

Minutes of the Holgate Local Academy Committee Meeting
Monday 12th May 2025 5.00pm- 6.30pm
The Holgate Academy

Governor name	Initials	Governor type	A = Absence
Kate Turner	KT	Chair	
Margaret Newcombe	MN	Appointed	
Mr Philip Bailey	PB	Staff	
Emma Paine	EPn	Appointed	
Emma Paling	EPI	Appointed	A
Emma Redgate	ER	Parent	
Scott Comer	SC	Parent	A

In attendance:

Staff name	Initial	Role	
Heather Widdup	HP	Executive Principal	
Henry Diamond	HD	Principal	A
Lynsey Parker	LP	Clerk	

Item no.	Item	Action / by whom / by when
THA/049/2425	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence:</p> <p>Apologies received and accepted from Mr Diamond, Mrs Paling and Mr Comer</p> <p>It was noted that Mrs Widdup, as Executive Principal would present the Principal's report.</p>	
THA/050/2425	<p>Declarations of interest:</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda</p>	
THA/051/2425	<p>Governance report:</p> <p>A discussion took place on attendance at local academy Committee meetings and it was agreed to review further before the next academic year, before making a decision on recruitment to strengthen the committee.</p> <p>It was noted that no link visit reports had been submitted, but that several visits had either already taken place or had been booked for after half term, and would be</p>	

	<p>reported back at the next meeting. In respect of link governor training, governors noted there has been an issue with the correct governors being invited, and it was agreed that the Clerk would investigate and resolve.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that a review of the LAC governance action plan, as well as a self-assessment on overall effectiveness is due to the place by the end of the academic year. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Chair and Clerk would carry out an initial review and then bring to the next meeting for approval.</p> <p>Individual governor skills audits are also due and will help to inform the local academy committee and Trust-wide governor training and development plan for 2025/26, it was agreed that the Clerk would circulate after the meeting.</p>	<p>LP</p> <p>KT/LP</p> <p>LP</p>
THA/052/2425	<p>Minutes of the meeting dated 10th March 2025: (attached/agreed by Chair, Principal, Executive Principal and circulated)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the chair, Principal, and Executive Principal.</p>	
THA/053/2425	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>THA/040/2425 – Mr Bailey and Mr Comer are still to confirm they have reviewed the suspensions and exclusions training</p> <p>THA/043/2425 – governors requested an update on an ongoing open complaint that was unresolved at the time of the previous meet on 10th March. It was confirmed that this will be carried forward to the next meeting for the Principal to provide an update and advised whether the matter has now been resolved satisfactorily.</p> <p>THA/043/2425 – It was confirmed that the safeguarding review has now been completed, although the report has not been formally circulated yet. The Executive Principal advised that best practice at THA was noted by the reviewer. The report will be shared with governors once it is available.</p> <p>THA 043 / 2425 – Governors enquired if there was any update on the new build, and the Executive Principal advised that there was no news. She provided an update on the new 6th Form Centre and advised very positive progress was being made and all is on track to enable the 6th Form students to move in in September 2025 as planned. Offices have been decanted successfully to allow works to be completed to the block, and during the last week of half-term, Year 12 students will be set remote work to enable works to progress further. The move of Science requiring control of chemicals, has been booked in in conjunction with the National Cof E Academy, from where the post-16 provision is being relocated, for efficient use of services and</p>	<p>PB/SC</p> <p>HD</p>

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	resources. The Asset register between the two Trusts has been agreed and staffing issues resolved.	
<p>THA/054/2425</p>	<p>Principal's Report:</p> <p>The Executive Principal gave an update on the finding from the academy's recent Academy Improvement Review (AIR).</p> <p>Overall, quality of education, especially for SEND students, was highlighted as a key strength during the review. It was noted that both are features of the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP) so it is very pleasing that improvements in these areas have been observed. Outcomes, attendance and the high rate of suspensions were recognised as areas of challenge.</p> <p>In respect of these areas of challenge, the Executive Principal noted that the current Y11 cohort is weaker overall than in previous years and that this year there will be no progress measures, only absolute attainment, and asked governors to bear this in mind when assessing outcomes data. The Executive Principal noted that there has been a good start to GCSE exams, with engagement significantly higher than in previous years, and with only one student out of the whole year group not attending today. An update on how students with SEND are being supported to sit their exams was provided.</p> <p>The Executive Principal advised that overall attendance has improved by 2% on the previous year, compared to 0.1% nationally. Within the overall figures it is pleasing that attendance for pupils with SEND has increased from 78% to 84% and that the gap between SEND and non-SEND students has narrowed by more than the national average.</p> <p>It was advised that attendance overall is still below national average and so remains a priority within the Academy Improvement Plan. A new category that has been introduced for monitoring by the DfE is Free School Meals (FSM) students which is more targeted than all Pupil Premium students, and the academy will look to work with this cohort next to improve attendance.</p> <p>It was noted that suspension rate (33.3%) continues to be higher than it should be and it was confirmed that academy staff are working hard to ensure that all students understand expectations. In response to a query from governors, the Executive Principal confirmed that the main reasons for suspensions and exclusions are persistent disruption and verbal abuse and that this is line with national trends. Governors asked about the reasons for the increase, and it was advised that</p>	

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	<p>expectations have raised and the academy will not tolerate as much poor behaviour as they have in the past, it was also confirmed that the graduated response pathway is now being fully implemented, with clearly defined steps in response to poor, and persistently poor behaviour. Governors asked if the academy anticipated that the number and rate of suspensions would continue to be high as a result of implementing the graduated pathway, or if this would start to decline. The Executive Principal advised that following a peak in suspensions at the end of the last calendar year, there has been a change in approach at the academy, with a small core group of senior leaders now reviewing all suspension decisions. Governors noted the amount of positive work done to keep children in the academy, that has been observed when they have sat on suspension and exclusion panels. Following a discussion, the Executive Principal advised that the onsite alternative provision (AP) centre must be viewed as short-term respite for the students who attend and that this cannot become an alternative to mainstream school.</p> <p>The Executive Principal provided some highlights from the AIR report, and governors provided challenge and support throughout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in Maths and positive use of Sparx which is a bespoke learning package with personalised work set for each student. Improvements in the presentation of Maths books is expected • Strong teaching and assessment practice in PE with improved participation rates and numbers of students picking this option for GCSE • Progress in English has accelerated with the return of the Head of Department from maternity leave. Governors asked how the academy can learn from this and upskill other staff within departments so that there are not such dependencies on Head of Department roles, and it was advised that the Head of Maths has recently carried out some work on this with the second in the Department • Books are well presented in English • There is strong use of the Fresh Start programme in reading for students with a low reading age, and the academy are recruiting a new HLTA to focus on this. Governors asked if this programme is phonics-based and if anything is else is in place for those students who struggle with this. Difficulty with phonics was noted but also that the tool is utilised successfully across the Trust • Strong provision and highly skilled staff and students in Creative Arts, but with inconsistency across some subject areas in the faculty • SEND students recognised that adaptations were being made in the classroom in relation to their Pupil Passport; governors noted that it is pleasing that students recognise this, before asking if parents were fully aware of adaptations being delivered and suggested that more could still be done to engage with parents. 	
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	<p>Governors observed that it was extremely positive that SEND improvements had been noted during the review and the Executive Principal confirmed that SEND provision is now more integrated and continues to be front and centre of the AIP and a priority for all faculties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour was observed to be much more positive within classrooms than in previous visits, with staff being more proactive • Sex education and healthy relationships are taught well • Careers provision is strong. Governors asked whether, once the post-16 students are on site, they will have access to the same careers opportunities and it was confirmed that activity such as university visits, mock interviews, and apprenticeship employer visits, will be offered. Governors noted that careers provision is becoming a real strength at the academy and welcomed the good use of partnership working and links with other organisations • Leadership and management is strong, SLT have a strong vision and set high expectations. It was observed that there is a clear link between the AIP and staff CPD. Middle leaders and ECTs feel well supported. Governors commented that feedback from middle leaders was extremely positive to see, and the Executive Principal advised that this group of staff is becoming stronger, they have clarity of expectations and a common language and framework to work within and that they take seriously their responsibility and accountability for the progress of students • Governance is strong, and the support and challenge of the whole committee was noted. Governors confirmed that they feel well-informed, involved and able to contribute to the direction of the academy. • Safeguarding practice is becoming a becoming a real strength at the academy, with strong senior appointments having a real impact. • Post-16 provision is strong, but it was advised during the meeting that numbers do pose a challenge to the budget and to future viability. Governors asked about student leader opportunities for 6th form students, for example as peer mentors, to which the Executive Principal confirmed that there will be a strong student engagement offer and that the 6th formers will be part of the academy community. <p>Safeguarding report</p> <p>Governors noted that this was very comprehensive and that they appreciated having sight of all the data and had assurance that this was categorised correctly and issues were being addressed. It was confirmed that if the Safeguarding lead spots patterns and trends within the data then he feeds this back to the academy personal development lead to continue to move from a model of compliance towards best practice.</p>	
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	<p>GDPR Governors had received numbers of cases in advance of the meeting. Mr Bailey advised that there was a new approach to SARs in place whereby staff were being more proactive and were meeting with requesters to find out exactly what personal data they were requesting and why.</p> <p>Complaints 2 new complaints had been received within the reporting period, both of which related to SEND provision.</p> <p>Category C trips Governors had received the calendar of trips for the academic year, and agreed that it was very pleasing to see the breadth of opportunities on offer across the academy. It was noted that the trip to Normandy was the only forthcoming Category C trip.</p> <p>Trust Policy updates A number of updates to Trust-wide policies were received.</p> <p>Local Academy Policy updates Updates to the following academy policies were received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance Policy • Provider Access policy annex • Relationships and Sex Education policy annex <p>It was noted that small changes had been made to bring these in line with the Trust policies as above. Further changes to a small number of academy policies will be made in September and brought to the local academy committee for review.</p> <p>Risk It was confirmed that the academy risk register had not been reviewed and updated ahead of the meeting and that this would be done prior to the Summer term 2 meeting for the governors to review.</p> <p>The Executive Principal advised that the national teacher's pay review was yet to be concluded, but that a 4% increase had been recommended. It was noted that this was unfunded and would require significant savings from the academy's budget. The Executive Principal confirmed that academy leadership were looking at a number of options to balance the budget including management of vacancies. In response to questions from the governors, the Executive Principal confirmed that the academy receives lag funding for student numbers, so won't receive the additional grant</p>	
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	<p>funding for additional students on roll yet; and that the new 6th form centre is not predicted to achieve a break-even position.</p> <p>It was confirmed that governors would review the budget risk via monitoring of the academy risk register going forwards.</p>	
THA/055/2425	<p>How has the Academy Committee held senior leaders to account:</p> <p>Governors had challenged the Executive Principal throughout the meeting in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of education • Standards and outcomes • Behaviour, suspensions and exclusions • SEND • Careers • Pupil number projections • Management of risk 	
THA/056/2425	<p>How have Vision, Mission and Values of Trust/Equality been upheld:</p> <p>These have been upheld through the agenda and discussions that have taken place. Equalities implications have been considered in all agenda items.</p>	
THA/057/2425	<p>Complete Report to Trustees & Response from Trustees:</p> <p>The report was completed and submitted to the Trust Board following the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that there were no matters requiring a response or feedback from Trustees.</p>	
THA/058/2425	<p>Determination of Confidentiality & Equalities Act Consideration:</p> <p>Academy committee governors considered whether anything discussed should be deemed confidential and it was resolved that there had been no confidential discussions.</p> <p>The Equality Act had been considered and upheld throughout the agenda.</p>	
THA/059/2425	<p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 30th June • Training: 4.30pm • Main agenda: 5.00-6.00pm 	

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The meeting closed at 5.56pm

Signed: K.Tuner (Chair)

Date: 19.5.25