



Minutes of the meeting of the Howden School
Local Governing Board
Thursday 13 February 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), Mrs S Symington (SS)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs J Doyle (Deputy Headteacher, JD), S Holliday (Associate SLT, present for minutes 32-26), Mr N Issatt (Head of Maths, present for minutes 32-36, NI), Mrs S Issatt (Assistant Headteacher, SI), Mr L Marshall (Associate SLT, LM) Miss C Scott (Associate SLT, CS), Mrs R Southorn (DSL, RS), 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.

32 WELCOME

SW opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the third meeting of the academic year. Introductions were made as this was the first meeting for associate SLT members, L Marshall and C Scott and newly appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead, R Southorn.

33 APOLOGIES

Full attendance.

34 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

34 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (21 November 2024)

Resolved: An amendment was requested by MM. Once corrected, the minutes from the last meeting were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, SW

35 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 35.1 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 - complete**
- 35.2 JN to explore resources to improve comms – action carried forward.** JN reported that there is not capacity within the school to send out more comms and he will approach shared services to discuss. SW advised that it needs to be made clear to parents what path of communication to use depending on the reason for contacting the school.

- 35.3 DSL to share patterns and trends of cause for concerns at the next meeting -complete**
- 35.4 DSL to show Smoothwall alerts by level in future reports -complete**
- 35.5 LOD to complete the safeguarding training module and SS the academy governor module before the next meeting - complete**
- 35.6 Clerk to circulate the Careers Policy and Provider Access Policy to governors for approval - complete**

36 SUBJECT LEADS PRESENTATION English Leader (S Holliday) and Maths Leader (N Issatt)

- The focus in the run up to the Year 11 exams is on crossover students – those achieving in one of the Basics subjects
- In English there is a focus on literature as outcomes were weak last year
- Subject leadership are running ACE periods interventions
- Revision area and shared resources have been posted on Teams
- Moderation taking place across the Trust
- Curriculum Leads across the Trust meet every term
- Year 11 parental engagement evenings have taken place with good engagement
- Improvements expected in the February mocks – common assessments used throughout the Trust. These mocks will be used to determine final tier entry
- 2024 outcomes rose by around 20% from the February 2024 mocks
- New Trust wide aligned curriculum started September 2024, Maths use the Pearson scheme
- English has been hit by staff absence, this is now settled after a new teacher started in January
- There has been a big drive to work on handwriting in KS3 and the benefits are now being seen in Year 10

C: (SW) Well done, there is a considerable amount of work going on in both departments. Are there any barriers to what you would like to achieve?

SH: We want to put more challenge in to Key Stage 3. Behaviour is so much better now so teaching is catching up. We were hit with staff problems but that is now sorted.

NI: Maths has been more fortunate than the English department regarding staff attendance. Some students are struggling to adapt to the new maths curriculum as there is more challenge, so learners find it harder.

C: (SW) If the students are using it from Year 7 they will not know any different. Well done both of you and good luck, thank you.

SH and NI left the meeting at 5.50pm.

37 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

- Current risks highlighted -Year 7 expected to be below PAN (<150) and low Year 11 outcomes
- There have been 28 mid-year transfers and 26 leavers. 8 leavers have left for elective home education
- There are currently 190 entries for Parent View with 97% parents recommending the school

- SEF rates behaviour, personal development and leadership as good, with quality of education remaining at requires improvement

Q: (EA) What year groups did the students from Holy Family join?

JN: There are 7 in Year 10 and 8 across other year groups. All have been complimentary on the quality of education they are now receiving.

Q: (MM) Can the quality of education rating change only after further outcomes or an external audit?

JN: Our SEF quality of education rating can only go up when the curriculum is in the right place. Outcomes are a challenge, and we expect an Ofsted visit anytime but by the third week in September. We have all our plans in place, and we are ready.

Q: (SW) What do you mean by enhancing self-study in this sentence "our whole school CPDL sessions have centred on effective peer assessment, SEND strategies in the classroom, and enhancing our approach to self-study."

LM: After half term we are rolling out a self-study policy as a trial. The students all have the Arbor app, and we will put self-study on Arbor. This should make it easier for students and parents as all the resources will be in one area. I'm writing a guide for the students and parents.

Q: (SW) Is there an expectation of how much and how often self-study should take place?

LM: The first stage was for learners to upload the app and the next is to give staff CPDL to upload the resources. We will then quality assure of what has been set, ensuring there is rigour of curriculum sequencing.

C: (JD) Expectations around self-study will be agreed, but I attend the Trust behaviour leads meetings and we have agreed that it is unfair to penalise for lack of self-study until the system is fully in place.

Q: (AB) What do you mean by giving more 'subject specific' feedback in books?

LT: Teachers used to give generic feedback such as 'well-done'. We have now moved to a whole class feedback model that should detail the strengths and focused areas to improve the work.

SI: There is also more live marking which gives learners immediate feedback.

Q: (SW) Is staffing settled now?

JN: We experienced more absence last half term, but it does now appear to be settled. The quality of supply staff is monitored by SLT daily.

Q: (SW) Do you also monitor attendance across different subjects so a class isn't hit by persistent absence?

LT: We are very conscious of the year groups that have been hit more than others and work to spread cover across different groups.

SW requested the subject curriculum reviews are shared.

ACTION: Reason for leavers to be logged in each HT Report

ACTION: SI to share the subject curriculum reviews

38 LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT

38.1 Year 11 (cohort of 128)

- The last set of mocks took place in November with a further set taking place this month. Both sets have taken place using past papers in external exam conditions
- November mocks show the percentage of students at Basics 4+ to be 32% and 16% achieving Basics 5+
- Attendance of Year 11 is 93.4% (3% higher than the same point last year)
- Subject areas of concern include science (both Combined and individual)

- Raising Attainment Plan launched to boost Year 11 performance

C: (LT) The Year 11 data in the performance report is out of date and we are confident that we will see a shift as we have seen a significant improvement in engagement. Subjects in the open bucket and vocational subjects are also improving. The SLT each have a mentor group of eight Year 11 students, who we are targeting to achieve both English and maths, and we have seen a significant improvement in engagement by supporting these students. We are also proactively trying to engage with students and their parents by pushing out half term communications regarding revision help, we have set up a Teams area with past papers and the Year 11 parents' evening took place two weeks after the mocks to present the results.

C: (JD) The improvements in communications to parents has been commented on by parents and that is due to Lisa's hard work.

LT: The parents need to know what is available to assist their child.

Q: (SW) Do you plan to launch the raising attainment plan earlier in future?

LT: Yes, and the Year 10 parents' evening will also take place earlier. The baseline work has all been done so this is about bringing the dates forward.

C: (AB) The revision strategy workshop looks good. As parents we need to know how to guide our children and the dedicated Teams area is really useful.

Q: (AB) Physics seems really low with only average points of 2.81. Why is this?

LT: The cohort doing separate sciences has now reduced from 21 to 12 due to ability.

Q: (SW) Do you plan to continue to offer triple science?

LT: Yes, but only if we have the right number of students able to access these courses.

JN: It may be a good idea to hold a curriculum meeting to discuss separate sciences. For most students it is best if they followed the combined science path; it is not viewed any differently by universities and the potential grade achieved would be higher looking at previous data. We perhaps need to change the parental view to be more accepting of combined science.

Q: (MM) Wolfreton have achieved much higher in the autumn marks. Is there anything we can learn from this?

JN: Some schools chose to do their mocks in the classroom over a number of days, so the mock results across the schools are not compatible. This was raised at the last Headteachers' meeting and will be the same across the Trust next year.

Q: (EA) Art is not on the subject attainment table, how is it going?

LT: We lost a long-term supply for art but now the department is settled. We have had Trust staff to moderate and I am happy with how it is going.

C: (GS) We have always heard how attendance is the key to achieving better outcomes, yet you only predict outcomes for the best attenders to be 50% at grade 4+. Do you think this figure will improve?

LT: Yes, we are very hopeful that good attendance will lead to good outcomes.

SW: We look forward to knowing how this round of mocks goes.

ACTION: Extraordinary meeting to be held to discuss the science offer

ACTION: February mock data to be circulated to governors ASAP

38.2 KS3 Data

- New 2-point assessment system was introduced in September to provide students and parents with a clear review of student progress in years 7, 8 and 9. A new progress report card was also launched.
- Assessments in maths, English and science in Year 7 and Year 8 indicate that students are achieving an average of approximately half marks across each subject area.
- The high prior attaining students did not perform well in any subject.
- Girls outperform boys in all subject areas in Year 8, but only in English in Year 7

C: (LT) It will take time to get the assessment correct as the knowledge when the students arrive varies widely and the end of year key stage 2 assessments show gaps in knowledge across different primary schools. The assessments show the areas required for improvement are mirrored across the cohorts. Leaders are analysing the key stage 3 data much more than previously.

Q: (SW) How do you set in key stage 3?

LT: Regarding maths, we have 34 high prior attainers. 28 of which had a significant strength in maths and went into set one and the remaining 6 joined a mixed ability class. Year 8 are streamed 1- 5 with 1-3 being tiered and 4 and 5 being mixed ability. With us being a small school, we have timetabling constraints.

Q: (AB) Do you use CATs or SATs to set?

LT: We use a combination of both; we look at the SATs results but if there are outliers we look at CAT scores.

Q: (MM) Looking at the new progress report for parents, does it make sense measuring the student's progress against themselves?

SW: This is the first time I've seen this report, and I found it confusing. How is it being received by parents?

LT: We have had really positive feedback from parents and students.

Q: (SW) But would parents be aware of their child's key stage 2 scores?

LT: Yes, that information would be on the report card so the parents know where the child sits in the group. We have tried to simplify the reports, but also take into account the prior attainment.

C: (JN) I would suggest the next time that governors drop in for their visits they look through the reports as they are easier to understand with the real data.

Q: (LOD) How do you ensure that the high prior attainers are sufficiently challenged if they are in mixed sets?

LT: The teachers adapt the lessons to stretch and challenge the higher ability.

Q: (LOD) You have stated that you have experienced staffing issues, how do you use cover staff?

LT: We tend to use cover in Year 7 and 8 and have had to move staff around when there is long term absence, but it is down to each curriculum leader's ability to look at what is needed to fill gaps in their area.

JN: We made an appointment in January for an English teacher and English will be in a much better position for this appointment. Maths is fully staffed, the only school in the Trust with a full maths team. There is an absence in science, but the cover staff member is particularly good.

39 ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR REPORT

39.1 Attendance Report

- Whole school attendance to date is 93.7% (same period last year was 91.6%)
- Year 11 attendance is 93.4%
- Boys' attendance is 94%, girls' 93.4%
- Non – PP attendance is 94.5%, PP 90.9%
- Non – SEND 94.1%, SEND 91.3%
- 13.4% students have 100% attendance
- 17.6% students are persistently absent (attendance of <90%)

39.2 Behaviour Report

- Behaviour continues to improve
- 109.5 days have been lost to 84 suspensions since the start of September (comparable period last year was 213.5 days lost)
- There have been 84 suspensions involving 35 students
- Most suspensions were boys

- Most suspensions are by Year 9, zero in Year 7
- There have been 2 permanent exclusions
- Significant decrease in classroom removals year on year (711 in HT2 2023 compared to 348 HT2 2024)
- 22 students are on an individual behaviour support plan

Q: (SW) *This is a really good report, thank you. How are you feeling about attendance?*

JD: *Positive, but I am looking into why there is a dip across all schools on Fridays. We have tried different initiatives but there is still a difference on Fridays.*

C: (GS) *The different group attendance (SEND and PP) is very good, I would expect the total school attendance to be higher.*

JD: *Yes, all SLT have a different year group to support to improve attendance. I am working with Year 11 and over a 4-week period, 75% have improved their attendance.*

Q: (SW) *It is great that suspensions have reduced, but why is this?*

JD: *The behaviour curriculum has led to students and staff understanding the expectations very clearly. The number of removals has also much improved. We are really pleased with Year 7 behaviour with zero suspensions.*

SI: *Year 7 are incredible and follow the values to the letter.*

C: (EA) *Year 11 behaviour has improved significantly from when that cohort were in Year 10.*

JN: *It's about students understanding the Howden way. The norm is now quite different to what it was.*

Q: (GS) *Is there cause for concern with behaviour in Year 9?*

JD: *Year 9 has a high number of students with a support plan and a high proportion of PP students. There are only around 15 students that struggle to self-regulate and need more pastoral care. The number of rewards is high in Year 9 too. Yes, Year 9 is a focus, but last year we were having 80-100 removals per week from this group.*

C: (LS) *They are not displaying high level behaviours.*

40 SAFEGUARDING REPORT (date cumulative from Sept)

- Non-teaching DSL appointed 6 January 2025. Since the appointment RS has reviewed processes and made strategic changes to enhance the already high standards of safeguarding across the school
- There is 1 child protection case and 10 children in need
- 5 children looked after (CLA)
- Schools Safeguarding carried out an audit 26 November 2024 and the results were extremely positive. The auditor stated *"The Headteacher's leadership on the school's improvement journey is widely recognised as inspirational and the children I met were a delight to engage with. Without exception, everyone devoted their time, showing a willingness and commitment to engage with the process and ensuring that safeguarding is as strong as possible"*. SS, as Safeguarding Link Governor, was also praised as demonstrating *"extensive knowledge of both local and Trust- wide safeguarding procedures, meeting regularly with the Lead DSL to obtain necessary assurances regarding safe practices and compliance."*
- 61 Smoothwall alerts – (51 Level 3 and 10 Level 4)
- There have been 12 Operation Encompass alerts
- There were 36 logs of inappropriate sexual behaviour

Q: (SW to RS) *Very warm welcome. How have you settled in?*

RS: *I have had a great welcome and really enjoyed my first 6 weeks. The bar was remarkably high to follow with a glowing recent external report. All amber issues raised on the report were issues around Trust policies. I am here to maintain the very high standards and introduce new ideas to*

grow safeguarding. I have already made minor changes, such as assigning CPOMs cases to members of staff and using full names of externals and staff in the CPOMs logs. When I joined there were 250 active CPOMs cases, that figure is now 100. The cases mounted up as they were not assigned to members of staff. As I am non-teaching, I have my full capacity to act swiftly. The parents, all staff and the students have been great. Regarding the high number of inappropriate sexualised behaviour logs we have had the police on site and have an assigned officer.

JN: The safeguarding report by Schools Safeguarding was phenomenal and that is thanks to JD.

41 GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Link visits have taken place in safeguarding and community. All other Links need to conduct a spring term visit and send the completed report form to GS by 16 April latest.

During the Community Link visit the appetite for a PTA was discussed. It was agreed that this should be explored.

ACTION: JN to introduce the idea of a PTA committee in the school newsletter

42 NEXT MEETING DATE

Thursday 24 April 2025 at 5.30pm (pre-meet 4.45pm)

43 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

43.1 Unsocial Behaviour

It was raised that on Facebook there had been talk of unsocial behaviour in Howden. JD and RS attended a meeting, but it was behaviour from primary school children.

43.2 Policies

The Online Safety Policy and RSE Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting and governors had responded with suggested amends.

Resolved: Governors were content to approve both policies after the suggested amendments were implemented

44 AGREED ACTION POINTS

44.1 ACTION: JN to explore resources to improve comms (minute 35.2)

44.2 ACTION: Reason for leavers to be logged in each HT Report (minute 37)

44.3 ACTION: SI to share the subject curriculum reviews (minute 37)

44.4 ACTION: Extraordinary meeting to be held to discuss the science offer (minute 38.1)

44.5 ACTION: February mock data to be circulated to governors ASAP (minute 38.1)

44.6 ACTION: JN to introduce the idea of a PTA committee in the school newsletter (minute 42)

SW thanked everyone for their hard work and closed the meeting at 7.50pm

