



ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday 2nd March 2026

Time: 4.45pm

Venue: Priestnall School

Clerk: N Burgess

Present: S Jhanji, C Jolleys, M Farrar, J Ledger, R Howarth, T Clarey, E Cookson, L Knowles and T Gilbert

Action	Initials
Governors to inform the Clerk of any changes to their Register of Business interests	All
Governors are asked to arrange their link visits to school	All
Update to be given on SEND link visit	LBU
Governors to complete any outstanding training modules	All
To send completed training certificates to the Clerk	All

Agenda – Part 1-

Category	Item	Notes	Action
1	Governance Arrangements	E Cookson presented Behaviour and SEND to Governors and gave an overview of reasonable adjustments the school makes for students with complex needs. Identifying of student needs is essential to enable support to be put in place. It is not acceptable to include a static approach to behaviour, to be able to recognise that the behaviour policy does not work for all, and that an adaptive approach is needed. There is a large Pastoral Team in school who support the students really well. Some students will need additional support to meet behaviour expectations. When, what and why are reasonable adjustments made – examples are this could be due to SEND, Disadvantaged, PP or heightened around uniform. Staff work with the students to identify the barriers for learning and then can make the reasonable adjustments. The SEND Code of Practice has four key pillars: Communication and interaction Cognition and learning Social, emotional and mental health difficulties	

			Sensory and/or physical needs These give a broad overview and some students do have multiple needs. It was also noted that some students present very differently, even with the same diagnosis, and that each student is treated as an individual. The Pastoral Team and SEND teams work together for the students. Students will still receive sanctions for behaviour but work is done to support them for the behaviour not to happen again. Support put in place for students also takes into consideration contextual factors such as social deprivation, cognitive ability, academic progress, social isolation, mental health needs and home stability. As much information as possible is considered when implementing support. Consideration is given as to how a student's needs manifest in their behaviour. A review is done and staff try to find a reason why. It is viewed as what do we need to put in place to meet the need, rather than just delivering punitive sanctions. It is a very nuanced approach which is always bespoke to the individual. We are able to respond in the moment and then consider for the longer term. Staff in school know the children well and know how to respond. Strategies are agreed and the students are able to access the SSC with a pass, where staff can see what they need, sometimes this can be a conversation with a member of staff or time to calm down. Staff need to be able to know the language and the triggers for the students. The decision-making process and part of the SFP means there needs to be consistent boundaries in place, whilst trying to find alternatives to suspensions. The intervention is to address the need. Governors were shown an anonymised case study to add context to the presentation. A profile is written and shared with all staff, including a list of specific challenges, how this manifests, and any reasonable adjustments in place. There are briefings for staff and also for the student, the student will have a debrief before they go home at the end of the day. In terms of trying to avoid a permanent exclusion for the student, there is a high level of support in place in school despite there being no EHCP. Q – Where do you stand with an EHCP? A – It can be difficult as students will not be accepted at	
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			a specialist provision is there is no EHCP in place. As a school here at Priestnall we provide all the same support we would if there was an EHCP. Q – Do you reduce the timetable for this student? A – We did try but this had no impact and was not really working, it can be totally mood dependent. Q – How do you ensure all staff are aware of the student’s needs? A – We have a briefing for all staff and then a specific one for their teachers. We do also drop in to lessons to ensure that all on the students SFP is in place. Our staff work really hard and always do their best for our students. Q – In terms of reasonable adjustments, from your experience over the last few years, if there are more students now is it sustainable? A There is less need now than when the school first joined the Trust. At the beginning there were a lot of children who were in crisis. In terms of numbers, they are rising and funding is a big issue as the top up funding has not yet gone up. SEND reform is on its way. It is a challenge but it is not always about doing something different in class, it is about adapting to how the students present in the moment. Staff training is so important so that we are on top of things and can be reactive. Q – Can you give an example of what is the most typical level of reasonable adjustments? A – A good example is with phones and impulsivity; the student can be time anxious and needs to check the time on their phone and we are able to be subtle in the adjustments for this. There are very varied levels of adjustments and this is possible as we know the students so well, we can be sensitive to the situation. SJ commented that building relationships with the students is so important. Q – Has there has been a piece of work around coping in mainstream and the need to intervene at high school? A – We raise any concerns directly with the primary school. Transition is so important so we can put the right support in place and make adjustments as soon as the students arrive. We look at trends and patterns and it is very complex,	
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		but this is why relationships and information sharing is so important. Q – There is lots of overlap with lived experience, how do you find out if something has happened so you can support? A – It is about building trust with the students, and also with their families. We try to build a relationship and to support. We can visit in the home and build the trust and get to know the families deeply. Q – Once the trust is established what resources do you have? A – We have a school-based therapist, mental health team, a school nurse and a team around the school including Police and Social Care. We also have a large Pastoral Team in school. There is also the option to refer to outside agencies such as YOS or Mosaic. We always ensure that student voice is built into the SFP document and recognise that each student is an individual. Governors had no further questions. EC was thanked for the presentation and for the incredible level of support given to the students.	
	Apologies	Apologies were received and accepted from L Burrige	
	AOB items	T Gilbert had circulated a list of questions prior to the meeting. Questions which had not been answered during the course of the agenda would be raised at the end of the meeting.	
	Declarations of interest in any of the agenda items	There were no declarations of interest made in any of the agenda items.	
	Register on Business Interests	Governors are asked to report any changes in their record to the Clerk.	All
	Code of Conduct	C Jolley, attending her first meeting, <u>agreed</u> to adhere to the code of conduct.	
	Minutes of previous meeting	Minutes of the meeting held 29th September 2025 were approved as a correct record of the meeting. <u>Matters arising:</u> BeWell data- is in the Head of School report for this meeting Register of Business interests is updated following each	

			meeting Link Visits – visits to school have taken place Educational neglect – is in the Head of School report Review of staff absence – this is monitored by Head of School and Trust HR Safeguarding and SEND links visits – visits to school have taken place Training reminders – were issued at this meeting Certificates to the Clerk – in progress ongoing	
		Membership: Recruitment Update/Succession Planning	C Jolleys was welcomed to her first meeting as newly appointed Parent Governor and introductions were made.	
		Link Governor roles	C Jolleys agreed to be the Link Governor for Leadership and Service. Safeguarding – M Farrar SEND – L Burridge Pupil Premium – L Knowles Academic Aspiration – Whole Academy Committee Culture, Creativity and Rhetoric – J Ledger Competition and Physical Endeavour – T Gilbert Governors are asked to contact their links to arrange a visit to school.	All
		Scheme of Delegation	There were no material changes to note to the Scheme of Delegation.	
		Trust Board updates	Governors received the reports for the Trust Board meetings in October and December 2025. Q – If the Trust are not undertaking any due diligence at present is this a good sign for other schools joining? A – At present, as a Trust, are completing lots of school-to-school support as part of the RISE project. EC is working with another school to support with SEND provision. There is a link in the report to the full minutes of the meeting if Governors would like further information. Q – Are there any special schools in the Trust? A – Yes, Laurus Grace is an alternative provision.	

2	School Performance & Accountability	Head of School report	RH highlighted key points from the report which was circulated prior to the meeting. Governor questions were invited. <u>BeWell</u> BeWell survey has been completed by years 7,8 and 10. It was a positive survey outcome on the whole. The only issue identified was around a year 10 friendship group. Governors noted the school compared favourably to other schools similar demographically. Reading was identified as 60% of students reading often and sometimes. Reading is a big focus in school but it was discussed that this was difficult to monitor or implement outside of school. In terms of sports and physical activity there has been lots of investment recently in the school sports facilities, and there are a large number of students who do lots of sports outside of school. Q – Was the survey completed in school or at home? A-It was completed in school, either during an IT lesson or during cornerstone form time. Q – Do the questions relate to outside of school too? A – Yes. We do not use the word isolation here in school, it is withdrawn study and this can be classed as a reasonable adjustment. Careers Education is important in school and talks have been arranged for year 9. There are jobs fairs where students are able to speak to companies and post 16 providers and look at career paths. Overall, it was a good positive response to the survey. <u>Academic Aspiration</u> Governors reviewed the autumn and spring term data. The spring data is based on the mock exam results and is more valid. Everything possible is being done to improve the outcomes for the students in the summer examinations. RH commented that the school want the best outcomes possible for the students but that there is a need to be realistic in the predictions. A second round of Maths, English and Science mocks are currently taking place. There are interventions in place
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			throughout the year but these are tailored following each round of mock exams. Governors were pleased to note there has been a good uptake in study skills and interventions. Governors then reviewed the data by identified groups and by subject. Governors noted that this would be the last year for Hospitality and Catering, and also Sociology as these subjects are no longer offered. Q – What can you tell us about the Music results? A – Last year the results were very strong. The current year 11 is a small group of students. TC presented an addendum to the report at the meeting, which contained the year 9 MFL data from the autumn term. This is the first time of year 9 sitting the MFL GCSE for the school. In the week prior to the meeting the students had sat their written paper and this will be combined with the listening and reading scores to predict the grades. The outcomes are looking positive for the year group. The approach to language teaching changed when the school became part of the Trust. RH commented that the conduct of the students towards their first GCSE has been exemplary. Governors noted that 242 year 9 students would be sitting their GCSE MFL examination in the summer. Q – Once the students have taken their MFL GCSE in year 9, can they choose another one in year 10? A – Yes. We can also offer provision for those students who wish to take their MFL at A Level. RH shared previous MFL results across the Trust for year 9. SLT and Governors were excited to see the results for the students in the summer. Mock results will be available before year 9 parents evening and KASH reports will be updated. RH commented that in terms of year 9 the parental focus on student engagement is phenomenal, this gives the students focus and makes them want to work even harder. <u>Behaviour</u> There has been a slight increase in behaviour incidents and this relates to a number of reasons, including some of the students with very complex needs. It should be noted that it is a small number of students responsible	
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			for a large number of incidents. There have been 66 suspensions this year, which is below the national average. Work is being done in school to work on interventions for the students suspended. There has been one permanent exclusion issued at the time of this meeting. SEND numbers are high due to the nature of the needs, but are still significantly below national average. Years 10 and 11 have the highest number of suspensions. Year 11 is not actually reflective of the year group, and there have been a number of students in the year group who were suspended due to vaping in school. In terms of reasons for suspensions, the highest is for physical assault, and the next for persistent disruption and then verbal abuse towards an adult. Q – Does drugs and alcohol category include vapes? A – Possibly, if we suspect there is another substance in the vape. <u>Attendance</u> Attendance is a big focus for the school and there is significant work being done to address this. Attendance is currently 92.8% which is just above national average. As a school the work to address persistent absence is having an impact. Governors then reviewed attendance by identified groups, noting that attendance was lower for boys than girls, and that SEND and PP were also a factor. Attendance does decline in some of the higher year groups and this can be due to disengagement, and as a school are doing everything possible to address this. We targeted families at the year 11 parents evening. We monitor attendance on a week by week basis and this did decline towards the end of last year due to study leave. This year we are holding a bootcamp exam preparation to show students a purpose to being in school right up to their exams. Q – Will this only target students with poor attendance? A – No, this will be for all students, we want them to know the value of being in school right up to their exams.	
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			RH informed Governors that the school does have some students whose attendance is below 50%, some of whom experience emotion based school avoidance. The SENDCO is working with the students including looking at alternative provision, home visits and EWO involvement. Q – Do you have robust knowledge of all of these students? A – Yes, the students sometimes have bespoke interventions in place, this is entirely dependent on the needs of the young person. Q – Do you get attendance data from previous schools? A – Sometimes we can do. Governors had no further questions to raise on the Head of School report.	
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		School Development Plan	The SDP is a 3 year plan and this is year 2. A review of the plan took place in the autumn term to review and establish the priorities. The review included what the school were working on at the present time and what could be done at a later date. RH highlighted the key aspects for Governors and questions were welcomed. <u>Academic Aspirations</u> Work is being done with staff to be able to analyse data effectively to enable early interventions. To develop tier 2 and 3 vocabulary. To develop programmes including “Thinking Matters” and “Thinking Works” at KS3 and Apertura at KS4. Cicero programme has been paused at the present time. External voice coach to work with Y10 Apertura students. <u>Culture, Creativity and Rhetoric</u> Work is taking place to train staff to become better at effective questioning to be able to give clarity to students. Limelights production has been paused but the school will still be taking part in Laurus Live trust-wide performance at the end of the academic year. <u>Leadership and Service</u> This is work in progress to engage the year 7 students with the Electives offer and to then focus on year 8. To increase the community offer outside of school, for example care homes or local schools. <u>Competition and Physical Endeavour</u> Student Voice to be sought from an identified group of students. Q – TG asked as Link Governors what this role would entail with regards to linking with the priority? A – This would be to visit school once a term, meet with the SLT Lead, and see how it is implemented and working in school.	
3	Governor Monitoring	Finance update	Governors reviewed the Management Accounts to 31st December 2025 and were pleased to note the increase in the income for the Sports Centre. Governors were pleased to note the current financial position for the school and had no further questions.	

		Policies	There were no policies for approval at this meeting.	
		School Risk Register	The Risk Register has been reviewed by RH and MF and was circulated prior to the meeting. Governor questions were welcomed. The register contains the key risks and the actions in place to mitigate. Q – Has there been any external input in creating the Risk Register? A – The CFO creates the Trust Risk Register and this is shared with Heads of School to able to review and adapt their own register specific to their setting.	
		Safeguarding and SEND Link Governor updates	<u>SEND</u> L Burridge will give an update at the next meeting. <u>Safeguarding</u> MF updated Governors on the two link visits to school this academic year. The visits are based on the proforma and all aspects are covered during the academic year. SCR check will now be reviewed at each visit.	
4	Governor Development	Review Trust Training Plan	Governor attention was drawn to the mandatory training modules. Compulsory training includes: GDPR, Prevent, Safeguarding and Cybersecurity. Governors were updated as to their individual training record and are asked to complete the outstanding training as soon as possible. Individual reminders were given at the meeting.	All
		Minute any training undertaken by Governors since the last meeting	Upon completion of the training modules Governors are reminded to send their certificates to the Clerk for retention.	All
5	Community Engagement	Stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder engagement is increasing ongoing. The school now has Eco Warriors. Bulb planting will be taking place in the local area with further events planned in the future.	

6	AOB		Questions raised by TG prior to the meeting were addressed and MF thanked TG for sending the questions in advance. Q – Is there a policy on the level of feedback which should be provided by teachers to students and parents? A – There are 3 KASH reports issued each year and one parents evening which are all opportunities for feedback. Each department has a marking policy and the HoD makes the staff aware of the expectations. Feedback is also given in the form of written or as whole class feedback. Q – Why is there inconsistency from staff regarding mobile phones? A – All staff have the same approach but this is an issue for some students who regularly access their phones in school, and for this we issue sanctions. Q – What is the policy on staff members phones in school, and are supply teachers aware of the expectations? A – Mobile phones and them not being used in school is part of the safeguarding induction, both for school staff and supply. The only staff who have access to a mobile phone during the school day is PE staff for first aid. We will review our staff policy to ensure that it is specifically clear. Q – Have efforts been made to obtain a copy of the recommendations made following the report into the Willgoose case? A – We have seen the recommendations for schools. As part of the Stockport Fair Access Protocols we readily share information with other schools and we all do this freely together. Issues could arise when students are transferring from another LA. Schools have 5 days to offer a place and wait for safeguarding information. We are all aware that safeguarding is above everything. Q – Has there been knife awareness training done in school for staff and students? A – Yes there has.	
7	Meeting Dates:	To note	Monday 15th June 2026 at 4.45pm Please inform the Clerk as far in advance as possible if you are unable to attend a meeting.	

Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes
Governors received a presentation on Behaviour and SEND
C Jolley was welcomed to her first meeting as newly appointed Parent Governor
Governors reviewed the Trust Board updates from the October and December meetings
Head of School report was reviewed, including the outcomes from the BeWell survey
School Development Plan was reviewed
Management accounts from December 2025 were reviewed
Governors reviewed the School Risk Register

Meeting closed at 6.40pm



M Farrar
Chair of Academy Committee
15.06.2026