



## Part 1 Minutes of the Meeting of the FULL GOVERNING BODY of Helsby High School

<b>Date:</b>	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 5.00pm	
<b>Venue:</b>	School	
<b>Present:</b>	I Devereux-Roberts (ID-R) Chair H Coy (HC) – Vice Chair M Hill (MH) M Garvey (MG) T O'Neill (TO'N) N Davies (ND) A Canham (AC) A Heald (AH) K Lowe (KL)	Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Head Teacher LA Governor Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Co-opted Governor
<b>Apologies:</b>	A Critchley R Allertson S Harrison	
<b>In attendance:</b>	S Warburton A Prichard-Roberts M Vickers John Addison	Senior Deputy Head Teacher Deputy Headteacher School Business Manager Clerk

**The meeting met its quorum.**

**Decisions, actions and areas of challenge during discussions indicated in bold text**

<b>Agenda item 1</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	Apologies were received and accepted from A Critchley, S Harrison and R Allertson
<b>Agenda item 2</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>The Governing Body considered the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 23rd September 2024.</p> <p>Governors held a discussion around the current practice of continuing to publish the FGB minutes on the school website or to simply publish the agenda and a summary of the minutes. Such a course of action would in no way impair the ability of any person to request a copy of the minutes</p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>That the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 23rd September 2024 be approved as a correct record.</b></li> <li><b>That in future the agenda along with a summary of the FGB minutes be published on the school website</b></li> </ol>

<b>Agenda item 3</b>	<b>ACTION LOG</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	The Action Log was reviewed and updated.
<b>Agenda item 4</b>	<b>SUMMER 2024 EXAMINATION RESULTS</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>MH advised that the summer 2024 examination results had been discussed at the meeting of the Quality of Education Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024, however, owing to the limited attendance at the meeting, the Chair asked that the proposed presentation be deferred to the next FGB so that all Governors had the opportunity to discuss them.</p> <p>Accordingly, Governors were asked to refer to minute 6 of the Quality of Education Committee which was to be read in conjunction with the detailed presentation delivered by AP-R which outlined the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yr13 attainment which was an improvement on previous years, however, there was no update on progress until 2025. There had been some really good achievements in certain subjects, but AP-R advised caution in reviewing the performance in certain subjects as small cohort numbers had a disproportionate impact on outcomes;</li> <li>• Progress 8 estimates +0.09 but there would be a second update in 2025 to address some perceived anomalies. AP-R confirmed that the P8 estimates were impacted by a small number of students who did not engage in education.</li> <li>• P8 estimates by bucket AP-R commented on the performance of various subjects but pointed out that the MFL score although negative, was a very good outcome for a school offering German and French</li> <li>• PP Student Progress – this showed -0.96 but AP-R commented that this cohort contained the vast majority of children who didn't attend or engage in school. Should these children be removed then the score would be around -0.65</li> <li>• Progress by PA</li> <li>• English and Maths Attainment – AP-R advised that these figures contained some inconsistencies. <b>HC asked what these were. AP-R commented that these centred around marking, robust assessment and classroom practice. HC asked if school was continuing to review teaching practices. AP-R advised that school had raised the expectations within these Departments about what was required to achieve a Grade 4 or 5. School had put a great deal of CPD in place both internal and external in order to support the raised expectations.</b></li> <li>• Ebacc Attainment</li> <li>• EnMa 4+ and 5+</li> <li>• New Performance Measures</li> <li>• Next Steps</li> <li>• Quality of Education – Classroom Expectations</li> </ul> <p><b>ND referred to section 2 of the Classroom Expectations slide and asked what constituted a trauma informed approach. ID-R responded that this referred to the Our way Of Working approach specifically, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which could impact on how children learned and how to approach a child who had experienced this.</b></p> <p><b>In relation to the new performance measures, ND asked what was included in the Yr11 destination measure. This was explained as where a student had continued in education or gone into employment</b></p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That AP-R be thanked for her informative presentation.</b>
<b>Agenda item 5</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE ISSUES</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p><u>Membership of the FGB</u></p> <p>Governors were advised that all terms of office were current</p>

	<p>In respect of the vacancies for Co-opted Governors, MH advised that there had been some historic expressions of interest. ID-R suggested that he and MH should seek to re-establish contact with these persons to see if they were still interested in becoming a Governor.</p> <p>The outcomes from the Skills Audit showed that there were no areas of significant weakness in the FGB.</p>		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That MH and ID-R progress efforts to seek Co-opted Governors.</b>		
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p><u>Committee Reports</u></p> <p>Governors reviewed each Committee's terms of reference.</p> <p>The Governing Body received the following committee reports:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of Education Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024;</li> <li>• Resources Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024; and</li> <li>• PDBA Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024</li> </ul> <p>Each Committee Chair gave a brief resume of the discussions at their respective committee.</p>		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<p><b>1. That the Committee terms of reference be approved with the next review being undertaken at the meeting of the FGB in September 2025.</b></p> <p><b>2. That the Committee reports be noted.</b></p>		
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p><u>Training Undertaken</u></p> <p>ID-R advised that he would be undertaken Level 3 safeguarding training in January 2025</p>		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the report be noted</b>		
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p><u>Governor Visits</u></p> <p>HC advised that she had attended the Health and Safety Audit undertaken by the local authority and which had elicited very positive feedback.</p> <p>ID-R advised that Governors had been present at various Curriculum Review meetings</p>		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the report be received</b>		
<b>Action:</b>	<b>What:</b>	<b>Who:</b>	<b>When:</b>
	Efforts progress to appoint Co-opted Governors	MH ID-R	ASAP
	Committee terms of reference be reviewed at the meeting of the FGB in September 2025	JA	Sept 2025
<b>Agenda item 6</b>	<b>REQUEST FOR A REDUCTION IN THE SCHOOL'S PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER</b>		
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>Governors were reminded that at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024, the FGB had approved an application being made to Cheshire West and Chester Council to reduce the school's Published Admission Number (PAN).</p> <p>Notification had been received from the local authority that it could not support the application for a number of reasons which were detailed in a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and circulated to Governors in the papers for this meeting</p>		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That a response be made to the local authority once the year 7 cohort numbers for September 2025 were known.</b>		
<b>Agenda Item 8</b>	<b>2023-2026 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (L&amp;M) SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN</b>		
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>Governors received evaluations of the 2023/24 School Development Plan (SDP) and an SSE Update and the 2024/25 SDPs for Leadership and Management, including Governing Body, Mental Health and Wellbeing and Parental Engagement</p>		

<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the 2023/24 evaluations and the 2024/25 SDPs for Leadership and Management be received.</b>
<b>Agenda Item 9</b>	<b>2023-2026 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (L&amp;M) SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	Governors received the 6 <sup>th</sup> Form evaluations of the 2023/24 School Development Plan (SDP) and an SSE Update and the 2024/25 SDP.
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the 6<sup>th</sup> Form 2023/24 evaluations and the 2024/25 SDP be received</b>
<b>Agenda item 10</b>	<b>2024-2025 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - OVERVIEW</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>The Governing Body received a leaflet which detailed the School Priorities as detailed in the School Development Plan in the areas of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of Education;</li> <li>• SEND</li> <li>• Behaviour and Attitudes,</li> <li>• Personal Development</li> <li>• Leadership and Management; and'</li> <li>• 6<sup>th</sup> Form</li> </ul> <p><b>MG referred to the SEND priorities and the progress to become a fully inclusive school. MH stated that school believed that becoming a fully inclusive school was more than just SEND and that school needed to know what inclusion meant. MG suggested that this could have resource implications.</b></p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the update on the School Priorities be noted.</b>
<b>Agenda item 11</b>	<b>HEADTEACHERS REPORT</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>The Headteacher submitted his report which began with the statement that this had been a very long term (one week longer than the last few previous years), but a very purposeful one with plenty to update governors on ...</p> <p><b>School Development Planning</b> A key aspect of the Senior Leadership Team's work this term had been the completion of the 2024-25 School Development Plans which had been presented at governors' meetings. As in the last couple of years, an absence of significant national direction with regard to education had allowed our plans to focus on on-going development and the addressing of known areas for improvement. MH suspected that the 2025-26 plans would look significantly different though, as they were likely to focus on responding to the new government's plans and priorities as they became clearer over the next 6 months or so. With a new Education Bill and Ofsted Inspection Framework likely to emerge early in the new year, it was likely that 2025 would provide an opportunity for a significant, and not necessarily unwelcome, review of the school's work, priorities, systems and processes.</p> <p><b>KS4 Performance Tables</b> These were published last week and revealed nothing that school wasn't already aware of thanks to the unofficial figures produced by the collaboration of schools that used the SISRA software package to track and analyse student progress data. The Performance Tables confirmed the strengths of our 2024 Year 11 data as Maths and Science progress, EBacc entry/achievement and the performance of many subject areas. They also showed clearly our two main areas of focus: English and student attendance. Improvement in these two areas was key to shifting a third, overarching priority: the performance of disadvantaged students.</p> <p><b>Year 11 and 13 Progress</b> Students from both Year 11 and Year 13 completed their first set of Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs or 'mocks') earlier this term, which was always a key point in the academic year for</p>

monitoring progress and identifying areas for intervention - aspects which were then emphasised in reports and at Parents' Evenings. Year 13 were making good progress, similar to previous years. Comparing Year 11 progress to previous years was very difficult though as the fact they did not do Key Stage 2 'SATs' (in 2020, due to the pandemic) meant that expectations could only be estimated from the 'CAT' tests they took in Year 7. All school could do was track their achievement against their ambitious targets whilst they were in Year 11 and then try to hold staff accountable respectively through comparison with the performance of students in other schools (which certainly won't be an exact science). Next year's Performance Tables would only show 'attainment' measures such as % students at Grade 4+ in English and Maths. Hence school was trying to shift the focus of work with Year 11 to respond to these priority areas, whilst still trying not to lose the 'progress' mentality ('every student, every subject, every grade' counts) that had been embedded so completely in recent years (and would return with our current Year 9 cohort in 2027).

#### **Performance-Related Pay**

Not unlinked to the issue of accountability for 2025 GCSE results, most schools appear to be taking up the newly-introduced option of removing performance-related pay from their pay policies. However, only when the Local Authority publishes its Model Pay Policy (which they were still consulting with unions on) would Governors be able to decide how school should progress on this issue as a school. **HC asked why this was being removed. MH advised that the Government had given schools the option of removing performance related pay. All the teaching unions didn't believe in performance related pay. HC asked how would school decide if a teacher deserved a pay award. MH commented that there would be automatic pay progression or capability if it was felt that the teacher was not performing as they should. ID-R stated that he hoped things would be clearer once the local authority published its Pay Policy**

#### **Attendance**

Student attendance was a key focus for the school, both in terms of our current position and also the national focus on this area, which was only likely to increase in the near future. Staffing instability in this area had been a significant issue in recent years and so embedding the work of a new team had been a key priority this term. To date, overall attendance in this academic year was improved in comparison to 2023-24, however disadvantaged student attendance remained a real concern and challenge for the school.

#### **SLT Review of Ofsted Areas For Improvement**

With plans for a new Ofsted Inspection Framework likely to be published in early 2025, it was currently unclear how much consideration of our current Areas For Improvement (AFIs) would form part of the next inspection process. However, they were still key foci and so it had been good to review in SLT Meetings this half-term the (significant) progress made in our AFI areas: consistency of curriculum implementation; reading and parental engagement.

#### **School Improvement Partner Work This Term**

School had started work with Mark Bayley, our new School Improvement Partner (SIP), this term. Until the summer Mark was Director of Education for Cheshire East and so had brought with him a wealth of insight and experience which school was already benefiting from. His work so far has concentrated on the following:

Autumn Term 1: Introduction to the school, planning of 2024-25 SIP work

Autumn Term 2: English intervention and Headteacher appraisal

Planned areas of focus of SIP work in the Spring Term are our work with disadvantaged students, student attendance and Pastoral Leader training. **AC commented that it would be useful for school to obtain some external validation of this.**

#### **Financial Position**

Governors who attended the recent Resources Committee Meeting would be aware that

	<p>school was on track to finish this financial year with a small surplus, thanks to careful financial management and the government meeting the costs of the teachers' pay award beyond the 1% rise that we had already budgeted for. At present, modelling is showing a significant deficit in our 2025-26 budget, however school was very likely to reduce overall staffing from September 2025 in line with an expected reduction in student numbers. Whether this staffing rationalisation was enough to balance the budget remains to be seen though. Although the cost of pay rises would be covered in future budgets, a rise of only 1% (significantly below inflation) for all other costs might ultimately mean that cuts to how school currently operated had to be made in order to balance the 2025-26 budget.</p> <p><b>FAVSP Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Developments</b></p> <p>Although the new government appeared to have an ambivalent approach to MATS, who have been described as "no longer having preferred status" with the Department of Education, it nevertheless seemed prudent to continue exploring the possibility of a MAT with partner primary schools and work had continued to this end this term. The FAVSP MAT Working Party had met on several occasions, the Chairs of Governors of the working party schools had met and a position statement produced. It will be good to share this work - and also the views of the Senior Leadership Team - with the Governing Body MAT Working Party when it convenes early next term.</p> <p><b>Festive Season</b></p> <p>Finishing the Autumn Term later this year had meant that even more of the festive season had been spent in school than in previous years, allowing us to enjoy events such as the Senior Citizens' Party, Year 7 Pantomime Visit and the Christmas Concert in Chester Cathedral with our partner primary schools. Students and families have once again been very generous with both their donations, to our Christmas Hamper Collection for example, and their time - contributing to many festive events across the local community. It is a time of year that really showcases the kindness, thoughtfulness and best of our students and their families. <b>HC commented that she had been in the Theatre along with the Yr7 on the pantomime visit and their behaviour had been exemplary and a credit to the school and staff who accompanied them.</b></p> <p>MH closed his report by thanking Governors for all their support during 2024. With a busy 2025 to look forward to ahead, your support would continue to be very much appreciated and valued by myself and the Senior Leadership Team in the new year.</p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the report be noted.</b>

<b>Agenda Item 12</b>	<b>FINANCE UPDATE</b>
	<p>The SBM reported that a full financial update had been made to the Resources Committee at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024. The following was the headline data</p> <p><b>Budget 2024-25</b></p> <p>A budget monitoring governor's report had been circulated which provided line by line details of the income and expenditure that had been incurred by the school during the current financial year 2024-25.</p> <p><b>Staff costs –</b></p> <p>The teaching pay award had applied a rise of 5.5% across the pay ranges, backdated to September 2024. School expected to receive a Core Schools Budget Grant to help with the cost of this award from September to March 2025. To date, no confirmation had been received of the grant's amount. Using the calculator provided by the DfE it would appear that school would need to fund the first 1% of the pay award, with the grant covering the rest. This was consistent with the 1% budgeted for.</p>

	<p>The support staff pay award had applied a rise of £1290 on all scale points. This was above the 1% budgeted for and was backdated to April 2024. The receipt of the Core Schools Budget Grant, mentioned above, should help with the cost of meeting this.</p> <p>Despite the award of a higher than expected pay rise for all staff, school was on course to be able to accommodate the expected wage bill from the budget. The reason for this was because of in year movement of staff since the budget was set in March and covering some vacancies with supply staff. However, it was only because of the award of the grant that school was able to make a saving on a wage bill costs this year, and the underspend would not be as significant as in previous years.</p> <p>The pay awards would be implemented in December.</p> <p>School was on course to underspend on our supply budget, though not by a significant amount.</p> <p><b>Indirect staff costs –</b> On course to remain on budget.</p> <p><b>Premises costs –</b> On course to remain under budget owing to a small saving on energy costs this year. School continued to build up the sink fund for the 3G pitch, with £75,000 saved to date, which sits within the budget as unspent expenditure.</p> <p><b>Transport costs –</b> On course to remain under budget. This was caused by the lack of expenditure on the minibus, which was scrapped in the summer of 2024.</p> <p><b>Communications &amp; IT costs –</b> On course to slightly overspend on budget, caused by higher than expected broadband costs (though our speed has increased to 2gig from 300meg) and expenditure on more software packages than anticipated.</p> <p><b>Other costs –</b> On course to be slightly overspent on budget, caused by higher than expected catering charges (though this is offset by increased income).</p> <p><b>Curriculum costs –</b> On course to slightly underspend on budget as a result of lower than expected spend on AP (alternate provision).</p> <p><b>Income</b> On course to receive higher than expected levels of income as a result of additional funding for High Needs, bank interest and receipt of the Core Schools Budget Grant. Plus the carry forward for 2023/24 was slightly higher than expected.</p> <p><b>Estimated in-year surplus</b> With 4 months of the financial year remaining, school was anticipating an in-year surplus of approximately £245,000. This was an estimated figure and could be higher. An update on this figure would be made at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>MV advised that since the meeting of the Resources Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024, notification had been received from the DfE that for 2025/26 schools should budget for a teachers' pay award of 2.8% which would not be fully funded. This would add approximately £100,000 to the school's anticipated deficit. Government had indicated that</b></p>
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	<p>they expected schools to find efficiencies to fund any shortfall. ND asked if school was already looking at any specific areas to find efficiencies. MV suggested that as staffing comprised 80% of the school budget this would be the first place to start with school already looking at SLT workload. MH stated that this would have an impact on the curriculum model used by the school.</p> <p>ND suggested that this would probably mean that teachers would be asked to do more with less which would impact on staff morale and wellbeing. MV commented that school was always mindful of staff wellbeing. HHS ensured that staff taught their specialisms which wasn't always the case in other schools. Staff would be fully consulted and kept informed of any proposals.</p> <p>Finally, ND asked if school was content that it maximised all possible income streams. MV advised that school had three sources of income. Catering which was centred around lunches and was thus price sensitive with any increases possibly leading to a fall in demand. The second area was lettings centred around the 3G pitch. MV advised that this was always fully booked. The final area was pupil numbers with school always trying to maximise numbers in Yr7 and the 6<sup>th</sup> form.</p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the financial update be noted</b>

<b>Agenda item 13</b>	<b>POLICIES</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>Governors received the following update in relation to Policies.</p> <p><b>Policies to be reviewed and ratified at this meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Admission Arrangements</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy to be ratified following review at the Resources Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charging and Remissions Policy</li> <li>- GDPR Various Policies (including ICT &amp; Email, Data Protection, Privacy Notices, Requests for Consent)</li> </ul> <p><b>Policies to be ratified following review by the Quality of Education Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexible Working Scheme Policy</li> <li>- Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Procedure</li> </ul> <p><b>Policies to be ratified following review by the Performance Development Behaviour and Attitudes Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection of Biometric Information of Students</li> <li>- Children With Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy</li> <li>- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions Policy</li> <li>- Uniform Policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the Policies be approved</b>

<b>Agenda item 14</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	SW advised that she would be circulating details of specific safeguarding training for Governors in the New Year
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the update be noted.</b>



<b>Agenda item 15</b>	<b>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>
<b>Decision:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b> <b>14<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>

**There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.40pm**