



ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday 16th June 2025

Time: 4.45pm

Venue: Priestnall School

Clerk: N Burgess

Present: L Burridge, S Jhanji, M Farrar, K McKnight, T Clarey, R Howarth, H Eckhardt, J Ledger, T Gilbert and L Knowles

Action	Initials
Governors are asked to inform the Clerk of any changes to their register of business interests	All
Parent Governor election will be held in the Autumn Term	RH
Attendance review and case studies for the next meeting	RH
To complete the four mandatory training modules before the end of the academic year	All
Newly appointed Governors are asked to review the training offer	All
To send completed training certificates to the Clerk	All
To send updated training completed to the Chair of Academy Committee	NB

Agenda – Part 1-

Category	Item	Notes	Action
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies were received and accepted from E Warrington.	
		AOB items	
		Declarations of interest in any of the agenda items	
		Register on Business Interests	All
		Code of Conduct	
		Minutes of the meeting held 3 rd March 2025 were <u>approved</u> as an accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising and all follow up actions	

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			were completed.	
		Membership: Recruitment Update/Succession Planning	S Jhanji was welcomed to the meeting as newly appointed Staff Governor. L Knowles and T Gilbert were welcomed as newly appointed Co-opted Governors. A Parent Governor election will be held in the Autumn term. K McKnight informed Governors that she would be stepping down as a Governor following this meeting. Governors offered thanks to KMc for her work and commitment to the Academy Committee and the school.	RH
		Link Governor roles	The following Link Governor roles were confirmed: 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 Leadership and Service – to be appointed	
		Scheme of Delegation	There were no changes to note to the Scheme of Delegation.	
		Trust Board updates	Governors reviewed the Trust Board report from the February 2025 meeting. Q – Which primary school will be joining the Trust in September? A – Norris Bank. Governors had no further questions on the report and noted they could read the full minutes of the meeting on the Trust website.	

2	School Performance & Accountability	Review Head of School report	Governors reviewed the Head of School Report, which was circulated prior to the meeting, and questions were invited. Q – There has been a big increase in the offer of Electives to students. How does this work in terms of finding time, space and resources? A – There are lots offered at lunchtime and after school. Our staff are keen to offer the opportunities for the students, and we have been able to increase the offer following the completion of the sports facilities renovations. Some Electives are only offered termly and are on a rotation. Governors were pleased to note the breadth of the opportunities available to students. RH commented that registers of attendance at Electives were taken and that participation analysis had been done. Participation rates are good but there is still work to be done. Governors were informed that 143 students were involved in the year 10 DofE, and that a large number of staff had volunteered their time for this to take place. In terms of trips and visits, participation in year 7 is low, but this increases in year 8 due to the MFL trips. Trips to France and Spain tie in with the students MFL GCSE subject. <u>Behaviour</u> Behaviour in school is improved and is now being embedded in the community. Suspensions are lower due to the implementation of the Behaviour Policy. Analysis of C codes has been completed. For a significant number of students receiving a C2 is a deterrent, and only a small number of students have above a C2 recorded. Whilst Leaders are pleased with the reduction in suspensions there is still work to be done. The main reason for suspensions is persistent disruptive behaviour, which is in line with the national picture. Previously the highest number of suspensions were for physical assault and verbal abuse. RHO commented that there had been one permanent exclusion this academic year. <u>Attendance</u> Attendance is a huge priority for Leaders, and is the first level of safeguarding. Attendance is currently tracking at
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			92.8%, which is just above national average, but this is definitely something which Leaders wish to improve on. It was noted that staff are working hard to improve attendance and are monitoring individual cases closely. Attendance of PP students in a priority. Governors reviewed attendance by week, in comparison to 2023-2024 data. It was noted there had been a dip in attendance in week 4 for both years, and that work was being done to analyse any potential trends. It was noted that DfE were now providing year 6 attendance data to schools, which would be useful in monitoring attendance on arrival. Q – What does transition look like? A – For SEND students there are additional visits to school, we want students to be able to know that they feel safe in school, and ensure that want to be here. T Gilbert arrived at the meeting at this point. Q – It is encouraging to see a drop in persistent absence, what work has been done to achieve this? A – We now do first day calling, which is proving effective, but there is still work to be done ongoing. Q – In terms of severe absence, can you see over a trend? A – We are doing a lot of work as part of our safeguarding of the students, these are all very individual cases, and we are also completing home visits. It is a small number of students and we are doing everything we can for them. We do not authorise any absence until we have spoken to a parent/carer. Q – Would it be possible to have more of a breakdown, week by week, particularly for SEND? A – We can look at this in more detail at ACM1 in the Autumn term. Attendance is a priority for all staff here at school. It may be possible to look at some anonymised cases studies. Governors had no further questions on the Head of School Report.	RH
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		Review School Development Plan The School Development Plan will now be a 3-year plan. Governors noted the updated draft plan, which included ambitions, what will success look like, and actions. Individual departments have their own plans, which feed into the SDP to inform the priorities. Governors noted the aspirational target of 96% for whole school attendance. It was discussed that this was very aspirational and a significant amount of work will be done to work towards this. The SDP will be reviewed throughout the academic year, and will be RAG rated to be able to see progress made and to prioritise actions. <u>Academic Aspiration</u> Leaders will continue to monitor closely and report back to Governors via the SDP reviews. <u>Culture, Creativity and Rhetoric</u> The SDP looks at what is happening at department level, and what is accessible to the students, for example Careers. Work is taking place on Cicero and oracy within lessons. <u>Leadership and Service</u> Student volunteering is an area of focus and to create opportunities. Year 10 DofE is a good offer for the students and take up is good. There is work to be done to engage with the local community, for example with local care homes. <u>Competition and Physical Endeavour</u> The aim is to increase the number of intra school and departmental competitions for students to be able to participate in. There had recently been a day held in school for House Competitions, which had been a very good day for students. <u>Professional Learning</u> There has been a big journey for staff around PL. 3 staff are currently undertaking their Masters qualification. Voluntary PL participation has increased. Action Research Community (ARC) participation has been well received by the majority of staff. Q – How many ECTs do you have at school? A – Currently there are 10.	
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			Q – For FPL how do you encourage staff to participate? A – Some departments lead by example, and this is driven by the Subject Leader. Uptake does depend on the particular subject which is on offer. Our staff freely give up their time before the school day starts in order to participate. Some weeks attendance is excellent, and others less so, this is dependent on the topic. ARC is a book sign up which is read and then reviewed as a group. The outcomes of the learning can then be implemented in the class room. Department meetings are now not simply about departmental business. Wednesday afternoon unit 6 is used to provide subject specific pedagogy. Time is allocated specifically in the calendar for Teaching and Learning overview. Q – In terms of the goal of students attending 2 Electives per week, how likely is this to achieve? A – It is highly aspirational to work towards. There is no time built into the timetable for Electives, and all are held at lunchtime or after school. We will start with where we would wish them to be, and aspire to do more. We aim to offer as many varied opportunities as we can to enable students to be able to try something new. We will update at future meetings ongoing.	
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3	Governor Monitoring	Finance update including pupil numbers, benchmarking and value for money	Governors reviewed the Management Accounts to 31st March 2025 and questions were invited. Q – Looking at the delegated budget and supply costs, was this planned supply or sickness cover? A – A significant amount was for LSA cover as this is an area we found to be difficult to recruit to. We do not have lots of planned supply moving forward, this is related to both cost and to student experience. One area of challenge was covering staff absence for DofE. There were 8 staff out of school at the time. Finances are looking better than initially thought, but there is still the unknown of the pay awards. Leaders have looked closely at every resignation to see if there needs to be a like for like replacement appointment. There have needed to be some difficult decisions made and work is ongoing. Q – Do you have any vacancies due to resignations at present? A – We have a vacancy for a Science teacher, which we are looking to appoint at present. We have a good field of applications for our Exams and Data post. Q – Can you raise any additional income from the sports facilities? A – This is overseen by R Clare who is the Trust Director responsible for sports facilities across the Trust. There are already some regular letting in place and this will increase over time. Q – How have the changes to PP funding affected? A – We are working hard to provide our students with what they specifically need. Q – Now that Ever 6 has gone, has this had a negative impact? A – We always use income carefully.	
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		Policies – undertake school level reviews	Governors <u>approved</u> the following policies: Attendance Policy School Uniform Policy Mobile Phone Policy Behaviour Policy Q – In terms of the Mobile Phone Policy, is there no restrictions on phones on school trips? A – This is something which has been discussed, but some trips would require access to a mobile phone for security and safeguarding. It is something we could look at in the future on an individual trip basis.	
		Ensure curriculum policies are in line with statutory guidance	RH, as Head of School, confirmed the school curriculum policies are in place in line with statutory guidance.	
		Safeguarding and SEND Link Governor updates	<u>SEND</u> LB had made a Link Visit to school on 31st March, and was planning a further visit before the end of term. LB had been impressed with what she had seen on the first visit. There were good systems in place for the benefit of the students. <u>Safeguarding</u> MF had made a Link Visit to school 14th March, and had a further visit scheduled for the week following this meeting. Absence was discussed in detail and the reasons behind this. It was noted there had been a definite change in the perception of attendance following the pandemic. HOY joined the visit and detailed the work being done by the Pastoral Team to constantly monitor attendance.	
4	Governor Development	Review Trust Training Plan	Governors are asked to complete the four mandatory training modules before the end of the academic year. New Governors were informed of the training page on the Laurus Institute Sharepoint, which can be accessed via the link in the agenda. There are additional modules for new Governors to complete.	All All

		Minute any training undertaken by Governors since the last meeting	There was no training to record for this meeting. Governors are asked to send their completed certificates to the Clerk for retention. The Clerk will provide an update on training to MF.	All NB
5	Community Engagement	Stakeholder engagement	There were no new updates for this meeting.	
6	AOB		Governors were informed that H Eckhardt would be leaving the school at the end of the academic year to take up the post as a Head of School outside of the Trust. Governors offered their congratulations to HE and thanks for the continued support of the school and the Academy Committee.	
7	Meeting Dates:	To note	Monday 29th September 2025 at 4.45pm Monday 2nd March 2026 at 4.45pm Monday 15th June 2026 at 4.45pm	

Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes

3 new Governors were welcomed to the meeting, and KMc stepped down from the Academy Committee, effective from the end of the academic year

Link Governor roles were confirmed

Governors received the Trust Board update from the February meeting

Governors reviewed the Head of School Report

Updated 3-year School Development Plan was reviewed

Governors reviewed the Management Accounts

Governors approved 4 school level policies

Head of School confirmed curriculum policies are in line with statutory guidance

SEND and Safeguarding Link Governors gave verbal updates of their visits to school

Meeting closed at 5.50pm



Dr Mark Farrar
Chair of Academy Committee
29.09.2025