



ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday 3rd March 2025

Time: 4.45pm

Venue: Priestnall School

Clerk: N Burgess

Present: T Clarey, H Eckhardt, M Farrar, L Burrige, E Warrington, R Howarth, J Ledger and K McKnight

| Action | Initials |
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| Governors are asked to report any changes in their register of business interests to the Clerk | All |
| Update on the application of a prospective Governor to join this committee | MF |
| AHT with responsibility for Attendance to be invited to the next AC meeting | RH |
| To send any comment on the Risk Register to Head of School | All |
| Complete mandatory training modules before the next meeting | All |
| Clerk to circulate a reminder of the links to the training | NB |
| To send completed training certificates to the Clerk for retention | All |

Agenda – Part 1-

| Category | Item | Notes | Action |
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| 1 | Governance Arrangements | <p>D Jones and K Smith attended to present to Governors the maths curriculum and pedagogy taught at Priestnall.</p> <p>Maths is taught to enable the students to think mathematically and to understand the structure behind Maths. It is not enough to just be learning to pass an examination.</p> <p>Governors were shown the 5-year curriculum overview. Each year begins with a different theme of numbers and the ideas are embedded in every lesson for the rest of the year. The area model is taught in KS2 and this is reverted back to in year 7.</p> <p>Q- Do you find most children understand this way of working? A – It is a low demand model in terms of cognitive load, and so is accessible for all.</p> <p>Bar model and ratio tables are taught from year 7. From</p> | |

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| | | <p>year 9 the bar becomes a double line. 40% of the national curriculum is covered by the bar model and ratio table. Students choose the tool that meets their needs, but will be exposed to others. Students sometimes will feel more comfortable in using the bar model in some situations and a ratio table in others. It was also noted that the same approach was also being adopted in Science, to deepen the understanding of the students. This way of learning allows the students to be on a different journey to get the same answer.</p> <p>Directed numbers are taught by the witches cauldron method. This encourages the students to think mathematically and to reason and justify the answer. This reframes what success is and explains their thinking.</p> <p>An information evening for parents is held in year 7. This includes the difference in Maths from primary school, how Maths is taught now, and the chance to view some taster lessons.</p> <p>Q – How long has this been embedded in the other schools in the Trust? A – This model has been taught for a number of years in the other Trust schools, and this is the second year at Priestnall, it is starting to become embedded and is non-negotiable.</p> <p>Q – How was the transition with staff? A – It was taught last year in years 7-9, but was only compulsory in year 7, although most chose to teach this way. It is in transition through the older year groups. Maths staff are working closely with Maths Hub. Numeracy specialists meet 3-4 times per year.</p> <p>D Jones also commented he was a facilitator for the Stockport Heads of Maths working group. Every member of staff is on a North West One group. It was noted that different teachers have a different style, which is essential, but are all teaching in the same way.</p> <p>Governors offered their thanks to D Jones and K Smith for the very informative presentation.</p> | |
| | Apologies | There were no apologies to record for this meeting. | |
| | AOB items | There were no other items of business to raise which were not covered in the agenda for this meeting. | |
| | Declarations of interest in any | There were no declarations of interest made in any of the agenda items. | |

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| | | of the agenda items | | |
| | | Register on Business Interests | Governors were asked to report any changes in their record to the Clerk. | All |
| | | Code of Conduct | New Governor J Ledger confirmed they <u>agreed</u> to adhere to the code of Conduct. | |
| | | Minutes of previous meeting | <p>Minutes of the meeting held 30th September 2024 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update on Recruitment will be given as part of this meeting • Governors are invited to the Dance Showcase on 2nd April, to the opening event for Club Priestnall, and to the Laurus Live Showcase in July • Governors are reminded to complete the mandatory training models • Advisory group meeting did not take place due to RA leaving the Academy Committee. | |
| | | Membership: Recruitment Update/Succession Planning | <p>J Ledger was welcomed to his first meeting as newly appointed Co-opted Governor.</p> <p>R Arthern has now stepped down from the Academy Committee due to work commitments. S Jhanji has been appointed as Staff Governor. A Parent Governor election will be held in the summer term.</p> <p>R Howarth and M Farrar will be speaking to somebody who has submitted an application to be a Co-opted Governor in the coming weeks and will update Governors at the next meeting.</p> | MF |
| | | Link Governor roles | <p>Curriculum links to the subject areas, linked to Cornerstones are being appointed to. This will be revisited at future meetings as the AC grows. The current Link Governor roles:</p> <p>Safeguarding – M Farrar SEND – L Burrige Pupil Premium – K McKnight Leadership and Service – to be appointed Academic Aspiration – Full AC responsibility Culture Creativity and Rhetoric – J Ledger Competition and Physical Endeavour – to be appointed</p> | |

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| | | Scheme of Delegation | <p>The Scheme of Delegation was received by Governors and there are no material changes since the last meeting.</p> <p>Governors had no further questions.</p> | |
| | | Trust Board updates | <p>Governors received the reports for the Trust Board meetings in October 2024 and December 2024.</p> <p>Governors had no further questions.</p> | |

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| 2 | School Performance & Accountability | Review Head of School report | <p>Governors reviewed the Head of School report, including Electives participation, Behaviour, Attendance and Pupil Premium.</p> <p>Governors were pleased to note that there had been no permanent exclusions issued this academic year.</p> <p>Q – With regards to Pupil Premium, in terms of the spend, is this low as it is done at the end of the year? A – The spend is driven by the need for our students, but this is done at different times of the year.</p> <p>Q – For suspensions, is the number in year groups as you would expect? A – The numbers are very cohort specific. Some of the same students in each year group make up the majority of suspensions. Leaders are very happy with the reduction in suspensions. There are other options available, for example managed transfers to another school.</p> <p>Q – Do you try managed transfers to another Trust schools? A – Potentially, there is an agreement in Stockport to try a managed transfer to another Stockport school, and there have been some successes. There has also been cases where a student has failed a managed transfer, but has come back to Priestnall and done incredibly well.</p> <p>Governors were informed Priestnall has the lowest number of suspensions of the Trust schools. It was also noted that on a week-by-week basis, in November 2023 there had been 18 suspensions issued, but in this academic year 7 had been the highest, and some weeks there were none at all. Suspensions are a third lower than last year.</p> <p>Q – How has the reduction in suspensions been possible? A – The behaviour is now embedded and much improved. Students can access the SSC for de-escalation space and have pastoral support and HOY support. Staff are very happy with the direction behaviour is moving.</p> <p>Q – SEN support suspensions repeated is higher, is this legacy cases? A – This is a normal percentage given the emotional regulation of the student. The number is lower than last year and is also significantly below the national average. It is also worth noting that at Priestnall the number of students who have an EHCP is twice the national</p> |
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| | | | <p>average.</p> <p>Q – Is there still an area you need to work on? A – There are no areas of weakness. Most suspensions day to day are low. Most are given for one off incidents. The second highest reason for suspensions is for physical assaults. There is work to do done with key students regarding fights. We will be offering targeted workshops for students as a follow up to suspension.</p> <p>Q – Last year unauthorised absence was recorded as 11.5%, why is there no figure recorded for this year to date? A – We now know better where our students are. We are working hard with students who are not engaging and this has meant alternative provision for some. We are also clear in that we do not authorise non-attendance.</p> <p>Q – Do you monitor severe absence? A – Yes we do. There are bespoke packages for the students we are working with. For the next meeting of this committee we will ask the Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance to present to you.</p> <p>Q – How many severely absence do you have? A – 4.2% to the end of February.</p> <p>Q – Is this figure throughout all year groups? A – It is primarily in year 11. We are spotting patterns early and are putting support in place.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the most recent headline prediction data.</p> <p>Q – Are the students where you would like them to be? A –We want to improve year on year. Staff are getting better in assessing where the students are up to. The data presented relates back to the mock examinations done in December. We will have further data to review once the next round of mocks are completed this week.</p> <p>Students have been very good in attending the power hours offered. Attendance at targeted intervention has also been very good and can really make a difference to our students. Power Hours are open to all students.</p> <p>We now have more capacity within the team due to the House system. Attainment is the priority and the House system is more than just competitions and points. Heads of House speak with students, and liaise with parents,</p> | RH |
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| | | | <p>they are mentors for our students.</p> <p>We have held the main parents evening for year 11, but have also done a targeted intervention evening. This included SLT, Heads of English and Maths, and members of the Pastoral Team, to provide focussed wrap around interventions.</p> <p>Q – In terms of Pupil Premium are you happy with the direction of closing the gap? A The gap is reducing from -0.8 to -0.3. We are continuing interventions and ensuring student attendance. We are working hard and doing all we can to close the gap.</p> <p>We have our year 11 Study Hub, where students can work on specific areas before they go home should they wish. We are targeting year 10 PP next and looking at potentially bringing in a KS3 PP&R club. PP students are a very high priority.</p> | |
| 3 | Governor Monitoring | <p>Finance update including pupil numbers, benchmarking and value for money</p> | <p>Governors received the budget for 2024-2025.</p> <p>It was noted that the budget is difficult at present, and work is continuous in monitoring and ensuring efficiencies. Attention was drawn to catering costs. The canteen is currently running at a loss, and will therefore be moving over to Dolce who are the Trust wide provider.</p> <p>The school is now fully staffed with LSAs and this should significantly improve the supply agency costs. Work is being done to become more energy efficient and reduce costs.</p> <p>Q – Can you raise income in hiring out the sports facilities? A – Yes we can, the 3G pitch is a good investment and will bring in additional income, alongside the refurbished facilities in the Sports Centre.</p> <p>Q – Has there been any increase in per pupil funding? A – There has been no increase.</p> <p>The Finance team are closely monitoring the budget. We are 5/12 through the year and links are being told to ensure their allocated budget lasts the whole financial year.</p> <p>Governors had no further questions relating to the budget.</p> | |

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| | | Policies – undertake school level reviews | Governors approved the following policies: Safeguarding policy Biometrics policy | |
| | | School Risk Register | The draft Risk Register was circulated prior to the meeting. Governors are asked to send any comments or questions to RH. The Risk Register will then be reviewed by RH and MF. Governors were pleased to see the risks recorded and the mitigations in place. | All |
| | | Safeguarding and SEND Link Governor updates | MF confirmed a safeguarding link visit had been arranged for the week following this meeting. LB has submitted a SEND link visit proforma for the Autumn term, and will be completing the next visit this half term. There is lots of work going on in school, which LB had found very reassuring. RH commented that there were plans to expand the Resource Base in school. | |
| 4 | Governor Development | Review Trust Training Plan | Governor's attention was drawn to the revised training area for Governors. Compulsory training includes GDPR, Prevent, Safeguarding and Cybersecurity. Governors are asked to complete the training by the end of the year and to send copies of their certificates to the Clerk. The clerk will circulate a reminder of the training links. | All NB |
| | | Minute any training undertaken by Governors since the last meeting | Governors are reminded to send their completed certificates to the Clerk for retention. | All |
| 5 | Community Engagement | Stakeholder engagement | There was no update for this meeting. | |
| 6 | AOB | | There were no other items of business to raise at this meeting. | |

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| 7 | Meeting Dates: | To note | Monday 16 th June 2025 at 4.45pm Please inform the Clerk as far in advance as possible if you are unable to attend a meeting. | |
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| Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes | | | | |
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| Governors received a presentation on Maths at Priestnall School | | | | |
| Link Governor roles were reviewed and allocated | | | | |
| Governors reviewed the Head of School report, including behaviour, attendance and outcomes | | | | |
| Governors received and reviewed the management accounts | | | | |
| Governors approved the Safeguarding the Biometrics policies | | | | |
| School Risk Register was received | | | | |

Meeting closed at 6.15pm



Mark Farrar
Chair of Academy Committee
16.06.2025