

MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL – BRACKLEY

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Business Meeting
held in the school on
Tuesday 17 Sept 2024 at 6.30pm**

Present:

Dr B Naylor (Chair)	BN	Community Governor
Mr J Bilson	JB	Member Appointed Governor
Mr G Ellis	GE	Community Governor
Mr T Hollis	TH	Headteacher Governor
Dr M Pobjoy	MP	Foundation Governor

Apologies:

Mr N Arnold	NA	Community Governor
Mrs L Crossley	LC	Parent Governor
Mr C Harte	CH	Foundation Governor
Mr N Jones	NJ	Parent Governor
Prof C Leitmeir	CL	Foundation Governor

In Attendance:

Mrs A Banks	AB	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs L Martindale	LM	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs C Powell	CP	Clerk

The meeting was quorate.

Governor questions and challenge are highlighted.

Actions

2.0	All Governors to update their entry on the Register of Interests for 2024 – 2025 using Governor Hub.	ALL
3.0	All Governors to confirm their agreement to abide by the Governor Code of Conduct 2024 on GHub.	ALL
4.0	All Governors to give consideration to taking on the position of Vice Chair of Governors.	ALL
5.0	Send the final version of the Governor Monitoring Visit Form to the Clerk to be uploaded and shared on GHub	JB
6.0	Amend the Register of Interests for the current year to meet the requirements of the Academy trust Handbook and include Jenny Harte as a Foundation Member.	Clerk
7.1	Read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and complete the declaration on GHub to confirm that has been done.	ALL
8.1	Create an anonymous summary document of staff feedback from exit interviews to share with Governors.	BN
8.1	Schedule a Governor visit for after October half-term to focus on the Behaviour Policy.	Chairs
9.1	Approach Mr Horner for contacts with local businesses and look into how the Community Governor vacancies could be publicised through these and through the local council.	Clerk
10.1	Add 'Review of the current Equality Policy and Impact Statement' to the agenda for the next Pastoral Committee meeting.	Clerk
10.1	Look at model policy document and start to consider what is required to renew the Equality Policy in the longer term.	TH

Decisions

3.0	Governors agreed to adopt the Governor Code of Conduct 2024.
4.0	Governors elected Dr Ben Naylor as Chair of Governors for a term of 12 months.
5.0	The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 9 July 2024 were approved without amendment.
6.0	Governors approved the application of a 5.5% pay rise across all teacher pay scales.
7.2	Governors approved the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024 for adoption.
8.1	Governors agreed to adopt the updated Terms of Reference for the Chairs' Committee.
9.1	Two versions of an advert seeking Parent and Community Governors were agreed for use.
10.2	Governors approved the Attendance Policy 2024 for adoption.

1. **Welcome & apologies for absence**

BN welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that Mrs Lindsay Worville (LW) has resigned as a Parent Governor as a result of a family decision to move their daughter to another school. He added that he has thanked LW for her contribution on behalf of the Governing Body, and voiced their good wishes for the future.

Apologies had been received and were accepted from Mrs L Crossley (LC) and Mr N Jones (NJ), Parent Governors; Mr C Harte (CH) and Professor C Leitmeir (CL), Foundation Governors; and Mr N Arnold (NA), Community Governor.
The meeting was quorate.

2. **Annual update of the Register of Interests and declarations of interest in respect of any items on the agenda**

Governors were reminded that it is time to update their individual entries on the Register of Interests for the 2024 / 2025 academic year, and they were asked to do this as soon as possible on Governor Hub (GHub).
There were no declarations made in respect of any items on the agenda.

3. **Adoption of the Governor Code of Conduct**

The Governor Code of Conduct had been shared in advance on GHub and the Clerk explained that this has been updated in line with the new model published by the National Governance Association (NGA). She noted that minimal changes were made.
Governors agreed to adopt the Governor Code of Conduct 2024.
The Code was signed by the Chair of Governors and all Governors were asked to confirm their agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct on GHub.

4. **Election of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors**

The Clerk confirmed that no nominations for either position had been received in advanced.

BN confirmed that he would be willing to stand for another term as Chair of Governors. There were no other nominations in the room and BN was duly elected as Chair of Governors for a term of 12 months until September 2025.

There were no nominations for the position of Vice Chair. It was agreed that given the low attendance at the meeting, the fact that all those Governors in the room were already acting as Committee Chairs, and the high number of vacancies on the Governing Body, the election of a Vice Chair of Governors would be carried forward to the next meeting.

In the meantime, the need to fill this position to ensure compliance with the Governing Body's Articles of Association was highlighted. Governors discussed the requirements of the role, which are important, but not onerous. The main requirement of the Vice

Chair is to chair a meeting if the Chair of Governors is absent. It was also noted that the Vice Chair acts as a Member of the Academy Trust, which in reality requires just two additional meetings per academic year, one being the AGM in December and the other being a Members' meeting in March.

All Governors were asked to consider taking on the position of Vice Chair.

5. Minutes of the meeting held 9 July 2024 & review of action points

The minutes had been shared in advance on GHub were checked page by page for accuracy. There were no amendments made, the minutes were approved as a true record of proceedings and signed by the Chair.

Review of Action Points

3.0	3 Governors to complete and return their Skills Audit forms to the Clerk. The Clerk confirmed that this is now COMPLETE and the revised Skills Audit Dashboard is on GHub.
3.0	Send the final version of the Governor Monitoring Visit Form to the Clerk to be uploaded and shared on GHub. JB confirmed that this is now with him and will be actioned. He noted what a useful and insightful visit it had been.
5.2	Add 'appointment of a Governor linked to Careers' to the agenda for September. ON AGENDA / COMPLETE
6.3	Add 'annual elections of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors' to the agenda for September. ON AGENDA / COMPLETE

6. Master's report

The Master's report had been shared in advance on GHub. It was noted that the report had already been discussed in detail at the Chairs' Committee meeting on 12th September, when all but one of the Governors at this meeting were in attendance. The key points were summarised by TH and questions were invited.

- **Numbers on roll**

Governors queried whether there are only 82 students in Y12? TH explained that was last year's Y12 (now Y13) and there are 118 students in Y12 this year, which is a big improvement. He added that although the original aim of 120 has not quite been met, the numbers are moving in the right direction.

Governors asked whether the process of ongoing communication with students in Y11 and the improvements made to the sixth form facilities (the TGC) have had an impact on numbers? TH reported that the school have retained more internal students and attracted more external students. He added that the improved TGC is proving popular with students and the new Bring Your Own Device policy also seems to be helping. AB added that the offer of re-sitting GCSEs has resulted in 6 additional students, which is one of many factors impacting the increased numbers. **Governors noted this number as manageable for re-sits and agreed that the decision to offer this was a positive one.**

BN noted that the Chairs' Committee had also questioned the lower numbers in Y7 this year, which have fallen from 260 in 2023 to 229 in 2024. TH explained that one identified pattern is a higher number of families from the Fritwell area choosing to send children to Heyford Park, which now has a Good Ofsted. He added that this applies mostly to out-of-catchment students and added that most in-catchment are still coming to Magdalen.

Governors flagged a concern about the negative impact of this drop in Y7 numbers on the budget, in what is already a deficit year. Governors asked whether there is any measure of comparison available with other local schools to help understand why some pupils are choosing to go elsewhere? TH

explained that Magdalen has a strong reputation for meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and this attracts high numbers of pupils in this group from out-of-catchment. The school also has a PAN of 270, so has spaces available across the year groups,

making them vulnerable to challenging in-year admissions. He added that there are now 3 secondary schools in the Bicester area, including Heyford Park. However, he reported that 130 plus families have signed up to attend the open evening for Y6 pupils next week, which is a positive indication.

Governors understood the good reputation the school has for supporting pupils with SEND, and highlighted the need to be mindful of the challenges presented by the group of non-SEND students, who have complex additional behavioural needs. It was agreed that the challenging behaviour of this group can have an impact on the school's reputation and resources. LM added that students with complex needs are being placed in mainstream settings due to a lack of places in specialist provision. The school does whatever they can to support these students, but it is never easy.

TH reminded Governors that he is involved in a review of Fair Access Panel process and confirmed that in-year transfers were a big challenge last year.

- **Staffing**

Governors noted that lack of staff in the Finance team is a concern. TH reported that a new Finance Assistant has now been appointed, so there is some incoming resource.

Governors asked whether 19 new members of staff is unusually high? TH reported that there were 16 new members of staff last year, so there has been a very big change across the last 2 years. He added that addition to the 19 new staff, there are 6 trainee, associate teachers, who are proving to be a positive resource to have.

Governors asked whether this is part of a new SCiTT programme? TH reported that it is new to Magdalen, although the school has worked with other SCiTTs and teacher training hubs in the past.

Governors asked if the Head of English post is still vacant? TH confirmed that it has now been filled. AB added that the appointment is proving to be a very good one.

Governors asked if the SENCo position remains vacant? TH confirmed that it does and will be re-advertised. He added that there will also be a vacancy for the Head of Social Sciences position from January 2025.

- **Exam Results**

Governors asked if national comparison data is available yet?

AB explained that some of this data is available and will be brought to the Education & Welfare Committee meeting next week. She added that this will make it possible to look at the context of the results.

TH noted that Progress 8 scores are slightly higher putting the school in the 'average' banding.

Governors flagged up the Science results as concerning and it was noted that this was discussed by the Chairs' Committee. TH confirmed that outcomes are down again across all Science teaching and confirmed that addressing this is a priority.

- **Teachers Pay Award**

TH explained that the Personnel Committee will discuss the issue of performance related pay for teachers alongside the policy review at their meeting on 1st October.

Governors approved the application of a 5.5% pay rise across all teacher pay scales.

Governors considered whether the removal by the government of the requirement for schools to operate performance related pay was helpful. TH added that the report by the Education Select Committee had made this recommendation as a way of reducing the bureaucratic burden on schools, and based on a lack of evidence that performance related pay has a significant impact on the quality and standard of teaching.

Governors noted that there is little evidence of the impact of performance related pay in the wider academic context.

Governors questioned what else can be done by school management to relate outcomes to the quality of teaching, giving their concerns about Science teaching at Magdalen as an example.

TH suggested that performance and quality of teaching can continue to be measured through appraisal and development, but without blending that process with pay. He added that it is necessary to consider the challenges of teacher recruitment and highlighted the need to have teachers in front of students as the priority, and then to support them with training and development in post. AB added that this is the reason for the priority around staff feedback in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for this year and noted that this will require staff to be open and honest about where practice needs to improve.

Governors asked whether exam results are the main indicator of the quality of teaching? TH highlighted that there are so many factors that are out of a teacher's control with exams, including a student's individual preparation and performance on the day, as well as their journey through school before reaching that teacher's classroom.

Governors suggested that the downturn in exam results from 2018 to 2024 is significant and indicates that something must be amiss with the quality of teaching at the school. They asked how that can be measured?

It was discussed and suggested that separating performance management from pay will make it easier to manage performance alone. Governors suggested that it is about priorities, ethos and emotional reward for academic success, which sits within a different realm of performance management.

- **Premises Update**

Governors asked whether the newly refurbished toilets have been vandalised yet? TH reported that they have, but that this had been repaired on the same day. He added that contractors have been used very effectively to achieve the progress made. TH reported that the additional information for the CIF bid has been submitted, but with no response to date.

Governors asked why there has been a change to the way the school works with consultants? TH explained that DfE want school leadership to take a more active role in the process and for Governing Boards to demonstrate their involvement in scrutinising bids for contracts to carry out premises works.

Governors noted that they have had more involvement in the past.

Governors noted the very positive work done over the summer, especially on the security gates and fences. TH added that this has had a tangible impact, with the school premises feeling safer and more controlled. He noted that this feeling is permeating the student body and has the added benefit of enabling staff to tighten up on punctuality.

- **SIP**

The update provided in the report was noted. TH noted that the version on GHub includes the updated work done on Hard Thinking, and will continue to include live updates in line with the weekly review cycle.

- **Risk Register**

TH explained that the review of the current Risk Register is a work in progress and the first requirement is the identification of the school's 'business objectives'. The proposals made by the Chairs' Committee were explained (see Chairs' Committee minutes dated 12th Sept 2024).

Governors noted these as a good set of business objectives and welcomed the proposal of a fifth objective around community. It was suggested that this could include the connections with Oxford University and the local business community.

TH agreed to work on the wording for this. GE renewed his offer to discuss this in more detail in a separate meeting with TH.

GE proposed that a review of responsibility for the Risk Register is needed and this was agreed. TH noted that the current committee structure does not match the Risk Register objectives.

GE noted that the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee have oversight of the Register and are there to ensure appropriate process is in place, with individual Committees taking responsibility for their own areas within that. BN added that the Audit Committee also have a role in ensuring that the Risk Register itself is comprehensive.

GE noted that all Committees then have the opportunity to review the Risk Register. MP recognised the problem of a mis-match between the Risk Register and the committee structure, but suggested that ultimately there will be a continuing need for each Committee to take responsibility for an area of risk. He noted that it would not work to divorce the Risk Register from the committee structure.

It was suggested that it may be easier for each Committee to consider the Register as a whole, as well as their own specific areas.

Governors agreed to revisit this conversation in detail when the Risk Register has been generated.

- **Academy Trust Handbook**

The updated Handbook for 2024 had been shared on GHub. It was discussed and agreed that;

- The Clerk will manage the required changes to the Register of Interests for Governors. MP noted the need to now list Jenny Harte as Foundation Member, which the Clerk agreed to do.
- The Chairs' Committee will have oversight of the Schedule of Musts.
- Most of the other updates relate to financial management and will be managed by the School Business Manager.

7. **Safeguarding**

7.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024

A copy of KCSiE 2024 had been shared on GHub. Governors were reminded that they must read this document and complete a declaration on GHub to confirm that they have done so.

LM added that she has uploaded a document summarising the key changes to KCSiE, the majority of which relate to definitions and references. The section on children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning remains under review until the response to the 'gender questioning children consultation' is published.

7.2 Adopt the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024

This policy had been shared on GHub and LM confirmed that it has been updated in line with KCSiE 2024 and following national guidance.

Governors approved the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024 for adoption.

7.3 Annual safeguarding update for Governors

LM confirmed that this is covered with the document summarising the changes to KCSiE, which is available on GHub.

8. **Committee Reports**

It was noted that only the Chairs' Committee had met since the last FGB meeting on 9th July.

8.1 Chairs' Committee – 12 Sept 2024

BN reported that the minutes of this meeting were still in draft and would follow in due course. He explained that one key item of business in the meeting that has not already been dealt with, was the review of feedback from staff exit interviews at the end of the summer term. He reported that the most significant theme was the new Behaviour

Policy, feedback about which has been passed on to TH. BN proposed that this theme be picked up in Governors visits. TH noted that it is also a priority in the SIP, and so a Governor visit focussed on the Behaviour Policy in practice would be welcome.

Governors asked for more information about the staff feedback. BN agreed to create a summary document that can be shared.

It was discussed and agreed that a Governor Visit to focus on this would be scheduled after the October half-term break.

The amended Terms of Reference for the Chairs Committee had been shared on GHub and were agreed for adoption.

9. Governance

9.1 Confirm Governor roles and responsibilities for 2024 – 2025

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Governor – NA
- SEND Governor – CH
- Pupil Premium Governor – CH
- LAC Governor – NA
- Performance Management Governors – NA & CH
- Careers Governor – vacant

9.2 Governor Recruitment

Two versions of an advert seeking Parent Governors and Community Governors had been drafted and shared on GHub. These were agreed for use by Governors.

TH noted that both would be shared in the school newsletter at the end of the week, as well as being put on the school website and Facebook page.

It was agreed that the Clerk should approach Mr Horner for any suitable contacts with local businesses, as well as looking into how the Community Governor vacancies could be publicised through the local council.

The need for more Governors was agreed as fundamental.

9.3 Training Plan

A list of statutory and recommended training for Governors had been drafted by the Clerk and shared on GHub alongside the current programme of training available through West Northants Council (WNC). Governors welcomed this as a helpful list to have.

MP explained that the Chairs' Committee had discussed the need to agree a rule around how many training courses Governors should complete each year. It had been proposed that each Governor could be expected to complete the statutory training plus at least one of the recommended courses per year, or perhaps 2 – 8 courses over a 4-year term of office.

The need to regulate the training plan was noted.

10. Policies

10.1 The Schedule of Policy Reviews for 2024 – 2025 had been updated and shared on GHub. The Clerk reported that the majority of overdue policy reviews have been scheduled for this term, with the exception of the Equality Objectives and Impact Statement. It was discussed and agreed that this needs wider consideration and TH agreed to look at suitable models on The Key. In the meantime, LM suggested reviewing the current version and this was agreed. The Clerk will add this to the agenda for the next Pastoral Committee meeting.

10.2 Attendance Policy

TH reported that this policy has been significantly changed in line with new statutory guidance published by the DfE in August. LM added that schools now have increased statutory duties around attendance and there are prescribed points when they are required to intervene. As soon as a student's attendance falls below 96%, the school

must be able to evidence the action taken. She added that attendance codes have also changed and TH noted that there are greater restrictions on authorising absence. He explained that the new guidance is the result of the Children’s Commissioner’s work on attendance and the impact of falling school attendance rates post-pandemic. LM noted that having this guidance helps to make it clear to parents that it is not just Magdalen enforcing these new rules, but all schools in England.

Governors asked for clarification about how attendance is measured each day. LM confirmed that each school day counts for 2 attendance sessions and added that the data is all relative to the time of the school year, for example a student could fall below 96% after only half a day absence now, when there have been just 2 weeks of the new school year.

GE noted that the Audit Committee have agreed to focus on Attendance as one area of scrutiny this year and asked when would be the most useful time to do this piece of work? It was discussed and agreed that the Summer Term would be most helpful. A Governor monitoring visit in January or February to look at how the new Attendance Policy works in practice was also agreed.

Governors agreed to adopt the Attendance Policy 2024.

Governors asked if there is a need for additional staff training on attendance? LM explained that an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) has been appointed to lead on attendance and will work closely with the pastoral team. She added that staff received training on the changes to practice before the summer holiday and as a result, an improvement in register accuracy has already been seen.

11. Any Other Business

There was none

12. Date of next meeting

It was discussed and agreed that due to a significant number of Governors being unable to attend the scheduled meeting on 5th November, this would now be held on

- **Tuesday 22 October 2024 6.30pm – FGB planning meeting**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Dated.....