

**MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL – BRACKLEY**

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Planning Meeting  
held in the school on  
Tuesday 22 October 2024 at 6.30pm**

<b>Present:</b>	Dr B Naylor ( <b>Chair</b> )	BN	Community Governor
	Mrs L Crossley	LC	Parent Governor
	Mr G Ellis	GE	Community Governor
	Mr C Harte	CH	Foundation Governor
	Mr T Hollis	TH	Headteacher Governor
	Mr N Jones	NJ	Parent Governor
	Prof C Leitmeir	CL	Foundation Governor
	Dr M Pobjoy	MP	Foundation Governor

<b>Apologies:</b>	Mr N Arnold	NA	Community Governor
	Mr J Bilson	JB	Member Appointed Governor
	Mrs L Martindale	LM	Deputy Headteacher

<b>In Attendance:</b>	Mrs A Banks	AB	Deputy Headteacher
	Mrs C Powell	CP	Clerk

The meeting was quorate.

***Governor questions and challenge are highlighted.***

**Actions**

<b>5.1</b>	Add the loss of business-critical roles and functions to the Risk Register.	<b>TH</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Review the Risk Register at the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.	<b>GE</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Communicate with the successful and unsuccessful candidates for the Parent Governor positions.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Invite successful candidates to the next FGB meeting.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Signpost successful candidates to induction training and resources.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Email the Clerk with ideas or suggestions to support plans for the induction of new Governors.	<b>All</b>
<b>6.4</b>	Liaise with the appropriate member of SLT to arrange Governor visits on the agreed dates.	<b>BN / CH</b>
<b>6.4</b>	Bring appropriate training opportunities from the Northants programme for discussion by Governors at the next round of Committee meetings.	<b>Committee Chairs</b>

**Decisions**

<b>5.2</b>	Governors approved the 5 business objectives identified in the Risk Register.
<b>7.2</b>	The Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee were approved.

- Welcome & apologies for absence**  
BN welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received and were accepted from Mr J Bilson (JB), Member Appointed Governor and Mr N Arnold (NA), Community Governor. Apologies were also received from Mrs L Martindale, Deputy Headteacher.

The meeting was quorate.

**2. Declarations of interest in respect of any items on the agenda & notice of any amendments to the Register of Interests**

There were no declarations made in respect of any items on the agenda and no amendments to the Register were noted.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held 17 September 2024 & review of action points**

The minutes had been shared in advance on GHub and 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**

<b>2.0</b>	All Governors to update their entry on the Register of Interests for 2024 – 2025 using Governor Hub. <b>Complete.</b> The Clerk confirmed that the updated Register has now been published on the school website.
<b>3.0</b>	All Governors to confirm their agreement to abide by the Governor Code of Conduct 2024 on GHub. <b>Complete.</b>
<b>4.0</b>	All Governors to give consideration to taking on the position of Vice Chair of Governors. <b>On the agenda.</b>
<b>5.0</b>	Send the final version of the Governor Monitoring Visit Form to the Clerk to be uploaded and shared on GHub. <b>Complete.</b> CH agreed to sign off this report and send it to the Clerk.
<b>6.0</b>	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. <b>Complete.</b>
<b>7.1</b>	Read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and complete the declaration on GHub to confirm that has been done. <b>Complete</b>
<b>8.1</b>	Create an anonymous summary document of staff feedback from exit interviews to share with Governors. <b>Complete and shared on GHub.</b>
<b>8.1</b>	Schedule a Governor visit for after October half-term to focus on the Behaviour Policy. <b>On the agenda.</b>
<b>9.1</b>	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. <b>Complete – response awaited.</b>
<b>10.1</b>	Add 'Review of the current Equality Policy and Impact Statement' to the agenda for the next Pastoral Committee meeting. <b>Complete</b>
<b>10.1</b>	Look at model policy document and start to consider what is required to renew the Equality Policy in the longer term. <b>Ongoing / with TH.</b>

**4. Interim Master's report**

The interim Master's report had been shared in advance on GHub. It was noted that it is not usual for this report to be brought to a FGB planning meeting, but was felt necessary in the circumstances.

The key points were summarised by TH and questions were invited.

- The biggest issue is the impact on the school's finance function following the unexpected loss of the School Business Manager in September.
- An interim arrangement with the EPA MAT is in place and their support is gratefully received.
- There are no internal finance staff currently working.
- Admin staff are working hard to cover the essential processes.

- Mr Ian Anderson will support preparations for the annual audit as part of the arrangement with the EPA MAT.
- The audit will now start on 2 December.
- The DfE have been informed that the Trust may miss the 31 December deadline for the submission of the Annual Report and Financial Statements.
- The aim is to ensure the more critical deadline of 31 January 2025 is met.

***Governors asked whether this will mean a change of date for the next meeting of the Full Governing Body and the Annual General Meeting, both of which are currently scheduled for 3 December?*** TH explained that preparation for the audit is being prioritised, but the timeline for this is currently unknown. GE noted that once the end of year financial statements have been prepared, it will be possible to schedule the necessary meetings for Governors to review these alongside the annual report. The Chair asked Governors to be flexible about the need to change the forthcoming meeting date.

***Governors asked if it would be acceptable for these meetings to be held online?*** The Clerk confirmed that this would be possible. The need for the auditors to be prepared to give their presentation to Governors online was noted as necessary.

***Governors asked how the payroll function was being managed?*** TH explained that payroll is stable and being managed by the HR Administrator.

***Governors considered contingency for that role and asked if anyone would be available to cover that function in an emergency situation?*** TH explained that he could cover payroll and added that EPM could be called upon for support if necessary.

***Governors asked for clarification that there are currently no members of the school's own finance team working?*** TH explained the situation as outlined in his report and described some of the practical challenges involved. He reported that there is a lot of learning to capture from this experience with regard to contingency planning. GE reported on his meeting with the Chief Financial Officer of EPA last week and noted that she is optimistic about achieving what needs to be done.

***Governors asked whether their condolences and thoughts had been passed onto the family of Mr Lenhan and BN confirmed that this was done through TH.***

#### **4.1 School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

TH noted that the most recent version of the SIP had been added to GHub shortly before the meeting. He explained that one of the four objectives is reviewed every week by SLT, meaning that discussion of the SIP is now more regular. He added that SLT are pleased with progress so far this year, having almost completed two full review cycles. Personal Development is the last objective to be reviewed for the second time. TH reported that the next step will be to see the objectives becoming embedded.

***Governors asked whether differences have been identified between the first and second review cycles?*** TH reported that they have and that there were both positives and negatives seen. He added that not all of the 'how' is being looked at in every review cycle. TH reported that there is clear evidence of the impact of actions on attendance and punctuality.

***Governors asked if there are any particular areas of concern?*** TH reported that there are some gaps around the Hard Thinking objective. AB explained that a lot of work needed to be done to set this up effectively and ensure that the appropriate structure is in place. She noted that this will be reviewed again in 2-3 weeks. TH added that some review work linked to this objective has not progressed due to his own lack of capacity, having had to prioritise the financial function as previously discussed.

***Governors asked whether a specific number of lesson 'dips' are done per teacher?*** AB explained that every teacher is visited during a lesson at least once every two weeks by their line manager and in addition, the members of SLT carry out regular lesson dips. She added that a dip takes a maximum of 10 minutes and involves whatever is appropriate at that point in time, which could be simply listening, looking at books, having a conversation with the teacher or talking with students about their learning.

TH explained that the language used around these lesson visits has changed based on the concept that colleagues are entitled to feedback. AB added that the process is centred around sharing good practice. She explained that there is a standard feedback form that is completed and sent immediately after each lesson dip to the teacher and copied to the Head of Faculty.

**Governors asked if this is well received by staff?** AB confirmed that staff value the feedback and the fact that the process is quick and easy.

**Governors asked what happens with substitute teachers and whether they are included in this process?** TH agreed that long-term staff absence does tend to hit some students more than others and noted that the aim is always to cover this absence with other staff from the faculty whenever possible. AB added that progress is being made with developing an internal group of cover teachers.

**Governors asked how feedback is provided on less good teaching?** TH reported that staff carrying out lesson dips will not assume that what they see in 10 minutes is normal practice. Observations about less good practice will be shared with other leaders and this part of the process will be completed discreetly.

**Governors asked how student feedback is gathered?** AB reported that student surveys were completed last term, when all staff actively sought feedback from one of their classes. TH added that year group reviews also involve student feedback.

**Governors asked how well students respond?** AB noted that they like being asked for feedback and see it as a positive process. TH added that this feedback is 'owned' by the class teacher.

**Governors were pleased to note that this is a meaningful process.**

**Governors asked whether there is a particular topic for student feedback across the school?** AB explained that staff had a choice of two surveys to use, one on teacher relationships or one on feedback. They were also able to pick which class they used it with. She noted that year group reviews will be more focussed on a point in time.

BN reminded Governors that the SIP objectives will feed into Governor Visits, which would be discussed at item 6.4 on the agenda.

## 5. Risk Register

### 5.1 Update on review process

The latest version of the updated Risk Register had been shared on GHub. TH noted that the spreadsheet is formatted with one tab for each of the 5 objectives, and a member of SLT and a Governor Committee has been assigned for each. The Register records the base risk score, the existing mitigations in place and the planned actions.

**Governors highlighted some duplication and one error in the impact scoring.** The required amendments were noted by TH for further review.

**Governors asked what the difference is between Likelihood 1 and Likelihood 2?**

TH explained that a score of 1 is unlikely, 2 is probable and 3 is highly likely. Probable is therefore the mid-point. **Governors noted that more clarity would be helpful.**

TH explained the approach he has taken in drafting the new Register, which was to consider what mitigations reduce impact.

He asked Committees to pick this up in the next cycle of meetings.

**Governors suggested that the risk rating for the building at St John's should be higher.**

**Governors highlighted how the current situation with the finance function has forced serious work on risk management.** It was noted that losing the finance function of the school is no longer a risk, but a reality, and should lead to careful consideration of other, similar vulnerabilities. It was agreed that critical functions across the school, internal knowledge of these functions and possible sources of external support should be explored, with the IT function given as one example.

TH added that having been through the process of managing the impact of an 'unknown unknown', he now has a better idea of the questions to ask when identifying and measuring a risk. The need to revisit the Business Continuity Plan was noted.

**Governors proposed that one mitigation would be to consider membership of a Multi Academy Trust, which would bring a source of support.** TH agreed and noted that this is demonstrated by the affiliated partner school programme offered by EPA, a copy of which had been shared on GHub. It was agreed that collaboration with other schools is a mitigating factor.

**Governors asked whether most roles within the school are critical?** TH explained that it would be possible to continue the core business without some roles.

It was agreed that only the business-critical roles should be added to the Risk Register. The Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee were asked to review the Risk Register at their next meeting.

## **5.2 Approval of business objectives**

**Governors approved the 5 business objectives identified in the Risk Register.**

## **6. Governance**

### **6.1 Update on recruitment of new Governors**

Copies of the candidate statements and ballot forms for the Parent Governor election had been shared on GHub. The Clerk reported that there were 7 candidates for 5 positions, offering a good range of backgrounds, skills and experience. The ballot is being carried out online and will close on 25<sup>th</sup> October. New appointments will be confirmed after half-term on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**Governors offered congratulations on the number of candidates and noted that communication with both the successful and importantly the unsuccessful candidates will be key.**

It was agreed that the newly appointed Parent Governors should be invited to attend the next FGB meeting and signposted to induction training resources by the Clerk. Governors were asked to email the Clerk with any ideas or suggestions to support plans for the induction of new Governors.

It was noted that gaps in some Committees need to be filled with some urgency.

The vacancies for one Foundation, one Community and one Local Authority Governor were noted and it was agreed that the focus on recruitment would move to these positions once the Parent Governor appointments have been confirmed.

### **6.2 Appointment of Vice Chair of Governors**

BN asked for any nominations for the position of Vice Chair of Governors and reminded Governors that this would not be an onerous task, and offers a good opportunity to develop in the role.

NJ stated that he would be willing to stand as Vice Chair of Governors. There were no other nominations in the room. NJ left the room and was duly elected as Vice Chair of Governors until September 2025. NJ returned to the meeting and was thanked for taking on the position.

### **6.3 Compliance review**

The Clerk noted that this had been covered under item 3 on the agenda, with the confirmation that all Governors have updated their entry on the Register of Interests for 2024 – 2025 and declared that they have read and understood Keeping Children in Education 2024. She noted that there is a statutory requirement for a named Governor to have a linked responsibility for Careers, and it was agreed that this appointment will be prioritised when the new Parent Governors have completed their induction process.

### **6.4 Plan for Governor monitoring visits**

The following plan for Governor visits was reviewed and agreed.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Link Governor / Member of SLT</b>
Behaviour Policy	After October half-term	BN / LM

Data and improvement plans – meeting with Maths, English and Science core leaders	Week beginning 18 <sup>th</sup> November	CH / AB
Attendance	Jan / Feb 2025	Pastoral Committee / LM

BN reminded Governors of their agreement at the last meeting to undertake some regular training and signposted the programme offered by Northamptonshire councils, which is available on GHub. **GE asked if there are courses specific to members of a particular committee?** It was confirmed that there are, and that some of these are available as bitesize modules, including Risk Management – Governors’ Oversight, and Finance & Compliance training at both introductory and advanced levels. It was agreed that Committee Chairs should bring appropriate training opportunities for discussion by Governors at the next round of Committee meetings.

## 7. Committee Reports

### 7.1 Education and Welfare Curriculum & Standards Committee – 24 Sept 2024

The minutes of the meeting had been shared on GHub and were summarised by BN who had chaired in the absence of JB and CH. He noted that;

- The Committee Terms of Reference were amended for review by the Pastoral Committee
- JB was re-appointed as Committee Chair
- CH was re-appointed as Committee Vice Chair
- The Curriculum, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Early Career Teachers (ECT) Induction policies were reviewed and approved
- The summary of feedback from the staff exit interviews in July was discussed and will also be on the agenda for the Pastoral Committee meeting in November.

### 7.2 Personnel Committee – 01 Oct 2024

The minutes of the meeting had been shared on GHub and were summarised by MP. He highlighted that;

- The Committee Terms of Reference were reviewed and are recommended for approval by the FGB
- He was re-appointed as Committee Chair
- 13 EPM model HR policies were reviewed and agreed in principle subject to being personalised for MCS. TH noted that this process has now been completed and the policies will be shared again with the Committee for final sign-off.  
**Governors suggested that staff should be informed that they have been updated.**
- A plan for a full review of the Appraisal and Capability Policy was agreed.  
**The Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee had been shared on GHub and were agreed for adoption.**

## 8. Safeguarding

TH advised Governors of a fixed term suspension issued today to a student in Year 13 relating to possible possession of drugs. He noted that this is the third suspension issued to 3 different Year 13 students since the beginning of the school year and highlights the prevalence of drugs amongst this age group in the local community. TH noted that the decision to suspend was taken on the balance of probabilities and added that all 3 students have been referred to Ngage.

**Governors asked about the risk to other students?** TH confirmed that there is no risk to other students.

**Governors asked whether communication with parents has happened?** TH confirmed that meetings have been held with parents in each case.

**Governors asked whether monitoring of key areas like toilets has been increased?** TH confirmed that it has and noted that monitoring of individual students suspected of drug possession has also been increased. He confirmed that under the

Behaviour Policy, the school is able to perform spot checks on students if the suspicion is there.

**Governors asked if the school is changing the way it deals with this issue as a result of the prevalence in the local community?** TH confirmed that this is having to happen due to the relative normalcy of drug use amongst this age group.

**9. Any Other Business**

There was none

**10. Date of next meeting**

As agreed at item 4 on the agenda, the date of the next FGB meeting remains subject to change based on progress with the annual audit. Governors will be advised of the date of the next meeting as soon as that is known.

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

**Signed..... (Chair)**

**Dated.....**