

- 4.1 Governors noted updates as follows:

Behaviour and Suspensions (February FGB, para 7.4)

- 4.2 The EHT advised that the process for recording behaviour and suspensions had been reviewed and, as far as possible, reasons logged on BromCom (which have to be selected from a drop-down list) match those in letters to parents.

Information about children on part-time timetables (February FGB, para 7.6)

- 4.3 A report on this would be brought to the July meeting.

ACTION: EHT

CPOMS entries (February minutes, para 8.2)

- 4.4 A review had been carried out to ensure that entries on CPOMS (the Federation safeguarding system) use appropriate and consistent language across the Federation. The EHT said that in due course consideration would be given to wording entries as if writing to the child concerned.

Mobile Phones (February minutes, para 16.1)

- 4.5 HJ confirmed that, before half-term, she would draft an article for school newsletters on the use of mobile phones by children.

ACTION: HJ

Use of reasonable force in schools (February minutes, para 17.1)

- 4.6 The EHT confirmed that policies and related documents had been updated to reflect the new guidance on the use of reasonable force which took effect on 1 April.

Redundancy Process (March EGM minutes, para 5.1)

- 4.7 Post-meeting note: an Appeals Panel meeting (should it be needed) had been scheduled for 19 June at 1pm.

Item 5 – Chair's Report

- 5.1 The Chair commented on how much was happening in the Federation at the moment and the strain this places on staff.

Item 6 – Confidential item

The discussion on this item is recorded in Part B Minutes

Item 7 – EHT Report (oral)

Attendance

- 7.1 The EHT reported that attendance for the Federation as a whole is currently 93.08%. The national average is 93.3% and for the Southwest 93%. For primary schools the national average is 94.8%. She suggested it was worth bearing in mind that the national average for special schools is 87.1% since the Federation has a high number of children with special needs. Attendance was lowest at Dulverton, at

only 88.9% but this was being addressed as part of the RISE programme, through fortnightly meetings with an external advisor and by staff at the school. Attendance was highest at Exford (94.4%) and at St Dubricius (94.2%). Attendance data had been reviewed to identify any trends or particular problem areas in categories such as Pupil Premium Grant, Free School Meals, English as an Additional Language, SEND and gender. For example, attendance was lower for boys (91.3%) than girls (94%) and persistent absence for boys is higher. 16.55% of absences were for holidays. Lates across the Federation were running at 3.26% and this would make a significant difference if effectively addressed. The EHT suggested that attendance should be part of governors' focus for their summer term monitoring (also pupil outcomes and impact).

Data

7.2 The EHT shared the following predictions:

Year 6 (Dulverton and Langford Budville combined)

- Reading – 73%
- Writing – 60%
- Maths – 53%

Combined Reading, Writing and Maths was 50% at Langford Budville and 27% at Dulverton. The RISE programme aimed to improve educational outcomes for the children at Dulverton Junior school, supported by the Federation's own staff, and the RISE advisor would observe the next FGB meeting as part of his review.

Post-meeting note: the RISE advisor will be looking for evidence of board effectiveness as part of his governance review

7.3 Writing across the board is a target area for improvement and is lagging behind reading and maths in general (not always the trend in every year group). Maths and reading have strong, coherent schemes used across the Federation; in writing and SPAG we are just at the point of creating greater consistency through membership of the Somerset Literacy Network.

7.4 EYFS – 40 pupils (74%) of pupils across the Federation are on track to achieve GLD, with some variation amongst the schools.

Bromcom is unable to combine Phonics predictions for the Federation, but for individual schools these are currently:

- Exford – 100% (1 pupil)
- Langford Budville – 0% (1 pupil)
- St Dubricius – 72% (22% of whom are receiving targeted support)
- Cutcombe – 87.5%
- All Saints – 77% (with 1 pupil receiving targeted support)
- Dunster – 63% at Dunster (with 2 pupils receiving targeted support)
- Timberscombe – no pupils on roll in year 1

Staff

7.5 Overall staff attendance is good. Staff wellbeing continues to be monitored and specific concerns actioned.

Federation Development Plan

7.6 The Federation Development Plan has been reviewed and updated but there were no significant changes to bring to governors' attention.

Inspections

- 7.7 Several Federation schools were in the window for a SIAMS inspection next academic year. School leaders are attending training and are being supported by Paul Marvin, Education Advisor for the Diocese.
- 7.8 Heads of School at Dunster and Cutcombe have prepared report card versions of their SEF in readiness for Ofsted inspections. These are based on the new Federation format and are being rolled out.

Suspensions

- 7.9 In March a permanent exclusion had been avoided by securing funding to support the pupil remaining on roll as they already have a place at a special school from September.

Post-meeting note: there have been 8 suspensions YTD for 5 pupils:

- Langford Budville – 2 pupils (last suspension in March)
- Dunster – 1 pupil (February)
- Dulverton – 2 pupils (December and January)

Return from suspension reviews have increased focus on actions to avoid further suspensions where possible. Damage and Physical Assault continue to be the main reasons for suspension. No girls have been suspended YTD. Numbers are too small to analyse for trends so each case is considered individually.

Question: how are admission numbers looking for September?

Response (NP/LP): Dunster 17, St Dubricius 12, Exford 2, Cutcombe 6, Timberscombe 5 and All Saints 15. However, these are not final figures and are subject to change.

Item 8 – Safeguarding (oral)

- 8.1 The [NSPCC Pants programme](#) has been revisited to help address some concerns raised by parents at Dulverton All Saints and to help children understand that their bodies are private. The EHT has met with one parent and school leaders/teachers and will be seeing one more.
- 8.2 There were no other safeguarding concerns that needed to be brought to governors' attention.

Item 9 – Finance and Pay Committee Minutes: 30 March 2026

- 9.1 The Finance and Pay Committee chair thanked staff for their hard work on the Federation's budgets and the Board noted minutes of the committee's meeting held on 30 March 2026.

Item 10 – 2026/27 Budgets and Summaries (papers)

- 10.1 The EHT updated governors on the compulsory redundancy process in train to address budget shortfalls and reported that it had been possible to stop the process for a number of staff groups by finding other solutions such as voluntary redundancy or reduced hours. Redeployment options are also considered as part of the process.

10.2 The Board:

- a) approved the 2026/27 Budget for the Moorland First Schools**
- b) noted the 2026/27 deficit Budget for the Dulverton Schools**
- c) noted the 2026/27 deficit Budget for Langford Budville**

Item 11 – Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) Submissions (papers)

11.1 The Board:

- a) approved the 2025/26 SFVS submissions for the Moorland First Schools, the Dulverton Schools and Langford Budville; and**
- b) noted the related party transaction schedule**

Item 12 – Working Groups (oral)

12.1 The Board agreed that:

- a) a working group should be formed comprising Julia Kingsford, Kim Garner and Lizi Pravato to discuss ways of promoting parental involvement in, and support for, the Federation's schools; and**
- b) a working group should be formed to raise LA awareness of concerns about pre-school provision in rural areas. The Chair would be on the working group and she invited expressions of interest from other governors.**

Item 13 – Governor Monitoring (oral)

- 13.1 The EHT thanked governors for submitting their reports on monitoring visits in the Spring Term. She would email proposals for Summer Term visits which were likely to include attendance, pupil outcomes and impact, collective worship and an aspect of the Federation Development Plan. She would allocate individual governors to schools they had not previously visited.

Item 14 – Link Governor Feedback (oral)

- 14.1 There was no additional feedback from link governors.

Item 15 – Briefing Documents Circulated Between Meetings (papers)

- 15.1 Governors had received the following documents since the last FGB meeting:
- a) Collective Worship DfE Update
 - b) SEND Deficit Write Off Somerset
 - c) White Paper SEND Reforms
 - d) White Paper Summary

Item 16 – Any Other Business

Reverend Dowell Conning

- 16.1 The Chair announced that Rev Dowell Conning was stepping down from the Board with effect from 30 April and thanked him for the enormous support he had given

as a governor of The Exmoor Federation and The Moorland Federation over the past 4.5 years. Dowell commented that he had enjoyed his role immensely and said that governors, staff, parents and – most importantly – the children would continue to be in his prayers.

Succession Planning

- 16.2 The Chair commented that governors would need to keep succession planning under review and asked everyone to consider whether they know of anyone who would make a useful addition to the Board in due course.

Year 5/6 Provision

- 16.3 One governor suggested that parents would be interested to know whether the Federation would resume exploration of proposals for year 5/6 provision at the First Schools. The EHT advised that proposals had been paused following the tragic coach crash on Exmoor last summer and since then she thought the LA had been focused on changes with the Beacon Trust and Midsomer Norton Trust but she would follow up with them.

ACTION: EHT

Close of meeting

- 16.4 Rev Ann Gibbs led governors in a closing prayer.

Date of next meeting

The next FGB meeting would be held on Tuesday 7 July 2026.

Kathryn Lanning
Moorland Federation, Clerk to Governors
