



HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Full Governing Body Minutes

Time & Date:	Thursday 2 nd October 2025
Venue:	In school
Governors Present:	Nick Cockerill Derek Cross – Chair Sue Doubell David Hall Mohammed Hans Jonathan Hodgson – virtual until 6pm Ross Oxby Matthew Pinder Lalit Suryawanshi Mark Tweedle Keith Wilson Peter Roberts – Headteacher
Non-Voting Attendees:	Jody Dunn – Clerk Natalie Loxley – Finance Director Richard Tipler – Deputy Headteacher Simon Taylor – Assistant Headteacher James Longridge – Assistant Headteacher
Meeting Quorate:	Yes

1. Welcome & Apologies

JDN welcomed all to the meeting and advised she would be chairing the meeting until the election of the Chair had taken place. Apologies were noted from Michele Brooke. Jonathan informed he had to leave the meeting early due to other commitments.

2. Declarations of interests

JDN asked for any declaration of interests and asked governors to complete and return the forms issued.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors

JDN explained that 2 weeks ago she had advised governors that the current Chair, Derek Cross and Vice Chair, Jonathan Hodgson, would like to seek re-appointment in their respective roles and asked governors for further nominations. JDN explained that no further nominations had been submitted therefore they would both continue in their respective roles. All governors confirmed they were in support of the reappointments.

4. Election of Sub-committee Chairs

C&S

Similarly, JDN explained that she had previously advised governors that the current Chair of the C&S committee, Keith Wilson, would like to seek re-appointment and asked for further nominations. JDN confirmed that no further nominations had been submitted therefore Keith would remain as chair of the C&S committee.

F&R

JDN explained that Jonathan Hodgson had advised he would like to step down as F&R chair and had nominated Nick Cockerill for the role, to which Nick was in agreement. Again, no further nominations had been received and all governors were in support of Nick being appointed.

5. Executive Summaries

Safeguarding, attendance and behaviour update.

SAT drew governor attention to the executive summary provided ahead of the meeting and advised of an error in the persistent absenteeism section.

He noted attendance is generally excellent, and that HGS is in the top 10% in the country. He advised the new information was highlighted and opened to questions.

A robust discussion was had around the number of suspensions and the reasons for these. MP asked if it would be possible to include yearly comparison figures, to which SAT agreed to include. SAT advised that he expected the number to decrease this academic year, leading to a discussion around the previous year's year 7 cohort and the potential reasons for the behaviour the school has seen. MT noted he felt it would be useful to look at the number of days of the suspensions and the impact that they have, again, SAT agreed to have a look at this. LS questioned the number of racist incidents logged, leading to a discussion around the context of these and how these are handled/managed in school. A discussion was had around Prevent and the processes around this, with SAT updating on the schools' experiences. NC asked about the data provided within the report and asked if/how this is used within school, to which SAT explained.

SAT reminded governors that they also required to read Part 2 of the KCSIE 2025 guidance and asked them to read and confirm this asap.



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DC suggested that this would be a suitable point to cover the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, whilst SAT was still present. SAT noted the new policy was in-line with the LA model policy and included lots more information for governing body awareness. A discussion was had around the number of DDSL's in school, prompting MP to suggest that perhaps the governing body should have a secondary Safeguarding Link governor to sit alongside Sue, given safeguarding is such a big statutory area and to ensure succession. The board agreed with this, and LS put himself forward. SAT advised he would be in contact.

It was noted that there was no name listed as the designated teacher for looked after children. SAT confirmed he was in with arranging this, however noted there are no looked after children in school at the moment.

The policy was approved.

SAT left the meeting at 5.35.

6. Sixth form Action Plan

JAL opened the presentation by providing the 2024-25 a-level results analysis and advising that HGS's A* - B and A* - A were the highest across the local authority and higher than the nearest school/college by approximately 5% (for those grade boundaries) and that this year we had double the national average number of students going to Cambridge.

He noted that the school is currently on an Alps 6, which is obviously disappointing and not where he wanted to be. He then looked at the grades by gender, ethnicities, etc, as well as prior attainment bands. He spoke briefly on a subject level and the impact of the big hitting subjects such as Biology, Chemistry and Maths.

JAL then went on to explain the limiting factors as to why he believed the alps grade was not better and provided a comprehensive review of the work carried out throughout the year. He demonstrated his evaluation of the effectiveness of each and outlined some potential improvement strategies. Following this, he drew attention to the 2025-26 action plan and explained the priorities including the covering of sixth form lessons, subject actions plan, assessment accuracy, inclusive and adaptive teaching and the new year 12 induction programme. He then opened to questions.

Q. Do we have a breakdown of internal vs. external Pakistani students?

A. Yes, we do. However, many students fall into multiple demographic categories, which makes the data complex to interpret.

Q. What are we doing to stretch our top-performing students?

A. This is addressed through quality-first teaching, super-curricular activities and wide range of enrichment and support opportunities

Q. What measures are in place to tackle the use of Ai / plagiarism?

A. We are currently developing formal policies, and some departments are already using tools to detect it.

Q. Why is Chemistry underperforming compared to the other sciences?

A. This was discussed in detail. JAL noted it was ultimately to teachers to adapt their methods to better meet student needs.

Q. In relation to cover, is there a particular issue with absence in Sixth Form teachers?

A. No, there is no specific problem. Absences are generally due to trips and other legitimate reasons.

Q. Is SLT involved in providing cover?

A. Yes, absolutely. This has a positive impact and provides opportunities to observe and refine internal processes.

Q. Why are we accepting students who may not fit the traditional grammar school profile? Isn't this creating additional workload?

A. All admitted students meet the entry requirements and have achieved the necessary grades. We have looked at this issue multiple times—changing our intake would significantly impact us financial, as it has before, and of course staffing. This led to a discussion around offering courses such as b-techs, and with RGT advising that to run these courses we would require staffing to be secured in advance therefore is a risk, and not in line with the traditional grammar school. This is something to consider in the long-term strategic planning.

Q. How does ALPS data reflect our value-added performance, especially for high-attaining students?

A. ALPS provides a strong indication of value-added and there is a high correlation with Progress 8 scores. It is to recognise that students with high starting points face different challenges.

Governors thanked JAL for his time and information.

DC suggested that the board look at the Sixth Form Admissions Policy before JAL left the meeting. JAL advised that the policy was largely unchanged, with the exception of the last paragraph in section 7, advising that students who are struggling will be asked to reconsider their subject choices to better align with their strengths and academic goals.



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RNO asked about impact of moving to another subject, and expressed concerns that these students may have little interest in the new subjects and will have missed lots of content. JAL noted he and SLT had agonised over this, and there was no perfect situation.

A robust discussion was had around baseline assessments and building on knowledge and plugging gaps. JAL explained what the assessment is testing and advised of the 70 students who have just been identified to need these conversations.

The policy was approved and JAL left the meeting.

7. Committee Membership & Structure Review

A couple of amendments to be made were identified, some following the meetings developments, and some missing link governors. JDN agreed to update.

A discussion was had around the links between safeguarding and health and safety. It was noted that DC was the link governor in a number of areas and this could potentially be too much. MP volunteered to become a secondary Health and Safety link.

JDN explained that staff governors are no longer a separate category of governor for academies and that the updated Academy Trust Handbook states that no employees other than the CEO should serve as governors.

PDR informed that we will soon be looking for a sustainability link governor, as it will be a requirement to have one, in-line with the new need for a school sustainability lead and policy.

8. Terms of Reference / Code of Conduct – Review

JDN advised of a few minor amendments made. Governors confirmed they had reviewed these and were happy to support. All governors present signed to adopt and agree to the code of conduct.

9. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

C&S – KW gave a brief overview of the meeting and noted an error to be amended.

F&R – As JH already left the meeting at this point, he sent across the following update to be included: In terms of my F&R update, I want to express my gratitude to Nick for taking over the reins! Here's a few key items to note in the minutes:

- We reviewed the ToR and workplan.

- We noted, and confirmed read, the changes to the Academies Trust Handbook.
- We were especially pleased with the 2024/25 outturn of a £83k surplus, prior to depreciation. However, we discussed the delay in the management accounts, noting some mitigations and thanks to Natalie for the recent June accounts. We also noted this risk and recognised that we were still in breach of the ATH.
- We discussed the delay to the Powell extension and the potential for legal intervention.
- We noted the improved trend in the catering contract, subject to some supply issues.
- We noted Derek's absence for his item and a robust discussion was had around the effectiveness of the risk register. Governors offered to assist in further developing this.
- We accepted and are recommending to FGB the rationale for our 2024/25 accounts being prepared on a going concern basis.

NJL advised of the going concern in JH's absence, advising that the committee was recommending adoption from the FGB. All agreed and the going concern was adopted.

Governors asked for an update on the carbon monoxide issue discovered in the Powell building. PDR brought the board up to date with what had happened the previous week and that he had since had a call with the HSE who are following the issue through. He noted he had also since received a report from the engineer who had done the calculations of potential risk, and it came back to be minimal. He advised the MP and DC had been into school to see that the issue had been appropriately recorded and what mitigations in place to prevent happening again. MP and DC advised they were satisfied that the situation was appropriately dealt with.

Minutes of previous meeting – These were approved as a true record of the meeting JDN gave an update on the progress of the actions.

Actions:

- Share tender report on Governorhub – complete
- Look into paying for music exams for PP students – complete and can do.
- Create an action plan for creating a long-term strategy and vision – Meeting scheduled
- Make suggested policy edits – complete

10. Work Programme 25-26 - This was approved.

11. Policies for approval

- Child Protection/Safeguarding – approved in earlier item
- Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2026 Entry – approved in earlier item



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- Pay Policy – NJL advised that the changes are in line with the national guidelines. A question was asked about recruitment incentives. Pay progression and the level of information provided to governors was discussed. The policy was approved.
- Developing Performance & Capability – NJL advised that nothing had changed, this is just an annual review, though we are going to be adding to it in the near future in line with the sixth form action plan. MP suggested including the definitions of substantial and sustained in the glossary as not clear. The policy was approved.
- Admissions Arrangements 2027 – RGT advised that the only date changes. MP noted he had some observations that he had shared directly with RGT ahead of the meeting – including:
 - Provide a section on how the school supports disadvantaged applicants (beyond Pupil Premium priority), e.g., bursary support for travel or test prep resources.
 - Consider requiring joint parental agreement or at least copying both parents (if both hold parental responsibility) to reduce future disputes.
 - Considering some simpler terminology
 - Consider a summary document for parents

A discussion was had around these and RGT responded to which he agreed with and provided reasoning as to why there were in as they were. The difference between information and policy was also discussed. MT raised the wording of the policy and the ability range of those meeting the standard, and how selective ability is defined. A lengthy discussion was had, and PDR noted that this had been discussed the last time the policy was reviewed and a vote was taken resulting in the removal of the reference to 25% criterion. Further discussion was had around the need for the policy to be broad to allow the school flexibility. Following further lengthy discussion, and uncertainty of how to move forward, it was suggested that the school provides two separate policies, one incorporating the governor suggestions, in which the board can take a vote. This was agreed.

12. Meeting review

JDN ran through the meeting review. One governor suggested the way that policies are reviewed could be reflected on and would send an email to advise.

Actions		Who
1.	Include yearly comparison suspension figures in the summary	SAT
2.	Look at total number of days of the suspension and the impact they have	SAT

3.	Contact Lalit re safeguarding link role	SAT
4.	Update committee structure sheet	JDN
5.	Create a second policy for governors to take a vote on	RGT

Governance Requirement: Minutes signed as true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signature: Derek Cross

Derek Cross
Chair of Governors