HECKMONDWIKE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Full Governing Body Minutes

Time & Date:	5.00pm – Wednesday 11.12.24
Venue:	In school
Governors Present:	Derek Cross - Chair Mark Tweedle David Hall Sue Doubell Nicky Stokoe Matthew Pinder Lalit Surywanshi Keith Wilson Mohammed Hans Jonathan Hodgson Peter Roberts – Headteacher
Non-Voting Attendees:	Nicky Thomas - Deputy Headteacher Richard Tipler – Deputy Headteacher Natalie Loxley – Finance Director Simon Taylor – Assistant Headteacher Jody Dunn – Clerk
Meeting Quorate:	Yes

1. Welcome & Apologies

Apologies were noted from Michele Brooke.

DC welcomed all to the meeting and congratulated the school on being named the 'Secondary School of the Year' and 'Secondary School of the Year for Academic Excellence' in The Sunday Times Parent Power Survey 2025. HGS is now officially ranked No 1 secondary school in the north of England. The board agreed this was tremendous and passed on their congratulations to the whole staff body.

2. Declarations of interests – None.

3. Safeguarding, Attendance & Behaviour update

SAT drew governors' attention to the report provided prior to the meeting, noting that all data included was new since the previous meeting.
He highlighted that the school was in the top 10% of schools nationally for attendance, however punctuality had recently declined, largely owing to the late arrival of buses. He noted the remarkedly low number of suspensions during the term and the positive results of the student survey, before opening to questions.

SD highlighted the notably high number of unauthorised absences in year 9 and asked for the reasons behind it. SAT advised that this was due to parents taking students out of school to visit family overseas. This led to a discussion around unauthorised absence and how the school's current procedures and attendance data is communicated with parents. SAT advised that the schools attendance policy has recently been updated, giving the option to impose fines should it be deemed necessary. A discussion was then had around year 13 attendance data and that the school is above average in Kirklees. The most recent Kirklees data shows that school sixth form attendance was 93.3% in Year 12, 90.6% in Year 13 therefore 91.9% overall at the end of the Spring term 2023-24.

Governors thanked SAT for his time and he left the meeting.

4. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of previous meeting were approved as a true record of the meeting and all actions were confirmed complete.

C&S – KW gave a brief update of what was covered at the recent C&S meeting, including the approval of staff pay awards. PDR picked up the social media comments that were highlighted by a governor during the meeting and explained what these were and what action had been taken. He urged governors to make the school aware immediately if they were to come across anything like this on social media moving forward.

F&R – JH then updated governors on the items of the F&R, informing that the auditors from Mazars had joined the meeting and requested that the approval of the financial statements. He explained the going concerns and that the information provided to the committee was very detailed and solid, with very little comments for a school this size. The board advised they were happy to approve the financial accounts for 23-24 in readiness for the submission to the ESFA.

JH then gave an update on the CIF bids, in particular the new perimeter fencing bid. He informed the board that the cost of the project had increased since last time, though due to the nature of the bid (safeguarding) the committee were happy to support the increased contribution. PDR reminded the board of the reasons as to why this bid wasn't successful the previous year. JH also updated them on the costs of the roofing bid. The board agreed they were happy to support these.

Governors were then brought up to date on the Health & Safety audit recommendations and how in response to this the F&R committee had agreed to commission a third party to carry out an annual inspection to provide reassurance. The board again agreed to support this.
A discussion was then had about following up on some of the other concerns raised in the report; it was noted that Peter and Natalie would routinely do this and report back to the board.

5. Executive Summaries

PDR asked governors for questions on any of the summaries provided prior to the meeting. DC noted the significant increase in SARs and FOR within the school community report and asked why this was. NJL advised these were largely on the back of the entrance exam, with many of them coming from one individual. This led to a discussion around the time and effort responding to these, with NJL advising she is liaising with Veritau (DPO provider) about this. Within the same report, the amount raised for Children in Need was noted, with governors congratulating all involved in the fantastic fundraising.

MP picked up on the pupil premium report, informing governors that he had just met with Megan Maguire (PP lead) in school to discuss this, noting he was really happy with the work being done in this area.

Some discussion was had around the Sixth Form summary, and governors asked how the open evening had gone.

Further discussion was had around the format of the documents, with governors expressing mixed views on this. PDR advised that these were working documents of the SLT and that he would ensure that all information would be current moving forward, given the number of highlighted errors spotted this time.

6. School Development Plan

PDR advised governors that despite their recommendation to try to condense the SDP, it wasn't possible due to the information required, given it is a central working document for SLT. Discussion was had around the red areas, with PDR noting that these were often the lowest priority, therefore resulting in the low progress had been made.

Governors asked what PDR felt the biggest focus was and if there are any barriers to overcome in order to achieve these. This sparked a discussion around Sixth Form, in particular new admissions. PDR advised that some positive change was now evident as a

result of the new processes and procedures, leading to further discussion around valued added and Alps grades.

The discussion then moved to the leadership and management section and succession planning within SLT and the wider staff body. It was agreed that this area could be fleshed out, to give details of the departmental vulnerabilities, which PDR agreed to do.
Governors noted the SDP was a great and thorough document, providing a great overview of the objectives and work carried out. MP suggested adding a formula to highlight the progress being made in each section. PDR agreed this would be useful and would add this in.

7. Self-Evaluation Form

PDR gave a brief overview of each section of the form and explained the judgement gradings for each, leading to discussion. He noted the excellent work for Nicky Thomas and Megan Maguire with regards to the quality of education and advised governors that the leadership and management focus of Ofsted is very much on the subject leaders. Discussions were had around how the evaluation links to the school development plan in terms of the key focus areas, again leading to more in-depth discussion around sixth form.
Governors asked about the external reviews that had taken place and the actions taken on the back of their outcomes. NJT advised on this and the QA processes that are now in place. PDR added that internal expertise within school now outweighs many of the external input we have had, though an external perspective is useful.

A discussion was had around the likelihood of the next Ofsted inspection and the school's readiness. Governors noted they were supportive of the work being done and the impact is evident in the fantastic student outcomes.

8. Governor School Visits Update

As per the agenda, the main visit for discussion this evening was that of the recently formed working party.

JH declared an interest at this point, given his son would be sitting the next entrance exam.

MT gave an update as to how this had come about, reminding governors that the working party had been formed with the aim of coming up with some ideas as to how to attract more local children to sit the entrance exam. As outlined in the comprehensive paperwork provided ahead of the meeting, MT advised that the party had analysed three-years' worth of data of those sitting the test and those meeting the standard and explained the findings.

Robust discussions were had around the admissions policy, the catchment area, the pass mark of the test and the selection process of those meeting the standard. Healthy debate was had around some potential concerns raised by some members of the working party, in particular the reduction in numbers of students in the catchment area and the potential reasons for this.

The chair reminded governors of the aim and focus of the working party and of the decisions previously made by the board.

Discussions were then had around ways in which stronger relationships could be made with local schools. RGT informed governors of some of the potential strategies to build stronger relationships with local schools that he had come up with.

PDR advised of the outreach work currently taking place and his recent meeting with a local primary school headteacher, leading to wider discussion around the other potential strategies.

The item was concluded with governors agreeing that any further points in relation to the issues discussed should be referred back to the C&S committee initially. Governors noted that they would be interested to see how many appeals follow the entrance exam this year given the changes.

9. Policies for approval – 2026 Admissions Arrangements

RGT noted that the only changes to the policy were the dates which were highlighted.

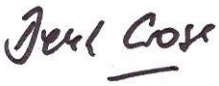
Following the conversations had under the last item, a robust discussion was had around the word 'combine' and how this could be misleading or confusing. Following healthy debate, it was agreed to remove the word and simply replace it with the word 'use'. Further lengthy discussion was had around the wording of 25% criterion in the admissions policy, and how this could potentially misleading for parent. To conclude, the chair suggested the board take a vote to determine whether reference to this should be removed. There was a majority vote to remove refernce to 25% criteriean.
RGT advised he would be happy to remove it and believed such a change would not require going out to consultation but would seek clarification from the solicitor first. (clarification has since been obtained from the school's solicitors and they confirmed no consultation is necessary).

10. AOB – None

11. . Meeting Review

JDN conducted the review, asking the usual questions around the meetings effectiveness and efficiently. A discussion was has around managing time and contributions in meetings.

Actions		Who
1.	Flesh out the Leadership & Management section of the SDP to include department vulnerabilities	PDR
2.	Add a formula to highlight the progress being made in each section of the SDP	PDR/RGT/JDN

Governance Requirement: Minutes signed as true and accurate record of the meeting.	
Signature: 	Derek Cross Chair of Governors