



Minutes of the meeting of the Howden School  
Local Governing Board  
Tuesday 8 July 2025 at 5.30pm



**GOVERNORS PRESENT**

Mrs S Warnes (Chair, SW), Mr E Allison (EA), Mrs A Bahadur (AB), Mr R Gardiner (RG), Mrs M Millar (MM), Mr J Nixon (Headteacher, JN), Mrs L Oates-Dibnah (LOD)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Mrs J Doyle (Deputy Headteacher, JD), Mrs S Holliday (Associate SLT, SH), Mr L Marshall (Associate SLT, LM), Mr J O'Brien (Director of Improvement and Standards, JOB), Miss C Scott (Associate SLT, CS), Miss R Southorn (DSL, RS), Mrs G Stafford (Governance Professional, GS), Mrs L Tester (Deputy Headteacher, LT)

Throughout these minutes a question is indicated by Q followed by the initials of the questioner and a comment is marked by C.

**59 WELCOME**

SW opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the final meeting of the academic year.

**60 APOLOGIES**

S Symington

**Resolved:** Consent was given to the absence of the above governor.

**61 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest made specific to this meeting.

**62 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (24 April 2025)**

**Resolved:** The minutes from the last meeting were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, SW.

**63 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**63.1 GS to discuss comms and website with Marketing Manager** – it was confirmed that each school is responsible for sending out its own communications. A new website will be online from September and when a news post is added, a link to download the story to the Facebook page can be selected.

**63.2 JN to provide Trust staff absence data in HT Reports** – complete.

**63.3 Safeguarding incidents to be broken down by year group in future reports** - complete.

**63.4 JN to circulate the new catering provider's presentation from the tender process - complete.**

**63.5 All Links to complete a summer term visit and send to GS by 3 July for inclusion in the next meeting's papers - 5 Link visits have been completed since the last meeting.**

**64 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

- Current risks
  - Year 7 expected to be below PAN (<150). Future intake numbers are projected to be up to 23% down in 2029 in Year 1 (therefore could be 23% down in Year 7 in 2035)
  - Outcomes
  - Non – appointment of a Director of Maths
- Staff absence – total absence for illness this academic year is 552 days
- Moving to a 2-week timetable from September
- History, geography and science will run aligned curriculums from September

*Q: (SW) Does the 23% reduction in students consider the new build estate?*

*JN: Yes, but the picture changes regularly. I am making you aware that this needs to be considered as it may be on the horizon.*

*Q: (EA) Of the 69 staff that have been absent, how many were absent for authorised reasons?*

*JN: It is very difficult to judge as there is no proforma for staff absence. And Arbor does not match the data on SAM People. To address absence, we need to be more assertive. We need to also care for the staff that are at work that are either covering for those that aren't at work or working with supply staff.*

*Q: (SW) There is much work going on with the curriculum, but staff absence will impact on learning. Are HR supportive in managing these absences?*

*JN: Yes, they are a fantastic support.*

*JD: To improve staff absence we need tighter rigour, supported by HR. We always carry out return-to-work interviews to unpick the barriers to attendance. We need to strictly adhere to the policy and look at the platforms that absence is recorded on, to ensure the data is accurate and easy to analyse.*

*Q: (LOD) What are the absence triggers?*

*JD: The first trigger is following 4 days absence in 3 months or 2 occasions, the second is 6 days in 6 months or 3 occasions and finally 12 days in 12 months or 5 occasions. Long term absence trigger is continuous absence for 20 working days.*

*Q: (EA) Another risk that we can see coming is the high number of students with an EHCP – 12 in Year 7 in September. How will we address this challenge?*

*LT: The students have differing levels of need. We have good visibility of what conditions are coming and our ERP curriculum is being developed. The provision in the Bridge is also changing. The SEN teaching and learning strategy is a priority for us in the first half term of autumn. We also have a very strong pastoral team.*

*JN: There is also a possibility that a small number of the 12 will not join.*

*Q: (SW) Where are we with the SENCO?*

*JN: She is on a phased return and will be back full-time from September. It is much appreciated how SI has stepped up and worked with the Hessle SENCo.*

*Q: (SW) Will SI continue to support on her return?*

*JN: Yes.*

*C: (SW) It is reassuring that she will be back in position in September. What are the plans for filling the leavers' positions?*

JD: We are interviewing for a Pastoral Manager on Friday and Performing Arts teacher tomorrow. The recruitment form has not been signed off yet for the Bridge Manager.

C: (JN): The move to align more of the curriculum is exciting.

JOB: Geography, history and science will be aligned from September. It is hard to align some subjects but the next in the pipeline will be MFL.

Q: (SW) Do you foresee any issues with a 2-week timetable?

LT: No, it should be smooth.

SW: Thank you and congratulations on all the work done.

**ACTION: JOB to consult with People Services to produce a proforma for all Headteachers to show staff absence**

## 65 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND EVALUATION AGAINST OFSTED CRITERIA

JOB explained that the Ofsted framework was changing significantly to judgements against 9 headings. The single-word judgments Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate will be no more, and from November 2025 will be replaced with either Causing Concern, Attention Needed, Secure, Strong or Exemplary for each of the following:

1. **Curriculum:** Evaluating the design and implementation of the school's curriculum.
2. **Developing teaching:** Assessing the quality and effectiveness of teaching practices.
3. **Leadership and governance:** Reviewing the effectiveness of school leadership.
4. **Behaviour and attitudes:** Observing pupil conduct and the school's approach to fostering positive behaviour.
5. **Attendance:** Monitoring pupil attendance rates & the effectiveness of attendance policies.
6. **Personal development and well-being:** Assessing how the school supports pupils' personal growth and mental health.
7. **Achievement:** Measuring pupil progress and academic outcomes.
8. **Inclusion:** Evaluating the support provided to vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
9. **Safeguarding:** Ensuring that the school meets required standards for pupil safeguarding and welfare.

There will be no routine inspections until November 2025.

JN informed the Board that:

- The plan had been updated to show progress made against development actions
- Early in September two members of SLT will attend a workshop with S Shaw to work on the Development Plan. It is expected that the majority of the development priorities would continue into the next 3-year plan

C: (SW) Well done, there are many positives, and I like that you have documented future plans.

JN: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for all the work done to get us where we are. There is still considerable work to do, this is just the start.

## 66 YEAR 10 MOCK DATA

|                    | Mock Data |     | Predictions |     |
|--------------------|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|
|                    | 4+        | 5+  | 4+          | 5+  |
| English            | 64%       | 46% | 81%         | 55% |
| Maths              | 49%       | 31% | 78%         | 52% |
| Crossover (Basics) | 46%       | 28% | 71%         | 43% |

C: (LT) I am comfortable we can achieve 71% 4+ Basics next year and am confident this is accurate. Last year we spoke about irregularities and unreliable data. These mocks have been marked and moderated and our rigour is strong to get us to this place. This year group is a cohort of 132, very able and motivated. They are modelling the Year 11 behaviour and their conduct in the mock exams was exemplary.

Q: (SW) Will you inform the students of their mocks by the end of term?

LT: Yes, next week we will have our mock results event. We launch knowledge masters -this identifies 3 gaps per topic to identify work to complete over summer. Interventions will start 18 September. English, maths and science will run on the same nights each week, so all students and their families know when they take place.

C: (SH) The Director of English will be invited in early to look at the areas of weakness in the Year 11. She has given a real boost this year.

Q: (SW) Where will the interventions be aimed?

LT: The top set was strong this year but next year we believe we need to focus on grade 4 – 5.

Q: (AB) Do interventions start in September?

LT: Yes, third week back.

Q: (AB) Who are the 4-5 students?

LT: Basically, students that are predicted a grade 4 in one but not the other and our focus is to move them up to a grade 5 in both English and maths. The crossover of 5+ in the mocks was disappointing considering the cohort ability. We have changed our language to the students to talk about achieving a grade 5, not a 4.

JN: It is believed that it makes a significant difference to the life of students that achieve a grade 5 in English and maths.

Q: (SW) We are waiting on the triple science mock results. Have the students been told yet that triple science will not be an option?

LT: No, I haven't looked yet. The combined science 4+ at 82% and 5+ at 65% is good.

Q: (SW) It was minuted in the meeting in March that you sought governor support to only offer Combined Science to Year 10 from September 2025. Is that still accurate?

Q: (MM) Might we offer triple science if the mock results are good?

LT: We will look at the mock results in conjunction with the curriculum leader for science and approve the most appropriate way forward.

SW: I think there needs to be clear communication with students and parents.

Q: (SW) Are you as confident in the other mock results?

LT: Yes, the process is rigorous. The two I would be cautious in accuracy would be geography and MFL.

## **67 SAFEGUARDING REPORT (data 31.3.25 – 23.5.25)**

- There are 5 child protection cases and 3 children in need
- 5 children looked after (CLA)
- 19 Early Help referrals
- 12 Smoothwall alerts level 3 or above (zero at Level 5)
- There has been 1 Operation Encompass alert
- There were 6 logs of inappropriate sexual behaviour (3 outside of school hours)
- This half term's focus is on the danger of County Lines
- A transition 3-day event will run for the new Year 7 students this week

Q: (GS) Would you say Year 9 is the year group that causes you the most concern – with highest number of inappropriate sexual behaviours and the highest year group for Wave 2 concern?

RS: Year 8 and 9 as they have the highest level of conflicting behaviours. Year 8 is also the largest year group.

Q: (GS) Do you attribute the Wave 2 cases in Year 10 and 11 to exam pressures?

RS: Students can be on a Wave 2 document for many reasons, and these could include home life, mental health, well-being and peer conflict. We aim to capture concerns around stress and anxiety early to keep the child safe from harm and reduce risk.

Q: (SW) Is there a correlation between poor mental health and attendance?

JD: Yes, and that is why we work very closely with JD and the attendance team. We are working hard to communicate to our families that 'If you are in the building we can support you.' We have weekly welfare meetings which include the pastoral manager, SENCo, Enhanced Resource Provision and we discuss patterns and vulnerable students. We are also working hard on our first hour response.

Q: (EA) What has changed that has made the number of inappropriate sexual behaviours reduce so dramatically from last year?

RS: Education through our ACE period and educating our staff to address any concerns promptly.

Q: (EA) Is any of that different to last year?

JN: It is a different year group and there has been a significant shift in culture.

## **68 ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR REPORT**

### **68.1 Attendance Report**

- Whole school attendance to date is 93.6% (same period last year was 92%)
- Year 11 attendance is 93.6%
- Boys' attendance is 94%, girls' 93.3%
- Non – PP attendance is 94.4%, PP 91.1%
- Non – SEND 93.9%, SEND 92%
- 4.9% students have 100% attendance
- 19.4% students are persistently absent (attendance of <90%)
- Areas for development – reduce persistent absence and strengthen the school's presence in the community to further raise awareness around attendance

### **68.2 Behaviour Report**

- 256 days have been lost to 162 suspensions since the start of September (comparable period last year was 445 days lost)
- 162 suspensions involved 59 students
- Most suspensions were boys
- Most suspensions are by Year 8 and Year 9
- There have been 3 permanent exclusions
- Significant decrease (46%) in classroom removals year on year (1493 this year to date compared to 2752 last year to the same point)
- Significant decrease (47%) in suspensions year on year (162 this year to date compared to 303 last year to the same point)

JD: We are really pleased with our attendance – we review our attendance strategy every half term and we will be looking more at SEN and PP students in further detail.

Q: (SW) On the table showing suspensions by pupil premium and SEND, it would be more useful to know the suspension rate by 100 students as we cannot compare how many suspensions were by SEN learners in this school compared to other schools as we don't know their SEN figures.

Q: (EA) Last year we were aware of Year 11 attendance tailing off during the exam period. How has their attendance been this year?

JD: Our Year 11 attendance stayed high as we collapsed the timetable, and the year group was a different calibre of child. They attended even when they didn't have an exam. Week 31 attendance for Year 11 last year was 94% and week 32 was 87%. This year Year 11's attendance in week 31 was 97% and week 32 was 97%. Last year we also had ten students with severe mental health

issues. This year the mentoring scheme has worked; the students love the rewards. They are often asked about the rewards and what they would like to see.

C: (SH) There has also been much more parental support for Year 11 this year.

LT: The culture in September is key. There has been a shift in mindset – students are aware that “school matters now.” They have also had great role models.

**ACTION: JOB to show suspensions per 100 students for SEN and PP in future behaviour reports**

## **69 GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

There have been 5 Link visits since the last meeting:

5.6.2025 Behaviour and Attendance – MM

20.5.2025 Community – LOD

17.6.2025 Curriculum – EA and SW

24.6.2025 Health and Safety – EA

13.5.2025 SEND – SW

All visit forms were of very high quality; being informative and triangulated the data within the reports provided to the Board from the school. One action arising from the Community Link visit was around the creation of a PTA group.

**ACTION: GS to find out which Trust schools run PTA groups and how they recruit parents**

## **70 POLICY MATTERS**

**70.1 Attendance Policy** – a Trust policy will be in place from September. Local procedures have been written showing specifics to the school such as staff contact details, lesson times and stages of support given.

**70.2 Behaviour Policy** – updates to the local procedures for behaviour were tabled and agreed.

**70.3 Uniform Policy** – Governors raised that they felt there had been confusion over the communication about changes to the Uniform Policy. LOD suggested the school should post reminders of uniform expectations and the key changes over summer. The main changes include no requirement for a badged jumper, skirt must be box pleated and skorts can be worn for PE.

**ACTION: JD to send out clear comms to parents over summer about the key uniform changes from September**

## **71 NEXT MEETING DATE**

**Thursday 18 September 2025 5.30pm, pre-meet at 4.45pm.**

## **72 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **72.1 Understanding Data**

JOB had kindly offered to conduct a training session on Teams on secondary performance data. This will be held on Tuesday 9 September at 5pm on Teams. A Teams link will be shared.

**73 AGREED ACTION POINTS**

- 73.1 ACTION: JOB to consult with People Services and produce a proforma for all Headteachers to show staff absence (minute 64)**
- 73.2 ACTION: JOB to show suspensions per 100 students for SEN and PP in future behaviour reports (minute 68.2)**
- 73.2 ACTION: GS to find out which Trust schools run PTA groups and how they recruit parents (minute 69)**
- 73.4 ACTION: JD to send out clear comms to parents over summer about the key uniform changes from September (minute 70.3)**

JN thanked governors for their support over the year. SW thanked everyone for their hard work and stated that the achievement of a good Ofsted judgement this year had been very well deserved, and the school had improved so much.

SW closed the meeting at 6.18pm.

