

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF SOUTHGATE SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board held at 5.30 pm at the school on Wednesday 26 March 2025.

PRESENT

Mr R Baines (Chair) , Ms R Cranmer (Head Teacher), Mr C McCombe, Mr M Cleve, Mr M Holland (Vice-Chair), Mrs W May, Ms A Morris, Mrs S Norman, Mrs J Wittrick.

IN ATTENDANCE

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

The meeting opened at 5.53pm

	Item	Minutes	Action
62.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Drye (consent) and Ms L Jackson, Associate Member (consent). There were no declarations of interest.	
63.	NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS	There were no matters to be raised under Any Other Business.	
64.	REPRESENTATION	(a) <u>Representation</u> <u>Re-appointment</u> <u>Name</u> <u>Category</u> <u>With Effect From</u> Matthew Holland Co-opted 25.5.25	

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		<p>(b) <u>Appointment of Co-opted Governors</u></p> <p>Governors noted that there are two vacancies remaining.</p>	
65.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2025	<p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	
66.	MATTERS ARISING	<p>(a) <u>Training Link (Minute 50 (a) refers)</u></p> <p>Mrs Morris had attended the training on disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>(b) <u>Head Teacher's Report (Minute 50 (e) refers)</u></p> <p>It was reported that the Comic Arts session went very well.</p> <p>(c) <u>Financial Management and Monitoring (Minute 51 refers)</u></p> <p>The School Business Manager has been chasing debts from other local authorities. Governors noted that there are lots of changes in the SEND Act and education finance.</p> <p>(d) <u>Pupil Progress Summary Report – Autumn 2024-25 (Minute 53 (a) refers)</u></p> <p>Unfortunately, the caretaker did not win the safety award but the Chair congratulated her on her nomination.</p> <p>Q: Have we heard anything more about the Ofsted framework? A: The launch is expected in September but there will be no inspections until October.</p>	
67.	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & MONITORING	<p>The SFVS had been completed and sent out to governors.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That governors approve the SFVS for submission to the LA.</p> <p>The Finance Committee met prior to this meeting and the following matters were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Period 11 has been completed and an estimate for the year end position made. Monies to transfer to next year's budget have been identified. Some money for curriculum resources will be carried forward to next year when the items to be bought will be 	

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	<p>identified. Funding for some of the children is still awaited so there is quite a lot of money to come in and the School Business Manager has been contacting other authorities for the funding for out of area placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The B1 budget has been reviewed with the LA finance team. It will be a challenging year as there is only a 0.5% increase in the budget but most of the costs have increased in excess of this. A number of council services have stopped and have to be sourced elsewhere. Broadband, school milk and staff absence cover have been discontinued by Kirklees and this has impacted on staff time. Grants from the LA have been received to help staffing and NI cost increases. - The school is exploring the option of the DFC being used for work in the quiet rooms to make them more fit for use. The School Business Manager is looking at grants to buy resources, - The carry forward into the current year was £137k and there is £251k in contingency, the difference being the money that had not been allocated to a budget heading. A graph over the last 5 years shows how costs have not been met by the budget. <p>ACTION: Ms Hallas to circulate the graph.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A decision needs to be made as to whether school continues to buy into staff absence cover. There are benefits e.g. wellbeing and health support but it does come at a cost. A meeting has been planned for 1 May to discuss this issue. If the school does not renew there will be associated recruitment and management issues. - Usually, the school has a virement mid-year as a result of attracting additional pupils each year but that will not happen this year. Discussions with the LA about expansion are taking place but this will not happen in the short term. The majority of the budget is spent on staffing but it is a priority for the school to have good quality staff and all the indicators in school are positive as a result. <p>Q. In the core budget (excluding the virement and carry forward) what percentage is the staffing costs? A. 87%</p>	<p>Ms J Hallas</p>

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	<p>Q. Could we introduce a holiday scheme and breakfast club? A. It is not the school's building so the school would have to work around any building work by the PPP provider and staff costs mean that it may not be profitable.</p> <p>PPP costs are high but it was acknowledged that there is a benefit in someone else looking after the building .</p> <p>Q. Could we have our own casual bank for staff? A. We are looking into this. Alternatively, we could have surplus staff as cover ETAs.</p> <p>Q. Is the main staff issue ETAs? A. Yes, as they make up the majority of our workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was discussion around using volunteers. The school has had student teachers and volunteers in in the past. An enquiry has been made for a couple of ETAs to undertake their SCITT training; this will not work for the school though due to the need to spend time in a mainstream setting. Community volunteers are welcome to apply when they enquire. Their skills could be identified in order to develop them ready to fill a vacancy. - The school has the Employee Healthcare Service from the LA as well as the welfare support services provided by SAS. The independent advice is necessary to support staff and inform the management processes. <p>ACTION: That as many governors as possible attend the meeting on 1 May to discuss the options for staff insurance and the reporting of finance.</p> <p>Ms Hallas left the meeting at 6.50 pm.</p>	<p>Governors</p>

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68.	REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES	<p>(a) <u>Standard and Effectiveness Committee</u></p> <p>The recent meeting was only attended by the Chair. The following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LA special school funding review which is challenging. - An approach to the school by commissioning to look at the possibility of additional pre 16 and post 16 places and the Head Teacher has responded with a range of possibilities. This would have to be a long-term solution and compliment what is already offered at Southgate School and in Kirklees. - Governing board skill sets. An advert has been drafted for a co-opted governor with the skill sets required. - Staffing. <p>(b) <u>Finance and Resources Committee</u></p> <p>This was covered under Minute 67 above (Financial Management and Monitoring).</p>	
69.	HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS	<p>The Head Teacher's report had been circulated before the meeting and the following key points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congratulations to Kate Emptage on her appointment as Deputy Head Teacher. The Chair commented that Ms Emptage had an excellent interview which demonstrated her passion for the students and staff in the school. - Events coming up which governors are welcome to attend. The role of governors in the career's day was discussed. - Councillors and MPs have been invited to visit school. Governors agreed on the following key messages that need to be delivered: <p>The school needs to be showcased highlighting the difference it makes to children and families and showing the potential the children have.</p>	

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		<p>The situation with post 16 in Kirklees and the school's proposed solution and need for support.</p> <p>The importance of the role of ETAs and the impact of post covid working reducing the pool of staff available and how to celebrate and recognise the role.</p> <p>There is a need to be clear about what the school want visitors to do after the visit, both nationally and locally.</p> <p>The number of children being educated out of borough.</p> <p>The budget issue is around not eroding the good work that has been done.</p> <p>The discussion nationally about the pay scales of support staff as it differs in other Local Authorities.</p> <p>Parents could provide evidence of their difficulties in getting the right provision for their child and what a difference it makes when they do, but also their concerns about post 16.</p> <p>Selling the USPs of Southgate School and the holistic approach.</p> <p>Q. Will the visitors meet some pupils?</p> <p>A. Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans for the 2025/26 budget and pupil placements for the 2025/26 academic year are well underway although the funding and sufficiency of places in the Local Authority make it challenging. - There are currently 183 pupils on roll, with 20 pupils at the satellite in Newsome. There are limited spaces left for September 2025-26, with 23 Year 11 leavers and 16 new starters already named. - The complexity of the cohort continues to increase. A graph indicated that pupils with A Banding (highest funded) now make up 20% of the 184 pupils on roll which was only

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	<p>4.7% in 2016. Pupils with B Banding have also increased to more than half of pupils, at 54% (only 14% in 2016).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobility is low as it is unusual for pupils to leave outside of the expected Year 11 leavers. - The ratio of boys/girls has continued to widen but is in line with national comparatives for special schools. - Pupils eligible for FSM have increased and now make up over half of the cohort which is significantly higher than national comparatives. Deprivation Levels are close to national. There are 9 Children Looked After (CLA) and 12 Post CLA (Autumn 2024 census return). Pupils who are identified as White British has steadily increased over recent years and those from a Minority Ethnic Group has decreased. Pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) has decreased over recent years but increased again this year. - Attendance for the academic year to 14.2.25 stands at 90.68% compared to the national figure of 87.08% There are 55 pupils who fall within persistent absence category. Pupils have missed a total of 140 days of school since September, due to transport being cancelled. The children who achieve attendance over 95% are celebrated. <p>Q. Do we know how many children have severe absence less than 50%? A. Not many.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Pupil Progress Analysis for the Autumn Term shows that the vast majority of pupils made good or better progress using the wide range of assessment tools that are now in use across school. Any pupils not making expected progress are identified termly as Priority Pupils and there are additional Priority Areas that leaders continue to monitor and develop. - In terms of behaviour, the analysis for Autumn Term 2024-25 has been shared with Governors. The Spring Term analysis will be shared in Summer 1. Outstanding days are steadily increasing and are approaching double what they were at this point in the term last year. Stage 3 Physical Interventions are lower than they were this time last year, 	

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		<p>with a minimum reduction of 2 per week for this half term compared to Autumn 2 in 2023/2024. There has been a reduction in inappropriate sexualized behaviour due to specialist interventions and staff training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most weeks there are no bullying incidents reported at all. Any incidents that have been recorded have been isolated incidents, with no more than 1 bullying incident logged in any week. - There were no exclusions or suspensions in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 or so far in 2024-25. No pupils have been off rolled. - The teaching team continues to be passionate, skilled and increasingly experienced. - We have undertaken a Skills Audit of Governors and this demonstrated that across the full Governing Board there is secure coverage of all aspects of school governance. Some less experienced Governors identified areas they have not participated in, such as dismissal panels or Head Teacher's performance management and opportunities will be offered to build their experience as the opportunities arise. - Since the new year the school has continued to develop extracurricular visits and experiences for as many pupils as possible across the school. Examples were provided in the report. - The health and safety audit identified no red areas. There was one amber for the school due to a poster not being signed. Some amber areas that are down to the PPP Provider will be addressed. <p>Q. What are the next steps after the Governor Skills Audit?</p> <p>A. The Head Teacher has put together an action plan and this will be shared with governors. The actions includes filling the co-opted governor seats, review of training and workload, paperwork, demands and expectations, governor visits and training requirements and succession planning for Governing Board members.</p> <p>ACTION: Governors to take a section each and determine an action plan for each area. At the next meeting it will be determined who will take on each area by the following meeting.</p>	<p>Governors</p>

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70.	SAFEGUARDING	<p>Currently there is 1 pupil on a Child Protection Order, 4 pupils on a Child in Need Plan, 4 pupils with a Child in Need respite package, 2 with a Team Around the Family Plan and 4 pupils have a Family Support Worker through Early Help. In addition, 1 Early Help Assessment is being undertaken and the school is working alongside LD CAMHS to complete another Early Help Assessment. 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 Autumn Term have had contact from, or made contact to Duty and Advice 11 times.</p> <p>Contextual Safeguarding Training was delivered to staff on 22 January. This was the first session to work with staff on developing their understanding of contextual safeguarding, where it is already happening in class and where else it could be implemented. During this session staff also focussed on P4C as a way to support the young people with their understanding. Further discussions around the matter are planned and an Action Plan will be developed.</p>	
71.	MONITOR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)	The Plan captured the impact of the actions so far. The SDP for 2024-25 has been updated and shared with Governors.	
72.	POLICIES FOR REVIEW/APPROVAL	ACTION: The Behaviour Policy will be sent out with just one change and governors are asked to email their responses.	Head Teacher/ Governors
73.	GOVERNOR TRAINING & GOVERNOR VISITS	<p>The following Governor visits were noted:</p> <p>The Chair attended the deputy head teacher recruitment and the committee meetings.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair attended the Visual Arts session and the safeguarding meeting and found a mismatch between what staff are experiencing and the duty and assessment response.</p> <p>Mr M Cleve also attended the safeguarding meeting and stated that there was a lack of response when issues are raised. Additional demands have been placed on schools post-Covid.</p> <p>Mr Cleve attended the Valentines Disco.</p>	

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		<p>Mrs Wittrick had reviewed safeguarding and looked after children and stated that the changes in the structures in Kirklees were not helping.</p> <p>Mrs Wittrick took part in the ETA recruitment.</p>	
74.	SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION 2024/25	The SEF had been updated in March 2025 and shared with Governors.	
75.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	There was no further business.	
76.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS	<p>RESOLVED: That the next Governors' meetings be held at the school at 5.30 pm on:</p> <p>Wednesday 21 May 2025 Wednesday 2 July 2025</p>	
77.	AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY	<p>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.</p>	

Meeting closed at 8.06 pm.