

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF SOUTHGATE SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board held at 5.30 pm at the school on Wednesday 21 May 2025.

PRESENT

Mr R Baines (Chair), Ms R Cranmer (Head Teacher), Mr M Cleve, Mr M Holland (Vice-Chair), Ms L Jackson (Associate Member) Mrs W May, Ms A Morris (remotely), Mrs J Wittrick.

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms S Dunn (Minute Clerk)
 Ms K Emptage (Deputy Head Teacher)
 Ms J Hallas (School Business Manager) – part

	Item	Minutes	Action
78.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Drye (consent), Mr C McCombe (consent) and Mrs S Norman (consent). There were no declarations of interest.	
79.	NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS	The following matter would to be raised under Any Other Business: • Kirklees Governor Clerking Service offer <i>Mrs May joined the meeting at this point</i>	
80.	REPRESENTATION	<u>Appointment of Co-opted Governors</u> It was agreed that this item would be discussed later in the meeting (Minute 91 refers).	
81.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2025	RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the following amendment: Minute 66 (b): Head Teacher's Report: reference to "Visual Artist" to be replaced with "Comic Arts".	

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82.	MATTERS ARISING	<p>(a) <u>Financial Management and Monitoring (Minute 67 refers)</u></p> <p>Ms Hallas confirmed that the SFVS had been submitted to Kirklees Council.</p> <p>Ms Hallas confirmed that the graph had been circulated to Governors.</p> <p>Options for staff insurance and finance reporting had been discussed at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 12 May 2025.</p> <p>(b) <u>Head Teacher's Report (Minute 69 refers)</u></p> <p>The date for the Councillor visits had been re-arranged to 10 June 2025 as the Councillors had been unable to attend</p> <p>The actual data on pupils with severe absences had been shared with Governors after the meeting.</p> <p>The Governors' Action Plan would be discussed later in the meeting (Minute 91 refers).</p> <p>(c) <u>Policies for Review/Approval (Minute 72 refers)</u></p> <p>A minor amendment had been made to the Behaviour Policy and it was now complete.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Governors approve the Behaviour Policy.</p>	
83.	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & MONITORING	<p>(a) <u>Finance and Resources Committee – 12 May 2025</u></p> <p>The Finance and Resources Committee had met on 12 May 2025. Minutes of the meeting have been shared with Governors.</p> <p>Ms Hallas presented a summary of the matters discussed which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed analysis of the previous year's budget which had been placed on SharePoint for Governors to view - Spending over the last 12 months had been consistent in many areas; however, supplies and services expenditure fluctuated the most - The aim was to better match expenditure with the income received, for example staffing costs and insurance claim monies. Spreadsheets had been created to help with this 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some expenditure had been carried forward from the previous budget amounting to £50-£60k in total. This expenditure was committed - The funding for the sensory garden had also been carried forward - The B3 for 2025/2026 had been reviewed. Increases in staff costs, transport, premises and supplies and services had been necessary. The budget for agency costs had been reduced - Budget areas had been RAG rated for monitoring purposes. Higher risk areas included staff insurance, mileage, taxi fares, agency staffing and the personalised curriculum - The allocation for 2025/2026 was £5,371,434 which included £742,332 of income and £27,244 carry forward. There would be a contingency of £166,503 - Financial reports would be prepared on months 3, 6, 9 and 12 which would be discussed at the Finance and Resources Committee meetings <p>Q. What provision has been included in the budget for staff pay increases?</p> <p>A. 3% as suggested by Kirklees Council. It is understood that some staff are being balloted for industrial action. Last year grants from Kirklees Council covered the increased costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The staff absence insurance policy would be monitored for a further year. Last year claims had been cautiously submitted but the policy would be more widely used this year. The wellbeing packages and other services available with the policy had been accessed by staff and had been promptly provided. Governors agreed that the policy gave the school “peace of mind” and withdrawing the cover and losing the wellbeing benefits could send a negative message to staff - An option to create a bank of staff to reduce the need for agency staff had been discussed. Whilst expenditure on agency staff had remained stable over previous years, there was a high risk that spending could increase <p>Q. The recommendation from the Government is that staff pay increases are likely to be 4% and unfunded. Is there a risk to the school if 3% is budgeted for?</p> <p>A. It is a very uncertain situation and there may also be additional funding allocated to cover an increase. This will be re-evaluated when we have the final information.</p> <p>Governors thanked Ms Hallas for the information.</p>	

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		<p>(b) <u>Budget for 2025/2026</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: That Governors approve the budget for 2025/2026.</p> <p>The B3 was signed by the Chair.</p> <p>(c) <u>Friends of Southgate (FOS)</u></p> <p>Ms Cranmer had met with FOS and had discussed finances. FOS would be supporting the sensory garden and forest school. Book bags for all pupils will also be funded by FOS and sent home to parents with a request for a donation to FOS if they are able to contribute.</p> <p>FOS had agreed to purchase the services of Parentkind who would help FOS to relaunch and to be self-sustaining.</p> <p>Ms Hallas was continuing to support FOS with finances and the Chair was assisting with this.</p> <p>(d) <u>Special Schools' Review</u></p> <p>Ms Cranmer provided an update to Governors which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school had been sent a mapping document to complete - Ms Emptage would be leading the school on moderation visits which would start after half-term. This would involve looking at three pupils to confirm if they matched the pathway descriptions and then if the pathway descriptions matched the mapping - There had been no further information provided about funding; however, this was expected after the moderation exercise and it had been proposed that the new funding would be effective from the next financial year. Governors commented that a set budget felt like a sensible approach and should give the school more stability than individual pupil banding <p>Q. Should the school cost up its pathways?</p> <p>A. Yes, however the treatment of buildings, assets and facilities which are unique to each school still needed to be worked through.</p> <p>Q. How many schools will stop accepting high needs pupils?</p> <p>A. This is not clear at the current time.</p>	

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		<p>Q. Within each pathway do the bandings vary a lot? A. This is not clear at the current time.</p> <p>Q. Where are the out of area pupils placed? A. There are several places used by Kirklees Council, for example Camphill Wakefield.</p> <p>(e) <u>Post 16 Provision</u></p> <p>Ms Cranmer was still continuing to push the local authority on this.</p>	
84.	PREMISE UPDATES AND PROGRAMME OF ANY SUMMER WORKS	<p>Ms Hallas reported that the PPP Contractor had provided a list of lifecycle works; however these had predominantly been for the building exterior. The school was disappointed that there had been no provision to replaster some of the classroom walls and other internal works. Kirklees Council's new PPP Contracts Manager had visited the school and had agreed that some internal lifecycle works were needed.</p> <p>The DFC allocation could be used to improve the quiet rooms, redecorate the offices and library and install some fencing. Quotes were being obtained.</p> <p>Q. Does the school pay over the odds if the DFC monies are used to pay the PPP Contractor for works? A. Some works have to be carried out by the PPP Contractor due to contract variations if there are future management and maintenance implications. The school is free to order some works from other contractors, for example the internal doors.</p> <p>Q. Has the school approached Locala for a grant as it would meet its criteria? A. The school looks at all grant options.</p> <p><i>Ms Hallas left the meeting at this point</i></p>	
85.	REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES	<p><u>Finance and Resources Committee</u></p> <p>This item was discussed under Financial Management and Monitoring (Minute 83 (a) refers).</p>	

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86.	HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS	<p>Ms Cranmer provided a verbal report to Governors which included:</p> <p>(a) <u>The year so far</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An update on a serious incident. Governors reported positive feedback on how well the school had deal with it. The school had felt very well supported by the local authority. The meeting discussed the high level of risk assessments and staff training/capacity that has been put in place to allow us to handle incidents competently, as well as arrangements with third party suppliers such as the transport provider - Following some concerning incidents the school was preparing a legal letter to be sent to a parent to warn them that a ban may be implemented to prevent entry onto the premises if there are further incidents. This decision has not been taken lightly and legal advice has been sought. The letter would include the Visitors' Code of Conduct <p>Q. Are incidents occurring daily? A. No, there are peaks and troughs.</p> <p>Q. Can alternative arrangement be made for the child to come into school? A. This is being considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance in the year to date was 90.83% which was better than local and national comparators for special schools - Cases of persistent absence and severe absence were being tracked. Kirklees Council had introduced a new Section 19 and IMAP process. Absences of more than 15 consecutive days were to be referred to IMAP <p>Q. Government guidance issued in December 2023 states that the 15 days absence is to be counted over the year, rather than a consecutive period of absence. Is there a reason why the arrangements are different? A. A reason has not been given by the local authority; however, its instructions have been clear that it is 15 or more consecutive days of absence where a referral to IMAP is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Fan was arranging the next Safeguarding meeting and the date would be shared 	

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		<p>(b) <u>Pupil Progress Summary Spring 2024-25</u> A report had been added to SharePoint for Governors. Ms Emptage presented key points which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There had been a further slight increase in pupils making expected progress, which remained at a high level overall. - Where patterns of limited progress had been identified teachers were receiving targeted support - 80% of pupils had made expected progress or above on the core curriculum and the continued consistency of progress across core area subjects had been helped by CPD - Interventions were improving the performance of Priority Pupils and just over 50% of the Priority Pupils in the Forest Pathway no longer needed additional, targeted support - Data recording for the Personalised Curriculum had improved - Pupils were assessed for the Engagement Curriculum using areas of the Engagement Model - Actions for the summer term included supporting teachers to set achievable ILP targets and explore ways to show pupil progress in the Personalised and Engagement curricula <p>Q. What is included in the ILPs? A. These comprise of 5 elements i.e. Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Social and Emotional, Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood. The EHCP outcomes are broken down into 12-week chunks. It is sometimes difficult to set targets as pupils do not learn in a linear fashion.</p> <p>(c) <u>Stress and Behaviour Analysis Spring 2024-2025</u> A report had been added to SharePoint for Governors. Ms Emptage presented key points which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils with Outstanding and Good Days amounted to 79%, an increase of 9% from the Autumn term - Stage 2 Day occurrences had been rare - Staff were being trained in how to measure and make judgments for Good and Outstanding Days 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spikes in the data for stress and anxiety were linked to pupils' concerns about transition; however, these were lower than recorded for 2022/2023. - For context it was only a few pupils who were involved in the majority of incidents and targeted support is in place for these pupils - There had been a significant decrease in the number of racist incidents as a result of direct interventions <p>(d) <u>Personal Development Enrichment Evening – 20 May 2025</u> Ms Emptage reported that the evening had gone very well. It had shown the range of activities provided by the school for pupils, such as arts awards and school trips. Several Governors had attended the evening and provided very positive feedback.</p> <p>(e) <u>Upcoming Events</u> Governors were invited to events which would be held at the school over the summer term. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sports Days – 24 and 25 June - Parents' Evening (involving parents of transitioning pupils and tours of the school) – 11 June - Year 11 Celebration – 17 June - Leavers' Assembly – 26 June <p>Q. Can dates for events be added to the SharePoint calendar? A. Yes, this will be looked into.</p> <p>ACTION: To look into adding the dates for school events to the SharePoint calendar.</p> <p>(f) <u>Quality of Teaching</u> Quality assurance was moving to a more collaborative and continuous process. Peers would be supporting each other's professional development. Staff members' had identified their own areas of strengths and weaknesses and staff had been paired up to use their strengths to help staff who wanted to develop that particular area of practice.</p> <p>The KLP had visited the school to meet with the PSHE Lead with responsibility for SRE (Sex and Relationships Education). Positive feedback had been provided. The number of Harmful Sexual Behaviour incidents had significantly reduced due to direct teaching.</p>	Ms Cranmer

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		Surveys for parents/carers and staff were underway. The SDP plan was being completed and work had begun on a new three-year SDP. The SEF was also being updated.	
87.	SAFEGUARDING	<p>There was 1 pupil on a Child Protection Order, 3 pupils on a Child in Need Plan, 5 pupils with a Child in Need respite package, 4 with a Team Around the Family Plan and 4 pupils have a Family Support Worker through Early Help. There are 9 Children who are Looked After on roll and 12 children who are Post Looked After.</p> <p>In the last 12 months, the DSLs have attended 8 strategy meetings and since the start of the year have had contact from or made contact to Duty and Advice 24 times. There had been 2 Operation Compass calls. There were 2 pupils on the Dynamic Risk Register.</p> <p>Staff had been given extracts from the Child Protection Policy to keep themselves up to date. The school would be hosting a DSL network meeting on 13 June. Exploitation checklists were being developed.</p> <p><i>Ms Morris left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
88.	STAFFING UPDATES/ ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/2026	<p>The staffing plan for 2025/2026 was well advanced. There had been a delay in processing EHCPs. The school had 13 places available and had 10 pupils on the list. Pupil information had been slow in coming through and 2 further cases had been received. Some tribunals had been held. It had been hard to get staff in place due to the uncertainty but progress had been made. The draft staffing plan had been shared with staff.</p> <p>Mrs Drye had been appointed as permanent Assistant Head Teacher. There were also middle leadership opportunities with a TLR (Teaching and Learning Responsibility) available such as Maths Lead, Orchard Pathway Lead and Technology for Life.</p> <p>There had been a successful teacher recruitment exercise with 22 applications received. Eight had been shortlisted for interview and three applicants had been appointed. One successful applicant was an ECT. All interviewees were very positive about the school and many reported hearing positive comments from staff who currently work at Southgate.</p> <p>Four ETAs had joined the school having been selected from a strong field of candidates. The improved induction process had been used.</p> <p>The Business Support Officer interviews would take place after half term.</p>	

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		<p>some pupils were able to self-regulate by using the rooms. He had noted that the rooms required improvement but understood the difficulties the school had in trying to do this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Jackson had been into school for the Careers Day, a music class and the Enrichment Celebration evening - Mr Holland had attended the Enrichment Celebration evening 	
93.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	<p><u>Kirklees Governor Service Offer</u></p> <p>From 1 April 2025, the school would be responsible for undertaking Section 128 and DBS checks for its Governors. Guidance had been provided. The school would also be expected to maintain the Register of Governors' Business Interests.</p> <p>Q. Who arranges the DBS checks for the school? A. Ms Hallas, however it is not a huge job.</p> <p>Governors noted the above changes and discussed a potential scenario that Kirklees Council may not offer any governance service to schools in the future.</p>	
94.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS	RESOLVED: That the next Governors' meeting be held at the school at 5.30 pm on Wednesday 2 July 2025	
95.	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 8.35 pm.