



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

Date:	Monday 24 th March 2025 at 5.00pm	
Venue:	School	
Present:	I Devereux-Roberts ID-R Chair H Coy HC Vice Chair M Hill MH A Jones AJ G Hutchinson GH C Spinks CS R Allerston RA K Lowe KL A Canham AC N Davies ND A Heald AM M Garvey MG A Kelly AK	Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Head Teacher Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Local Authority Governor Staff Governor
Apologies:	T O'Neill and S Warburton	
In attendance:	M Vickers John Addison	School Business Manager Clerk to the Governing Body

The meeting met its quorum.

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

Agenda item 1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Discussion:	The Chair welcomed all present especially to Alison Jones, Geoff Hutchinson and Claire Spinks who were attending their first FGB. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from T O'Neill and S Warburton.

Agenda item 2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
Discussion:	The Governing Body considered the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 16th December 2024. Governors received clarification around the publishing of a meeting summary on the school website.
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 16th December 2024 be approved as a correct record. 2. That the revised meeting summary arrangements published on the school website commence from the new academic year

Agenda item 3	ACTION LOG
Discussion:	<p>The Action Log was reviewed and updated.</p> <p>An action for the PDBA Committee was included in respect of a presentation from the SENDCO being made to the FGB although this would probably not take place until the implications of the current review of SEND were known.</p>
Agenda item 4	GOVERNANCE ISSUES
Discussion:	<p><u>Committee Reports</u></p> <p>The Governing Body received the following committee reports:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Education Committee held on 22nd January 2024; RA, as Chair gave a brief overview of discussions held at the meeting. AH advised that she was arranging a Career Link Governor Visit before Easter. • Resources Committee held on 11th March 2024; HC as Chair gave a brief overview of discussions held at the meeting. ID-R advised of the continuing dialogue in the sector around the pay progression within the UPS; and • PDBA Committee held on 12th February 2024. KL as Chair gave a brief overview of discussions held at the meeting paying specific attention to the ongoing efforts to improve attendance.
Resolved:	That the reports be noted
Discussion:	<p><u>Governing Body Membership</u></p> <p>Governors were advised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that Andrea Critchley, Co-opted Governor had submitted her resignation with immediate effect • that the term of office of Helen Coy, Co-opted Governor had expired on 14th March 2025 and that Helen had indicated her willingness to seek re-appointment • that school had been fortunate to secure the services Alison Jones, Geoff Hutchinson and Claire Spinks as Co-opted Governors. • that subject to the appointments indicated above, the FGB was now at full complement.
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the resignation received from Andrea Critchley be accepted and that the Governing Body place on record its thanks and appreciation for Andrea's long and dedicated service to the school. 2. That Helen Coy be re-appointed as a Co-opted Governor for a 4-year term of office to 13th March 2029. 3. That Alison Jones, Geoff Hutchinson and Claire Spinks be appointed as Co-opted Governors for a 4-year term of office to 23rd March 2029.
Discussion:	<p><u>Strategic Planning Day</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of Governing Body Strategic Planning Day held on 15th March 2025. Governors commented that they had, once again, found the day extremely useful and purposeful and that it was worthwhile continuing with the event next year. The event this year had been complemented by the attendance of Mark Bayley the School Improvement Partner and MH advised that he and Mark had discussed a possible theme for next years' event around the concept of Next-Gen Governance and a possible three year Governance Development Plan. ID-R also thanked all Governors who had attended the event • Review of 2024/25 Governing Body Development Plan – this was the subject of an in-depth discussion at the event • Governing Body Development Plan 2025/26.
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a Strategic Planning Day be scheduled for March 2026. 2. That the Governing Body Development Plan 2025/26 be approved.

Agenda item 5	RESOURCES																								
Discussion:	<p><u>2025/2026 Budget</u></p> <p>MV submitted the draft 2025/26 Budget for Governors approval.</p> <p>Governors were advised that at the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 10th March 2025, the Committee had received the draft 2025/26 Budget and 3 Year Forecast which showed as follows</p> <table><tr><th></th><th>Forecast 2025/26</th><th>Forecast 2026/27</th><th>Forecast 2027/28</th></tr><tr><td>Balance B/fwd.</td><td>532,000</td><td>0</td><td>-387,000</td></tr><tr><td>Projected Income</td><td>9,606,000</td><td>9,327,000</td><td>9,553,000</td></tr><tr><td>Projected Expenditure</td><td>9,606,000</td><td>9,714,000</td><td>10,021,000</td></tr><tr><td>In Yr surplus / deficit</td><td>0</td><td>-387,000</td><td>-468,000</td></tr><tr><td>Projected C/fwd.</td><td>0</td><td>-387,000</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>MV advised that since the meeting of the Resources Committee school had been advised that the National Insurance Grant figure had been announced and was higher than school had anticipated, and that 6th Form income had been approved and was £14,000 more than budgeted. ND asked for an explanation as to the increase in 6th Form funding. MV advised that school had used previous years factors to calculate income but the factors for 2025/26 were slightly higher so although the 6th Form numbers were the same the formula was slightly higher and thus income greater. KL asked about the amount of SEN Top Up Funding school would receive. MV advised that the increase had resulted in school receiving extra funding for pupils with EHCPs, however this income was volatile as numbers could fluctuate.</p>		Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Balance B/fwd.	532,000	0	-387,000	Projected Income	9,606,000	9,327,000	9,553,000	Projected Expenditure	9,606,000	9,714,000	10,021,000	In Yr surplus / deficit	0	-387,000	-468,000	Projected C/fwd.	0	-387,000	
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Resolved:	That the draft 2025/26 Budget be approved, signed by the Chair of Governors and submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council																								
Discussion:	<p><u>SFVS</u></p> <p>The SBM advised that TO’N had submitted to SFVS to Cheshire West and Chester Council within the authorised timescale.</p>																								
Resolved:	That the report be noted and MV and TO’N be thanked for their work on this.																								
Discussion:	<p><u>Possible Reduction in School Published Admission Number</u></p> <p>MH reminded Governors that a recent application made to Cheshire West and Chester Council to reduce the School Published Admission Number (PAN) from 225 had been rejected based on an assumption from the local authority that the 225 places would be needed to satisfy demand from local schools. School would be taking 228 students into Yr7 from September 2025, however 31 of these were from out of area catchment so if these students didn’t arrive then school would be well below its PAN with the consequent financial implications.</p> <p>MV had circulated details of historic pupil numbers from local schools which showed that if school did not take out of catchment students, then Yr7 numbers would be consistently below 200. The local authority argued that house building in the local area would increase demand, however, developments had not matched this assumption. In essence, there would always be a challenge taking enough children from FAVSP to fill 225 places in Yr7. This assumption did not change in the projections for pupil numbers in the medium term.</p> <p>MG commented that he viewed HHS as a community school which catered for the local community and had its own identity. AH asked if there were any specific primary schools outside of catchment who sent students to HHS. MV also advised that there were 2 specific local secondary schools who have already reduced their PAN.</p>																								

	Governors discussed the proposal in detail and concluded that a similar approach to that previously adopted would probably result in the same outcome. The local authority needed to be convinced that not all local schools sent all of their Yr6 children to HHS and that this situation was not likely to improve in the foreseeable future.
Resolved:	That MH be authorised to enter into informal discussions with the local authority to discuss future projected numbers in Yr7 and that there could be an imperative to reduce the school Published Admission Number
Discussion:	<p><u>F40/NGA SEND Letter</u></p> <p>Governors discussed the contents of a letter jointly prepared by an organisation entitled F40 which was a cross-party local authority campaign group set up by the lowest funded councils for education in England with the aim of securing fairer funding for schools and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the NGA asking schools to contact their local MPs asking them to lobby Government to address the funding crisis for SEND services.</p> <p>Whilst being supportive of the contents of the letter, Governors found themselves in a difficult position as currently, the constituency in which HHS was situated did not have an MP.</p>
Resolved:	That the Chair be authorised to send the letter direct to the DfE explaining that in the absence of a local MP, school was contacting the Secretary of State directly.
Discussion:	<p><u>Staff Wellbeing Survey Summary</u></p> <p>Further to a discussion held at the Resources Committee on 10th March 2025, Governors received a summary of the outcomes of the latest Staff Wellbeing Survey. MH advised that document summarised the responses from the survey carried out in July 2024 and that carried out in December 2024 and January 2025.</p> <p>The key findings of the summary were as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of support staff (classroom) were better than or in line with average in all bar two categories in the first survey but this had dropped to below average 5 categories by the second survey. • Support staff (non classroom) had no areas at Helsby High School with a below average score in the second survey which was an improvement on the first, though this was still positive. • The uptake was less for the second survey (61%) compared to the first (82%). • All categories resulted in a below average score for teaching staff (classroom) in the second survey with change and demands in the 10th decile when compared with other schools. • DLs were positive about most aspects except demands and each category bar two showed improvement between the two survey points. <p>The document also summarised proposed next steps including making time to be able to undertake the survey every term.</p> <p>HC asked if the data was qualitative or quantitative and was advised it was a summary of quantitative data. ND commented that the outcomes of the second survey appeared to show a drop off from the first survey and that the outcomes on the demands on teachers raised some concerns. MH suggested that it was important to repeat the survey at the same time each year to take seasonal fluctuations into account as well as distinguishing between primary and secondary school data. In addition, looking at demand issues on teachers needed to be further investigated.</p> <p>ID-R commented that he would discuss the issues raised in the survey at the next meeting of the Staff Wellbeing Committee</p>
Resolved:	That regular updates on actions be made to the Resources Committee, with the Staff Well-Being Lead, Sam Warburton, to attend the Summer Term meeting.

Agenda item 6	HEADTEACHERS REPORT
Discussion:	<p>Strategic Planning Day Thanks</p> <p>MH thanked Governors for their attendance and contribution at the recent annual Strategic Planning Day. As always this was a really purposeful day, with this year's focus on Inclusion even more relevant than ever given the current national focus on SEND, attendance and disadvantaged students' performance. A one-page summary of the discussions on the day by Mark Bayley, our School Improvement Partner, who led our work at Foxhill. Mark also observed the following in his 'end-of-term report' on his work at Helsby this month ...</p> <p><i>"It is important to report that the quality of the discussions with governors was impressive both in terms of their desire to learn and develop as a group and their commitment to wanting the best for every learner at the school. Discussions which took place were thoughtful and reflective and showed a real willingness to adapt to a changing national agenda over the coming few years. The varied skill set of governors certainly will allow for the group to be well placed to meet the challenges going forward and the move to embrace the concept of 'Next-gen governance'."</i></p> <p>Planning for September 2025</p> <p>The governors' Strategic Planning Day came at an important moment for the school moving forwards. With the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, changes to the Ofsted Framework and the outcomes from the Curriculum and Assessment Review all requiring responding to, along with changes to Senior Leadership Team personnel and an ambition to want to continually improve the provision for all students, school was currently reflecting on Senior Leadership Team roles and responsibilities for the new academic year. These reflections would impact on all of the school improvement processes, with school self-evaluation, development planning and Governing Body Committee structures and Terms of Reference all likely to evolve so that they continued to be fit for purpose from September 2025.</p> <p>Year 11 and 13 Student Progress</p> <p>One of the challenges of school leadership was to balance long-term planning for the future with continually doing the very best for the students in the present. Inevitably, supporting Year 11 and 13 students to be as successful as possible in their GCSE, A-Level and vocational examinations this summer had been a key priority since January. Both cohorts completed their second Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs) this term, their progress analysed and resulting intervention programmes implemented as required. Both cohorts' overall progress looked sound, with improvements required identified and resulting actions implemented. Year 11 students received their PPE2 predicted grades through a 'Mock Results Day' format with bespoke follow-up and support provided on receipt of their predictions.</p> <p>Attendance Update</p> <p>Alongside student progress, particularly for disadvantaged students and in English, governors would be aware that attendance was the other key priority area this academic year. There had been a small improvement observed, as new ways of working introduced by the Education Welfare and Attendance Officer, who began in post in September, had started to have some impact. Instability in the team over recent years had really affected work in this area - the Autumn Term was spent embedding processes and procedures and then Sam Warburton, as SLT Attendance Lead, had been able to spend more time this term developing a longer-term strategy in this area. This had involved working with the School Improvement Partner, attending various national Attendance seminars, visiting another school and developing plans for the extension of Attendance work using software packages and/or an enlarged team.</p> <p>School Improvement Partner Work This Term</p>

	<p>Given the above, the foci for Mark Bayley's work this term would be January: Year 11 Pupil Premium Student Voice & Attendance March: Year 11 Pupil Premium Student Work Scrutiny & Pastoral Leader CPD Planning Mark had also supported some of the FAVSP MAT work , attended the Governor Planning Day this month and would support my mid-year appraisal review in early April.</p> <p>2025-26 Budget Governors would be aware that setting a balanced budget for 2025-26 had been a bigger challenge than ever this year as school had to manage both anticipated lower student numbers with an unanticipated proposed 2.8% unfunded pay award from September, with the Department for Education acknowledging that schools would "need to make efficiencies" to fund the award. To once again be in a relatively healthy position compared to many other schools was a testament to the work of Matt Vickers and I know that governors would want to pay tribute and thank him for this work for the school before he moves on next term. School was currently in the process of recruiting a replacement.</p> <p>September 2025 Year 7 Admissions One piece of good news for the longer-term financial stability was that school was once again over-subscribed from September, with 228 offers made, an increase of 9% from the feeder primary schools and 31 students from outside the catchment area. Without the latter school would still be significantly under PAN (Pupil Admission Number) though and hence requesting a reduction in our PAN was once again worthy of discussion.</p> <p>Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Development Governors reviewed the on-going work to explore the option of a MAT for the school with our partner primary schools. Included in the documentation for the meeting was a position statement formed in the Autumn and details of this term's work, which had been complemented by a meeting of the Governing Body's MAT Working Party, details of which had been made available to Governors. Governors were happy for the Working Party to continue its work and ID-R commented that he could see the benefits of the primary schools working together in a MAT although thought needed to be given as to where HHS would sit in such a structure. HC commented that it would be difficult to make a decision on whether to progress to such a model based on the FAVSP without comparing it to another model containing more high schools. MH suggested that that would be a piece of work to be discussed as part of any future strategy.</p> <p>Ofsted IDSR The March 2025 version of the Ofsted Inspection Data Summary Review had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. MH explained that this was a high-level view of the school and the first document that any Ofsted Inspector would look at in advance of an inspection. MH went through the salient points in the document.</p> <p>A56 Speed Limit MH advised that following a tragic incident involving a student outside a primary school, a campaign group, The Make Wrexham Road Safe Again, had been formed to lobby the local authority to review speed limits outside of schools. The school had been contacted to ask Governors if they wished to be part of the campaign to have the speed limit on the A56 outside of school reduced from 40mph to 30mph. MG commented that it was about consistency of speed limits outside schools and the current 40mph speed limit outside HHS seemed excessive.</p>
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Headteachers Report be noted. 2. That the Governors support the continuing work of the MAT Working Party 3. That Governors agree to support the campaign for a reduction of the speed limit on the A56 outside school from 40mph to 30mph.

Agenda Item 7	REVIEW OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SECTION OF THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SDP, 6TH FORM SDP AND 2023/24 EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT
Discussion:	Governors received the Leadership and Management section of the School Development Plan (SDP). The section contained the objectives, detailed the actions aimed at achieving those objectives, who was responsible, and progress made which was RAG rated. The Governing Body also received updates for the Mental Health and Wellbeing and 6 th Form Development Plans along with the Equality Impact Statement
Resolved:	That the update be noted.
Agenda item 8	SAFEGUARDING UPDATE
Discussion:	MH advised that there were no safeguarding matters to bring to the attention of Governors, other than the recent completion of updated Safer Recruitment Training by all members of the Senior Leadership Team.
Resolved:	That the report be noted.
Agenda item 9	POLICIES
Discussion:	<p>Governors were asked to approve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Principles and Written Statement • Critical Incident Management Plan (which would need further updates to include new Governors) • Complaints Procedure <p>and to ratify the following policies following review at the committees indicated.</p> <p>Resources Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lettings Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Whole School Pay Policy <p>PDBA Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children Policy
Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Behaviour Principles and Written Statement be approved (and reviewed by a GB sub-group during 2025-26). 2. That the Critical Incidents Management Plan be approved 3. That the Complaints Procedure be approved. 4. That the following Policies be ratified. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lettings Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Whole School Pay Policy • Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy.
Agenda item 10	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Decision:	Monday 14th July 2025 at 5.00pm

There being no business the meeting ended at 6.50pm