



Minutes of the meeting of the Howden School  
Local Governing Board  
Thursday 21 November 2024 at 5.30pm



THE CONSORTIUM  
ACADEMY TRUST

Shaping Positive Futures

## 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), Mrs S Symington (SS)

## ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Mr M Brown (Executive Director of Education, MB), Mrs J Doyle (Deputy Headteacher, JD), S Holliday (Associate SLT, SH), Mrs S Issatt (Assistant Headteacher, SI), Mrs G Stafford (Governance Professional, GS), Mrs L Stephenson (Assistant Headteacher and SENDCO, LS), Ms 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.

## 15 WELCOME

SW opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the second meeting of the academic year. Introductions were made as this was S Holliday's first meeting.

## 16 APOLOGIES

Full attendance.

## 17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

## 18 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (19 September 2024)

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

## 19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 19.1 DSL to record the number of learners per year group with logs of concern in future safeguarding reports - complete
- 19.2 SI to share key calendar dates with GS to input in governors' calendars - complete
- 19.3 LOD to be invited to the communications meeting with the Marketing Manager, 26 September -complete
- 19.4 Governors to complete two modules on GovernorHub this term: Induction for academy governors and Safeguarding for Governance -ongoing, see minute 28

## 20 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

- Student numbers for September 2025 look positive with 129 choosing Howden as their first choice
- Outcomes are predicted to improve on last year but as Year 10 and 11 do not have progress data due to Covid, the school's progress 8 scores will remain on the DfE website for a further 3 years (until current Year 9 data is published).
- New DSL appointed
- 4 Associate members of SLT appointed – R Gardiner, S Holliday, C Marshall and C Scott
- Staff absence is much reduced from the same period of time last time – 39.5 days short term sickness compared to 105.5 last year
- There have been 14 mid-year transfers and 16 leavers. 5 leavers have left for elective home education
- One of the highlights of the first half term was being awarded the title of Modeshift STARS Secondary School of the Year 2024/25

*Q: (MM) Year 11 outcomes were below national average, but the development plan states that we will achieve at least national, which is correct?*

*JN: We will not achieve national across all bands but will in some areas.*

*Q: (SW) Is there adequate cover in areas where staff are missing due to absence?*

*JN: Yes, we can cover day to day absence although art is an issue to cover.*

*LT: We have had our art teacher on maternity leave but had a long-term supply. Following the vocational review this member of supply moved on. We have a long-term solution from January and are receiving support from other Trust schools.*

*Q: (SW) How do you manage short term absence?*

*JD: We are interviewing two cover supervisors next week. The curriculum leads identify any weaknesses.*

*Q: (SW) We have read through the report on behaviour and relationships, but where are the recommendations?*

*JN: They are all in the development plan.*

*Q: (EA) Throughout the report on behaviour there is reference to staff /student relationships: 'Whilst they complete that work in most lessons they did identify that in a few lessons they do not because the expectation to do so are not as high' and 'A few of the students stated that staff expect more than others in terms of work rate and completion'. My question is therefore how do we transport good behaviour into all areas?*

*LT: These findings tie in with observations made during the vocational review. When we see consistency of teaching and level of expectation we see more ambition and better outcomes. We have rolled out the Howden Way for students and will do the same for staff. We must have consistency.*

## 21 EVALUATION AGAINST OFSTED CRITERIA, SEF and SDP

The exception report, the self-evaluation form and the development plan were considered alongside each other.

The school leaders assess the school as requires improvement in all areas.

*JN: The SEF is constantly live and is an honest view.*

*Q: (SW) I think it is important that the profile of intake section outlines the profile of the community as families have a unique range of aspirations.*

*Q: (MM) When do you feel your assessment may change to good?*



JN: We are close in behaviour and attitudes and there is a lot of work going on in personal development. There is still work to do in quality of education.

Q: (MM) Is it wise to aim for a "broad and ambitious curriculum" if we did not reach national last year and only expecting to achieve national in some areas this year?

JN: This year we are looking at outcomes very close to national with pockets slightly below, we are addressing these pockets.

Q: (MM) Do you still see a broad and ambitious offer as a positive?

JN: Yes, we want to provide a curriculum which prepares the students to be aspirational and well rounded.

Q: (AB) You state you want to expand the extra-curricular activities to ensure students have access to diverse opportunities. Who will lead on this and how do you enable an increase in participation?

LT: L Marshall and C Scott will lead. We need to provide more provision around unstructured time as this motivates good behaviour.

RG: We have many activities coming through such as an enrichment day for Year 7 and how to launch a business for Year 10.

C: (SW) I really like the vision for the next 3 years at the start of the development plan.

Q: (SS) Has there been a RAG review of actions on the plan yet?

JN: No, not yet. We will RAG rate when the action has made an impact. We have struck through the text when individual actions have been completed.

Q: (LOD) The plan speaks about the importance of good comms with parents. In terms of delivery, we have spoken in the past about getting the resource to send out comms, has there been any development in this?

JN: We believe that a TCAT media person has been appointed.

MB: I do not believe this to be the case.

Q: (SW) Where would the capacity come from? There are lots of examples where communication needs to improve – to parents and to governors.

JN: I will follow this up.

Q: (MM) What is the High Fliers programme?

LT: We feel our high ability students are not as challenged as they should be. These are students who should be achieving grades 8 and 9. We want to develop a programme to expose these students to aspirational ideas around employment opportunities and universities. It will be a wrap around programme to support and challenge this cohort and will be embedded by July 2025.

SW: Thank you – to write and maintain the SEF and development plan is a considerable piece of work.

**ACTION: Minor amendments needed to the SDP:**

**Update profile of student intake**

**Strategic action 1b.4 needs re-wording to re-engineer the school from September 2024**

**Strategic action 2b.2 timescale should be April 2025**

**ACTION: JN to explore resources to improve comms**

**22 PUPIL PREMIUM STRATEGY**

- 3-year strategy covering 2022-25
- Number of students in the school is 685
- Number of eligible PP students this year is 22% of the student population
- This year's funding is £177,491
- Year 9 has the highest % of PP students
- Pupil premium outcomes are a priority

A discussion followed around the reporting restrictions of the template, the difficulty for school staff to allocate finances when they have little discretionary spend and also the governors' responsibility to approve a document when they do not have delegated responsibility for finances and do not have view of last year's spend. However, it was accepted that this is a DfE template to follow, and LS had done a comprehensive job updating the document.

Q: (EA) Why is the PP Pastoral Manager doing 3 days for KS4, when the KS4 curriculum is 2 years?

LS: This is a legacy as the strategy was first written in 2022.

Q: (LOD) You state that '2023/24 outcomes were not where we wanted them to be' so should you not review the strategy sooner than 2025?

LS: We update the plan annually and address SEN and PP outcomes throughout the development plan.

JN: The PP Strategy is a DfE document; I would prefer it to be all on one document within the development plan.

Q: (LOD) What do you mean in your report by reference to the behaviour of PP students as 'learned helplessness'?

LS: Some Year 11 students last year had extremely low aspirations, possibly due to missing most of KS3 with schools shut for Covid. We are trying to change those values and build aspiration.

Q: (SW) How can you ensure that all teachers have PP students highlighted in their mark books/spreadsheets when there are inconsistencies in practice across teachers? How can you ensure they do this for PP?

LS: We see it, but we do need to ensure consistency across staff.

C: (JD) Arbor has assisted staff by clearly showing who is PP or SEN. It is very visual and easily accessible.

Q: (SS) Can supply staff access Arbor?

JD: Yes.

Q: (SW) How do you ensure there is wider quality assurance?

LT: We need Quality First Teaching for all, regardless of group. With our data we will then target intervention groups.

SI: Our quality assurance looks at specifics e.g. challenge, work scrutiny.

C: (JN) It is a misconception that PP students are low prior attainers in schools.

Q: (EA) When do you think the next Ofsted inspection will take place?

JN: The framework suggests it will be 2.5 years from the last inspection which will take us to September 2025.

**Resolved:** The Pupil Premium Strategy was approved

## **23 ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR REPORT**

### **23.1 Attendance Report**

- Whole school attendance to date is 94.4% (same period last year was 91.8%)
- Year 11 attendance is 94.3%
- Boys' attendance is 94.4%, girls' 94.6%
- Non – PP attendance is 95.2%, PP 92%
- Non – SEND 95%, SEND 91.5%
- 39% students have 100% attendance

### **23.2 Behaviour Report**

- Behaviour continues to improve
- 36.5 days have been lost to suspensions since the start of term (comparable period last year was 98.5)
- There were 28 suspension incidents, involving 18 students



- There were 28 suspension incidents, involving 18 students
- Most suspensions were boys
- One boy has 5 suspensions in the first half term
- Most suspensions are by Year 10
- There have been 0 permanent exclusions
- No bullying concerns
- Significant increase in classroom removals from Year 8 compared to HT1 last year when they were in Year 7

Q: (SW) When there are a high number of removals such as in Year 8 with 101, do you continue with removals or change your strategy?

JD: We have changed strategy for 4 students as they are boomeranging in and out of lessons. We need to keep making changes, being fluid. They access the Bridge and the ERP. There has been a reduction in classroom removals HT 1 23/24 of 507 to 349 HT1 24/25.

Q: (MM) Do you think the decrease is down to resistance last year to the Behaviour Policy and acceptance this year?

RG: Most students came back from the summer break incredibly positive. We did have a spike in behaviour after the policy change but then that dropped and students have settled very well. The message is that this is serious now and most tow the line.

C: (SH) Children appreciate routines and consistency and respond to boundaries. Now we are not having to deal with high numbers of low-level behaviour we are building strong relationships in the classroom.

C: (JD) My mantra to the students is 'practice who you want to be'.

RG: The ACE period is meaningful and there is connectedness across the school.

C: (JN) There is a shifting culture. It's who we are now.

Q: (SW) There are no logged bullying incidents, do you believe this is true? Are you confident that any bullying would be reported?

JD: Yes. We have done a student survey assembly at which I explained the questions very clearly to the students. 83% reported that bullying does not happen at this school. Parents use the term 'bullying' incorrectly and more often than not mean peer conflict. Do we have targeted and persistent bullying? No. It is important that we get the right narrative out to parents.

Q: (MM) Will you approach the 17% that did not answer positively and address?

JD: Yes, we will speak to each student that we have concerns arising from their answers. The safeguarding focus this half term is online safety. 92% of students felt safe in school and all have a trusted adult they can talk to.

Q: (EA) As teacher absence affects students' morale and achievement is it worth reporting on staff absence?

JN: I refer to this in my HT Report.

C: (MB) Staff attendance is reported at Trust Board level too.

C: (JD) We look into removal data by teacher too to know if there are any issues.

MB: There is a culture of the school changing and everything is coming together.

C: (SW) There is such a lot going on across attendance and behaviour and things are improving. Should curriculum now be number one on the Development Plan, rather than attendance and behaviour?

JN: Yes, possibly.

## 24 SAFEGUARDING REPORT (HT1)

- There are currently 2 children under child protection, 13 children in need and 5 children looked after (CLA)
- All professional and agency meetings were attended
- 37 Smoothwall alerts - 10 in Year 11

- There have been 5 referrals to Early Help and 0 to the Safeguarding and Partnership Hub
- All training is complete and current. Hard to reach staff have face to face training each half term
- There were 317 causes for concern logged – 152 learners
- There were 42 logs of physical conflicting behaviours and 43 verbal conflicting behaviour in Year 8

C: (SW to JD) Thank you for stepping into the DSL role at short notice.

JD: Thank you. Everyone has stepped up.

C: (JN) Yes, I must echo that. The management team has been strengthened by new arrivals and JD and SI have the safeguarding expertise to step back into the roles. Our new DSL will be coming to school next Tuesday when we have the external safeguarding audit.

Q: (SW) How do you manage the single central record?

JD: The Headteacher is responsible for the SCR. 4 of us have access and we have a tracker of when checks are completed. We complete monthly checks.

C: (SS) The People team also carry out checks and as Safeguarding Link I have no concerns with the SCR at this school.

Q: (LOD) Why are the logged concerns so high for physical and verbal behaviours in Year 8?

JD: This is our largest year group, with the highest number of EHCPs. Students at Year 8 age are still quite immature and there is lots of peer conflict. The year leader is also particularly good at logging concerns.

Q: (SS) Why are there so many Smoothwall alerts from Year 11?

JD: Alerts are rated 1-5 with 5 being the most serious. 12 of the 37 alerts are level 3 and above. This is about educating a small number of students not to search for certain topics. The situation has improved as we can now lock down computers. Some alerts are linked to the health and social care taught content.

**ACTION: DSL to share patterns and trends of cause for concerns at the next meeting**

**ACTION: DSL to show Smoothwall alerts by level in future reports**

## 25 SEND REPORT

- There are 26 students with an Education Health Care Plan and 78 with additional support
- The primary need is cognition and learning with 47% of the need
- Average attendance of EHCP students is 90.8% (23/24 82.4%) and attendance of SEND support students is 91.3% (23/24 87%)
- Inclusion Curriculum 'Futures Pathways' is an alternative pathway
- SEND suspensions in Year 8 are higher than in any other year group
- 6 referrals for ASD (autism spectrum disorder) and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) have been submitted and an EHC needs assessment
- 9% of the SEND population attend extra-curricular clubs

Q: (SW) Has the Inclusive Curriculum started?

LS: Yes, not just for SEN learners. It may also be accessed by disengaged learners.

Q: (SW) Does it follow the standard curriculum?

LS: No, we can interweave what the child is interested in.

Q: (SW) Do many staff attend the SEN surgeries?

LS: Yes, but staff reach out daily.

Q: (SW) How thorough is the standard of SEND data you receive from the feeder schools?



LS: CPOMS has really helped with this. We read through and disseminate the information to staff during transition. I also visit feeder schools so know what learners we are getting. I attend the annual reviews from Year 5 onwards.

Q: (SW to RG) How confident do you feel about catering for special educational needs?

RG: The TAs are so proactive now and have a very good understanding of PP and SEN students.

SH: We have had training as we are seeing new SEN. The one-minute information is especially useful.

C: (LS) 7% of SEN learners have no diagnosis and there is 51 weeks for the waiting list for a triage. We do not wait for a diagnosis; we see the need and treat it.

C: (SW) The attendance of SEN students has increased dramatically, well done.

## 26 COMPLAINTS REPORT

- 38 formal complaints received across the Trust since the start of this academic year – 7 are from parents of Howden students
- 1 complaint remains from last academic year as it cannot be resolved – a member of the community is unhappy with the speed that the buses go over the speed bumps

## 27 GOVERNOR LINK VISITS

Visits had been completed in the following areas behaviour and attendance, careers, community, curriculum, careers and safeguarding.

A SEND Link visit is taking place tomorrow and that will be all autumn term Link visits completed.

The Safeguarding Link is coming into school to be part of the external safeguarding audit on 26.11

## 28 GOVERNOR TRAINING

Four governors have completed at least the two mandatory modules on GovernorHub. LOD and SS have one more module to complete.

**ACTION: LOD to complete the safeguarding training module and SS the academy governors module before the next meeting**

## 29 NEXT MEETING DATE

Thursday 13 February 2025 at 5.30pm (pre-meet 4.45pm)

## 30 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 30.1 Policies

Careers Policy and Provider Access Policy to be circulated for remote approval by governors.

**ACTION: Clerk to circulate the Careers Policy and Provider Access Policy to governors for approval**

### 30.2 Vocational review

LT summarised a recent vocational review by A Welsh:

- 10 subjects looked at over 2 days

- Strengths seen included a clear journey from KS2, clear objectives and all knew the end points
- Concerns – art and technology and 3 subjects were in the middle tier of concern
- Areas for development - sequencing of curriculum, students' expectations, pace and ambition of the lesson and lack of feedback
- Many of the actions have been completed already including changes in line management and additional external support

### **30.3 School Charity**

Governors were asked if they were content to approve the continued choice of the school charity - A Shining Light – a charity raising money for Teenage Cancer Trust. The Board unanimously supported this most worthwhile cause and were very happy to continue to support.

**Resolved:** The school charity to continue to be A Shining Light

## **31 AGREED ACTION POINTS**

- 31.1 ACTION: Minor amendments needed to the SDP: Update profile of student intake, Strategic action 1b.4 needs re-wording to 'Re-engineer the school from September 2024' and Strategic action 2b.2 timescale should be April 2025 (minute 21)**
- 31.2 ACTION: JN to explore resources to improve comms (minute 21)**
- 31.3 ACTION: DSL to share patterns and trends of cause for concerns at the next meeting (minute 24)**
- 31.4 ACTION: DSL to show Smoothwall alerts by level in future reports (minute 24)**
- 31.5 ACTION: LOD to complete the safeguarding training module and SS the academy governors module before the next meeting (minute 28)**
- 31.6 ACTION: Clerk to circulate the Careers Policy and Provider Access Policy to governors for approval (minute 30.1)**

SW thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7.25pm