



MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

**Minutes of the Full Governing Committee Meeting held on
Monday 17 March 2025 at 5.30pm, Room 136 - Hinchingbrooke School**

Governors: Mr Mike Shaw (MC) – Chair, Mr Alan Winchcombe (AW) – Co-opted Governor, Mrs Vicky Stanley (VS) – Parent Governor, Mrs Lynne Milton (LM) Parent Governor, Mrs Vicky McGregor (VM) – Co-opted Governor, Mr John Grenville (JG) – Co-opted Governor, Miss Lucy Inskip (LI) – Foundation Governor, Mr Steven Ragdale (SR) - Staff Governor

In attendance: HBK Vice Principals: Mr Matthew Pinder (MIP), Miss Anna Nightingale (AN), Mrs Kate Tandy (KMT) Mrs Debbie Warner (DW) - Clerk to the Governors

Presentation by Head Students on student-led initiatives across Hinchingbrooke School

Agatha Leach (AL) and Rhys Gill (RG) attended as outgoing Head Students to update governors on some of the student led initiatives across the school: leadership experience, celebrating diversity, mental health culture. AL: Through the School Council and Student Leadership Conference, students were asked what they thought wellbeing should look like at Hinchingbrooke. Students were able to voice what they wanted to see: an anonymous reporting system with an opportunity for follow-up, an academic space during break and lunchtime hence The Lantern is being developed - a student-led initiative comprising wellbeing support, careers advice, post 16 advice, stress management strategies. This project is due to be completed later this year. RL: Leadership at Hinchingbrooke this year has flourished. The Leadership Conference proved a highlight, bringing together a variety of student leaders across the school: Form Reps, Prefects, House and Charity Reps. The outcome of student engagement led to more structured mentoring, inspiring students of all ages. A refined Student Council ensures more voices are heard. Student voices shape the way serious issues are handled. Breaking down banter and bullying to ensure students feel confident to recognize and report harmful behaviour with a crucial follow up process to make sure concerns are taken seriously. AL: First ever culture day in sixth form took place recently with an experience of different cultures through food, music and raising awareness of the many rich cultures within the sixth form. RG: The Head Student role is more than leadership, it is about fostering culture, valuing student voice and hearing directly from students about positive initiatives and being proud of the legacy left for future students. Governors thanked the Head Students for their splendid presentation and acknowledged the significant amount of work that has been going on to benefit the school.

Questioning/challenge:

Q: What feedback have you had on bullying?

A: All schools face this issue and being able to have a reporting system with the option to remain anonymous, and receive feedback has been reassuring for students. The School Council has been influential in finding hotspots around the school.

Q: When talking to students, did you ask the nature of bullying and where bullying occurs?

A: Yes, the buses are a hotspot.

KMT praised the Head Students for making their own mark in moving the school forward since taking over as Head Students and the impressive legacy they have left for the school.

AL and RG left the meeting at this point.

1. Opening Business (Chair)

1.1 Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest:

Apologies of absence were received from Gary Moss and Stuart Nunn.
The Clerk confirmed there were no conflicts of interest to note.

1.2 Membership:

The Chair welcomed John Grenville as a Co-opted Governor. His appointment had been unanimously approved by Governors. Governors introduced themselves and current membership/link governor responsibilities were confirmed.

1.3 Business referred from the Trust Board:

Andrew Goulding, CEO of ACES Academies Trust, attended the meeting to provide a confidential update on

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	the proposed merger.
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting, actions and matters arising (Clerk)
	<p>The minutes of meeting of 9 December 2024 were deemed to be an accurate account of proceedings and were signed off by the Chair once the action points had been discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding visit has now been completed and a report sent to the governing body. - Spring term governor visit is yet to be arranged: AN thought that a well-being focus as part of department health checks scheduled for the summer term would be of value to staff. Governors agreed this would be a useful visit. The Chair asked for the Clerk to send governors a choice of dates. <p>ACTION: OFFER DATES TO GOVERNORS FOR A VISIT ON DEPARTMENT HEALTH CHECKS (WELLBEING FOCUS) – AN/CLERK</p>
3.	Principal's Report (AH)
	<p>Governors confirmed they had read the report prior to the meeting. The Principal highlighted the key points from the report: Attendance data – whole school attendance has dipped slightly but the school is currently ranked 5th position in 35 schools in Cambridgeshire, which is encouraging. The school's FSM attendance is ranked 2nd place in Cambridgeshire. Governors noted that the attendance data is impressive and significantly better compared to the national picture.</p> <p>Questioning/challenge:</p> <p>Q: A governor referred to the resignations contained in the report; are any of these related to workload pressures?</p> <p>A: AH believed that from the leavers, there were no issues relating to workload. One leaver one had managed to secure a role outside of education and the other was due to a maternity leave contract ending.</p> <p>The Chair was pleased to note the level of good appointments to the school. AH agreed that the school is in a fortunate position to secure these posts as other schools are finding it difficult to recruit good quality staff. Training is also very successful within the school.</p> <p>A Governor noted from his experience at another school that teach walk systems are in place to spot practices that are being done particularly well which is fed back into team meetings; staff appreciate this and find it a useful way of keeping up to speed. AH thought the comment was timely as discussions had recently taken place to look to implement some of the positive things to share with staff. Teachmeets are also a good platform to share positive information.</p>
4.	Governance reports
	<p>4.1 Behaviour report (KMT)</p> <p>Suspension figures are slightly lower compared to this time last year. 9 suspensions and significantly below national figures. Blue Room episodes are also lower than this time last year with the main factor being physical altercations. Biggest concern is lateness and this is now a hot topic. Guidance has been written for a joined up approach to help tackle the issue. A large piece of work going on under the topic of "The Big Conversation" which, following an external review, focuses on those conversations around bullying, harassment and discrimination. Action plan has been shared with governors showing the hotspot areas of the school. Open forum, form groups and assemblies are providing opportunities for students to raise any concerns. Staff training is also taking place. The Lantern provision, with thanks to financial support from the Foundation of Hinchingsbrooke, is underway which will provide a student-led academic space for students.</p> <p>Questioning/challenge:</p> <p>Q: Have the surveys that have fed into this work been distributed to students who are not in school as they may have anxieties around some of the issues.</p> <p>A: No but this is something we can think about and ask them to send their thoughts electronically.</p> <p>Q: A governor asked staff to consider all types of students who may be persistently absent and the need to build inclusivity in students who don't feel part of the school community.</p> <p>A: The bulk of the feedback is received from our Student Rep meetings - all students have chance to contribute and the option on anonymity.</p> <p>Q: Are the findings from this initiative shared with the new students coming up in September?</p>

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A: This is something that could be considered.

Q: Toilet hotspots; what type of toilets do students prefer?

A: A lot of the issues were more the students who are in these areas. Open plan toilets seem to be more popular although some students thought there was a lack of privacy.

Q: There is no feedback from Year 11 on litter, why? Are the bins empty when the students come on site.

A: There is more work to be done in this area and an issue where some of the bins are located.

Q: What will the antibullying reps work involve?

A: These are Year 9 students and have applied for the responsibility. Staff have been doing some training with them but we would like to expand on this and raise the profile of keeping the site clear of litter. The Chair noted that good work going on with antibullying strategies and suggested an antibullying campaign could be established. KMT said this would be something the school would welcome and agreed to discuss it further outside meeting.

ACTION:

SHARE SOME OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE BIG CONVERSATION WITH UPCOMING YEAR 7 STUDENTS - KMT
INCLUDE PERSISTENTLY ABSENT STUDENTS IN SURVEY RESPONSES - KMT

4.2 Data report (AN)

KS5: Sixth form has been an area of focus for a long time and the hard work is being evidenced by results and progress, which have been phenomenal. IDSR shows that A level APS (Summer 2024) is significantly above national. These results are truly impressive. KS4: Data shows we are in a better position than this time last year. Attainment is looking very positive, especially in maths and English match. Data for this year's KS5 is also looking very promising.

Money available for catch up funding no longer exists but the school continues to put on many support packages for students. Engagement for Easter School 2025 for Year 11 students has received the most applications to date.

The Chair thanked AN for the very detailed report. He added that he had previously been involved in a mentoring scheme with the school which had been successful and could be reinvigorated. AN said there is a number Year 10 students who would benefit from this scheme and have expressed an interest to links with the armed forces. JG said this could be expanded to links with civil servants and industry partners and would be keen to be involved.

ACTION:

DEVELOPMENT OF MENTORING SCHEME (SUPPORT FROM ARMED FORCES) – AN/JG

4.3 Premises and budgeting monitoring report (MIP)

Middle school roof project is now finished. Fire alarm upgrade has been carried out to some areas of the school. Site security has improved for sixth form students who can now sign in/out electronically. Classroom refurbishments continue at pace with many computer suites and classrooms completed. The Medical Room has been moved and is now located next to the KS4 office; this is working well. Low level wooden fencing is being erected around site and this is ongoing. A further classroom is to be created as part of the PAN increase project. Reroofing of the music department is scheduled and will be funded through capital funding. Security fencing is also planned to the perimeter of the school.

Questioning/challenge:

Q: Capital funding; do you lose it if it is not spent immediately?

A: It can be rolled over for the period of 1 year only.

4.4 Budget monitoring (MIP)

Departments to be mindful of how they manage their budgets. Feedback from department Heads on fairer funding was received and funding reallocated accordingly. Tracking of budget monitoring to forecast where each department is to ensure departments do not overspend. Late announcement of high needs spending cuts has impacted budgets which has been countered by tightening up on costs elsewhere. The CEO thought the biggest threat to the Trust/School is the decision, yet to be made, whether national insurance will be funded. AH added that the school was in the fortunate position of having a large and successful sixth form which

	generates income for the school, funding from the Foundation and a commercial income from HBKL.
5.	Governor visit report
	<p>Vicky McGregor carried out a safeguarding visit in February 2025 and updated governors on her findings: Safeguarding Team is proactive and, in comparison to last visit, wrap around resources have developed and barriers have been removed. It is still a significant challenge for staff working in safeguarding with the continual decline in external services. Checks show that staff are carrying out robust case studies to ensure decisions made at the time were appropriate and are able to reflect on these decisions. Staff voice and how they feel about safeguarding may not be adequately captured - how are ECTs supported and what supervision is in place for staff who have been exposed to challenging situations.</p> <p>KMT added that the team will be very pleased with how the visit has been reported. Just for clarity, AH requested the reference on whistleblowing could be replaced by concerns in the report.</p> <p>Brief discussion on how and what should be reported at governor visits and a template would be useful to make sure all information is captured from future visits.</p> <p>ACTION: GOVERNOR VISIT TEMPLATE TO BE SHARED TO GOVERNORS – CLERK</p>
6.	Policies for approval
	<p>Antibullying Policy: Some of the processes have been updated and the use of MyConcern system now provides breakdown to different types of bullying and the ability to go back in and make additions. A governor noted that the policy did not contain an introduction setting out the purpose of the policy and what the school does to promote an antibullying culture in the school.</p> <p>Governors approved the policy subject to the addition of an introduction.</p> <p>Drugs Policy: There are no changes to this policy. Governors approved the policy.</p> <p>ACTION: UPDATE ANTIBULLYING POLICY WITH AN INTRODUCTION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE POLICY – KMT UPLOAD APPROVED POLICIES TO WEBSITE AND INTRANET AND SHARE WITH STAFF - CLERK</p>
7.	AOB
	The CEO thanked governors on behalf of Trustees for the valuable work and expertise in holding the school to account.

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