

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF SOUTHGATE SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board held at 5.30 pm at the school on Wednesday 11 December 2024.

PRESENT

Mr R Baines (Chair), Ms R Cranmer (Head Teacher), Mr M Cleve, Mrs L Drye (part), Mr M Holland, Mrs W May, Mrs S Norman, Mrs J Wittrick

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs S Dunn (Minute Clerk)

Ms K Emptage (Interim Deputy Head Teacher)

Ms J Hallas (School Business Manager) – part

The meeting opened at 6:00 pm

	Item	Minutes	Action
27.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Apologies for absence had been received from Ms C Grey, Ms L Jackson (Associate Governor), Mr C McCombe and Ms A Morris (with consent). A declaration of interest was received from Mr Holland. Mr Holland's wife would be working with the school on Carry My Story.	
24.	NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS	The following matter would be raised under Any Other Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calming rooms	
25.	REPRESENTATION	(a) <u>Appointment of a Co-opted Governor</u> It was agreed that the vacancy would be discussed at the next Standards and Effectiveness Committee meeting and the Committee would identify the skills needed from a new Governor.	

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		<p>(b) <u>Appointment of new Head Teacher</u></p> <p>Mr Baines, on behalf of Governors, congratulated Ms Cranmer on her appointment as permanent Head Teacher. He thanked the school staff for facilitating the recruitment process and Ms J Nellis (KLP) and Governors for their support. He stated that the other candidate had been a very strong contender and feedback had been provided.</p> <p>Mr Cleve thanked Mr Baines and Mr Holland for their work on the recruitment.</p>	
26.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2024	RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.	
27.	MATTERS ARISING	<p>(a) <u>Representation (Minute 4 refers)</u> The Governors' Skills Matrix would be discussed at the next Standards and Effectiveness Committee meeting.</p> <p>(b) <u>Recruitment and Selection Process for New Head Teacher (Minute 6 refers)</u> The EduCare training link had been sent to Governors.</p> <p>The KLP had been given access to the application system and MS Teams.</p> <p>(c) <u>Review of Committees (Minute 7 refers)</u> The Head Teacher's Performance Management meeting had been arranged for 17 December 2024. The KLP had been invited to attend the meeting.</p> <p>(d) <u>Matters Arising (Minute 11 (d) refers)</u> Ms Emptage reported that she had contacted Term Time Wear to explain how their shop was not inclusive for all pupils. She had negotiated that the supplier would provide a sample of every piece of uniform (except blazers) in every size to the school to show to parents and allow pupils to try them on.</p> <p>Q: Where will the samples be stored? A: This has still to be agreed.</p> <p>(e) <u>Financial Management and Monitoring (Minute 14 refers)</u> The Pupil Premium and Sports Premium Reports had been shared with Governors.</p>	

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		<p>(f) <u>Policies Requiring an Annual Review by the Full Governing Board (Minute 18 refers)</u> The Kirklees Model Appraisal Policy 2024 had been shared with Governors.</p> <p>The Wellbeing Strategy had been shared with Governors.</p> <p>(g) <u>Dates of Future Meetings and Possible Agenda Items (Minute 21 refers)</u> Dates for future meetings had been shared with Governors. Ms Cranmer asked Governors to note the subsequent changes to dates for the Finance and Resources Committee and Standards and Effectiveness Committee meetings.</p>	
28.	MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2024	<p>As the meeting held on 5 December 2025 had been inquorate, the meeting would need to ratify the decision to appoint the Head Teacher.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Governors agree that the minutes of the meeting are a correct record and support the decision of the Recruitment Panel to appoint Ms Cranmer as Head Teacher at the school.</p> <p>ACTION: The Chair of Governors to write to Ms Cranmer confirming her appointment and agreeing a start date.</p>	Mr Baines
29.	MATTERS ARISING	There were no matters arising.	
30.	REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES	<p><i>Mrs Drye joined the meeting</i></p> <p>(a) <u>Finance and Resources Committee – 11 December 2024</u></p> <p>Ms Hallas provided an update on the matters which had been discussed. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total budget for 2024-25 was £5,158,239 • At Period 7 spending was on track with 57% of the budget accounted for • Changes to pupil funding were under discussion with Kirklees Council; many requests were to increase funding • Changing staff absence insurance provider had resulted in the school paying the equivalent of 18 months premia in the current year. This had not been planned for in the budget and the additional cost would be taken from the contingency 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new broadband provider would need to be sought as Kirklees Council would no longer support the broadband • Investment in curriculum resources to support the SDP were being considered and prioritised • Grants had been applied for funding for the forest area and sensory garden and other sources of funding were being explored • The impact of the reduced level of services provided by the council would make an impact on next year's budget and the number of services commissioned to meet pupils' needs would increase <p>In respect of the catering service provided by Kirklees Council the school had been informed that, due to a system error, meals for KS3 and KS4 pupils had not been billed to the school. The error had been ongoing for a few years. The catering service had requested the school reimburse £21k for the unpaid meals. The school had spoken to Kirklees Finance who advised the school to refuse to reimburse on the grounds that previous years' budgets had been closed down. The Governors discussed the matter and agreed with the advice from Kirklees Finance.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Governors do not agree to the reimbursement to the catering service due to the previous years' budgets having been closed down.</p> <p>Ms Cranmer reported on an issue with fencing. Loss of a hedge on a neighbouring property had resulted in a gap which allowed pupils to abscond. A temporary fence had been installed however this had not made the school grounds secure and the area could not be used by pupils for safety reasons. The FM contractor had visited the school, however the space was still not secure. Another weakness in the fencing had been identified at the front of the school where temporary fencing was still in place. The FM contractor had adjusted the temporary fencing. The school had urged the PPP contractor to prioritise both areas and the matter would be raised at the next Property Meeting on 28 January. It was expected that rectification of the issues would require a contract variation.</p> <p>Q: Can a permanent solution be found for the fencing at the front of the school? A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: Will the permanent solution compromise on height? A: The height would be reduced by around 6".</p>	

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	<p><i>Ms Hallas left the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>Governors suggested that there be a wider review of the school's fencing and its fitness for purpose.</p> <p>Q: Would the same fencing contractor be used as previously? A: It was unclear who the FM contractor would use, however the school's concerns about the contractor would be passed on.</p> <p>(b) <u>Finance and Resources Committee – 21 November 2024</u></p> <p>Draft minutes of the meeting had been produced.</p> <p>(c) <u>Standard and Effectiveness Committee – 21 November 2024</u></p> <p>Draft minutes of the meeting had been produced. Mr Holland provided a verbal report. The main item had been the Kirklees Special Schools Review and other items discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for school places • Ambition to expand provision and support pupils in other schools • The change in Government • Head Teacher recruitment • The DfE's review of exams and exam boards • SDP • The probation process and authority to dismiss • Staffing issues <p>Governors discussed inviting the current Members of Parliament (MPs) to the school to provide them with information about the provision and the issues. It was agreed that any meeting should coincide with an event at the school e.g. arts, to secure better attendance. It was agreed the best time to arrange the meeting would be March/ April 2025.</p> <p>ACTION: Invite local MPs into the school.</p>	<p>Ms Cranmer</p>

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31.	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & MONITORING	This item had been discussed under Reports from Committees (Minute 30 (a) refers).	
32.	HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS	<p>Ms Cranmer provided a written report which had been shared with Governors ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>She invited Governors to support two events which would be held in spring 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Book Day involving a visit from a comic artist – 6 March 2025 • Careers Day – 3 April 2025 <p>(a) <u>Pupil numbers and admissions</u></p> <p>Pupil numbers stood at 183, including 20 pupils at the satellite provision. Two pupils had left since September and a third would be leaving in January 2025.</p> <p>Monthly meetings with the EHCP team (formerly SENDACT) were taking place on admissions for September 2025 and the process had improved. Outreach work was provided by a central team, and the school had made links with that team.</p> <p>Sufficiency of places was still an issue and Ms Cranmer was actively involved in the Kirklees Special School Review.</p> <p>(b) <u>Pupil Profile</u></p> <p>Complexity of need had increased year on year with 20% of pupils with Band A funding and 54% with Band B funding. No pupils had had funding withdrawn/reduced.</p> <p>Pupil mobility was well below national and special schools' data. Whilst KS3 and 4 remained the biggest cohorts, younger children were now joining the school. The boy to girl ratio had continued to widen but was in line with national and special schools' data.</p> <p>54% of pupils were eligible for free school meals, which was higher than national and special schools' data. Governors had received reports on the Pupil Premium strategy and review.</p>	

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		<p>Pupils who were identified as White British had increased whilst pupils from a Minority Ethnic Group had reduced to below the national average.</p> <p>(c) <u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>There was one child on a Child Protection Order, four pupils on a Child in Need Plan, four pupils with a Child in Need respite package, four pupils with a Team Around the Family Plan and four pupils with a Family Support Worker through Early Help. There were nine children who were Looked After and 12 children who are Post-Looked After.</p> <p>DSLs had attended 11 strategy meetings in the last 12 months and five Duty and Advice calls had been made since September.</p> <p>Staff had received an annual safeguarding, medical and equality update on 23 October. Knowledge checks had been carried out with further training provided if required. Activity Support Officers (ASOs) had received training on 3 December. The Governors' Safeguarding and CLA meeting would be held on 12 December. Knowledge and understanding would continue to be checked.</p> <p>(d) <u>Attendance</u></p> <p>Attendance was 91.04%, which was higher than Kirklees, regional and national data. There were 32 pupils classed as persistently absent and these were carefully and individually monitored. Reasons for persistent absence included medical needs, term-time holidays and anxiety.</p> <p>(e) <u>Teaching and Learning</u></p> <p>The new Ensuring a High Quality of Education Policy had been implemented. Coaching had taken place with Senior Leaders, Curriculum Co-ordinators and Subject Leads in developing the Quality Assurance approach. The CPD menu approach had been well received and would continue.</p> <p>The school would be visited on 13 December regarding its application for accreditation for a wellbeing award.</p>

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	<p>(f) <u>Pupil Progress and Attainment</u></p> <p>The majority of pupils were making expected progress. Those who were not were identified as Priority Pupils. Peer moderation had focused on numbers, reading records and ILPs.</p> <p>KS4 accreditations had been planned with new entry levels subjects added such as GCSE Maths and Functional Skills Maths. BTEC qualifications would continue and a new qualification, AQA Unit Award in Plumbing, had been introduced through a new external partner.</p> <p>(g) <u>Behaviour and Attitudes</u></p> <p>The new A Relational Approach to Behaviour Policy had been implemented. Data from the autumn term would be collated and analysed in the spring term. The number of outstanding days was increasing and Stage 3 Physical Interventions were lower than last year.</p> <p>The Intervention and Pastoral Team were working more closely with the Therapy Team to address pupil need more holistically.</p> <p>Discrimination incidents had increased from the previous year but were attributable to a small group of pupils and were anxiety related. Incidents of behaviour were low and similar to last year.</p> <p>There were four Team Teach Tutors working in the school who had delivered a number of courses to staff and these had gone well. Workshops were offered to parents and carers on understanding behaviour as communication and offering strategies for challenging behaviours.</p> <p>(h) <u>Staffing</u></p> <p>Two new teachers had started in September and were doing well. Six ETAs had also started in September with further appointments of ETAs, ASOs and Personal Care staff had been made. A new cover supervisor had also been recruited.</p>	

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		<p>Recruitment remained a challenge but vacancies had reduced and the school had improved its range of HR skills and systems. To increase retention the school offered CPD opportunities and would try to assist staff with difficulties. A new Equality Diversity and Inclusion Forum had been set up in response to the annual staff survey.</p> <p>(i) <u>School Self Evaluation (SEF) and School Development Plan (SDP)</u></p> <p>The KLP had provided a positive response on the SDP which had been shared with Governors. The Standards and Effectiveness Committee had scrutinised the action plans under A2, C1 and C2 at the meeting on 21 November.</p> <p>The SEF had been reformatted to show the actions worked on and would be updated throughout the year.</p> <p>(j) <u>Enrichment and Opportunities</u></p> <p>There had been a focus on providing more educational visits and community experiences for pupils. Governors noted and were impressed by the range of opportunities that had been provided both outside and inside school.</p> <p>(k) <u>Things to Celebrate</u></p> <p>A pupil had won the SENSE Charity Young Person of the Year Award and had featured on television and in the press.</p> <p>Governors noted that the school had received several positive comments and feedback from a wide range of sources e.g. parents, student placements and social work professionals. Governors offered their own positive experiences of the school.</p> <p>Q: Do parents get to see the school's behaviour analysis of their child? A: The analysis was not done to inform parents but to assist the school in monitoring the provision and determine what needed to be done for a child. There was a concern that sharing the data may cause parental anxiety. Behaviour was discussed with parents and at EHCP reviews.</p>	

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		Governors thanked Ms Cranmer for the report.	
33.	SAFEGUARDING	This item had been discussed under the Head Teacher's Report (Minute 32 (c) refers).	
34.	POLICIES FOR REVIEW/APPROVAL	<p>(a) <u>Staff Appraisal Policy and Teacher Appraisal Policy</u></p> <p>The policies had been based on the Kirklees Model policy and had been shared with Governors.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Governors approve the Staff Appraisal Policy and Teacher Appraisal Policy.</p> <p>(b) <u>Wellbeing Strategy</u></p> <p>The strategy had been shared with Governors.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Governors approve the Wellbeing Strategy.</p> <p>(c) <u>Pupil Premium</u></p> <p>The documents had been shared with Governors. Mr Baines had provided positive feedback to the proposals and costings and had suggested that two sections could be simplified.</p> <p>ACTION: Review Pupil Premium report to simplify the text.</p>	Ms Emptage
35.	TEACHERS PAY AND CONDITIONS PROPOSALS – SEPTEMBER 2024/25	<p>RESOLVED: That Governors approve the Kirklees Model Teacher Pay Policy 2024 which would break the link between performance and pay.</p> <p>The Pay Committee had met on 14 November 2024 and had reviewed the pay of 20 members of staff.</p>	
36.	GOVERNOR TRAINING & GOVERNOR VISITS	<p>The following Governor visits were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Holland – Safer Recruitment Training, comic artist visit, safeguarding training. He would be attending a Safeguarding/Looked After Children and Attendance meetings before the end of term 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Baines – Head Teacher Recruitment, Pay Committee meeting, meetings with the Head Teacher • Mr Cleve – Halloween disco, parents' evening, Head Teacher recruitment, Christmas performance, Wonderdome • Ms Jackson – Maths and curriculum visit, Safer Recruitment training, coffee morning, Christmas performance • Mrs Wittrick – Parents' evening, Halloween disco 	
37.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	<p>(a) <u>Calming Rooms</u></p> <p>Governors had noted the recent national news story regarding the use of calming rooms at a school in London and asked the Head Teacher for assurance on the procedures used by the school. Governors queried if the school should respond to the news story by sharing its procedure with parents to be open and give reassurance.</p> <p>Ms Cranmer summarised key points which applied to any Personal Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior staff were involved • The Pastoral Team were well trained • Staff were not afraid to challenge each other • The school had a reflective culture – “What could we have done better?” • A restorative approach was used with pupils • There was dialogue with parents and carers • Skilled staff were available to train other staff and identify good and bad practice • Staff were self-aware and knew when to step away and let others take over <p>The quiet rooms were located around the school and were visible; however the child's dignity was still retained. The doors had vision panels and when in use there would also be a member of staff outside the room. On call staff were available to assist.</p> <p>Q: A child would not be left in a room for six hours, like the news article?</p> <p>A: No. A child is not left alone in a room unless they specifically request it. There would always be someone outside the room. The rooms are sparsely furnished but equipment would be taken into the room to help the child regulate based on their individual needs. Some children take themselves to a quiet room to self-regulate.</p>	

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		<p>Q: Can Governors check the school's documentation? A: Yes, Governors are welcome to come into school and see the system, approaches and processes.</p> <p>Q: What percentage of pupils cannot verbalise if something happened to them that they did not like? A: Pupils demonstrate unhappiness in many ways and the school is mindful of this in looking for patterns in behaviour.</p> <p>Q: Did any parents raise the news article with the school? A: No.</p>	
38.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS	RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the governing board be held at 5.30 pm at the school on Wednesday 5 February 2025.	
39.	AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY	RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the school, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.	

Meeting closed at 8.25 pm.