



PRIORY FIELDS
SCHOOL

Priory Fields School

Local Governing Body Meeting

Tuesday 1st July 2025

Head Teacher: Miss Casey Hall

Minutes of the Local Governing Body Meeting

held on Tuesday 1st July 2025 at Priory Fields School at 4:15pm

Governors Present: Malcolm Bowler (Vice Chair of Governors), Henry Coates (Chair of Governors), Casey Hall (Headteacher), Aimee Lucas, Alison Mackintosh, Shelley Yalden

Others Present: N/A

Governance Professional: Katie Banes

1	<u>Welcome, introductions, resignations and apologies</u> Governors were welcomed to the meeting. Pavel Gina was absent from the meeting. The meeting was confirmed to be quorate.
2	<u>Declaration of Business Interests/Business Interests Against this Agenda</u> Governors were given the opportunity to declare any new business interests and/or declare any pecuniary interests against this agenda. No declarations of business interests were made against this agenda.
3	<u>Minutes from Term 3 LGB Meeting Published on the Website</u> The Governance Professional confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 4 th February 2025 in Term 3, have been published on the school website.
4	<u>Approve Minutes from previous LGB Meeting in Term 4 –Tuesday 1st April 2025</u>
4.1	Approval of Minutes Previous minutes were made available to Governors prior to the LGB meeting. The minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting held on Tuesday 1 st April were approved as a true and accurate record. <i>The Chair of Governors signed the previous minutes to reflect this.</i>
4.2	<u>Actions</u> <i>Governors to receive an update on drawing club and curious quest at the next LGB meeting.</i>

	<p>Staff were unavailable to present at this LGB meeting. This will be followed up and shared with Governors in the new year.</p> <p>Share external safeguarding audit report at the next LGB meeting. The external safeguarding audit was made available to Governors prior to the LGB meeting.</p> <p>MB to carry out SATs monitoring visit. SATs monitoring has been carried out and will be covered under agenda item number seven (7).</p>
5	<p><u>Ofsted/Local School Updates</u> <u>Changes to Ofsted Inspections</u> Governors were provided with a brief overview of the recent changes to the Ofsted inspection process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools will no longer receive single-word inspection judgements. - Notice for routine inspections will always take place on a Monday after 9:30am. - A new 'suspend and return' policy has been put in place for safeguarding judgements. - A new report card system will be implemented in September 2025. Governors will be updated on these changes in the new academic year. - Schools may be placed into a formal 'category of concern', whereby any judgements which are inadequate, or where safeguarding is found to be ineffective. <p><u>Local Update – Community of Schools</u> A new, locality-based approach to Special Educational Needs support and funding developed by Kent County Council. 75% of the funding has been protected for four (4) terms to support the transition of the new system. Funding allocated will be supporting a group of nine (9) schools. Protection has been put in place for pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP), who are in receipt of over six thousand pounds (£6,000) for them to retain their funding.</p> <p>WDAT schools are actively engaged in the community model and part of a Dover locality group. The implications for the Trust means that there will be changes to how high needs funding and EHCP applications are assessed and moderated. THE SEND and leadership teams will work together to engage with the Community of Schools panel to ensure timely and effective support for pupils.</p>
6	<p><u>Governance</u> <u>Governor Membership</u></p> <p>6.1 - PG Membership</p> <p>Whilst understanding the circumstances surrounding PG's ongoing absence from LGB meetings, Governors agreed to remove PG from the Local Governing Body. Chair of LGB to send a letter PG informing him of the LGB's decision. Governors would consider any future applications if levels of commitment will be able to be observed.</p> <p>6.2 - AL Membership</p> <p>Governors were informed that AL has resigned due to seeking new employment. Therefore, AL's term of office will cease on 31st August 2025. Advertisement to be placed for a new Staff Governor.</p>
7	<p><u>Governor Monitoring</u> <u>External Advisor – Feedback from Writing Monitoring</u></p>

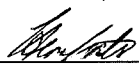
	<p>The school has funded external support from Graham Chisnell to support the school in moving forward with the key priority of writing. Following GC's final visit to the school, MB attended the feedback session with the senior leadership team.</p> <p>The overall feedback for the school was very positive, with a clear direction of the next steps identified for the school. Governors were encouraged to be more challenging and for leaders to involve Governors in more of their monitoring.</p>
8	<p>Headteacher Report</p>
8.1	<p>The Headteacher Report was made available to Governors prior to the LGB meeting. Governors were aware that the leadership team have followed the key priorities and school improvement areas rigidly across the year to ensure progress is made in every area. New medium-term plans, which have been amended by the leadership team have been received positively by the teaching team. There continues to be a strong focus on handwriting and presentation across the school. Handwriting and spelling will remain a priority for next year.</p> <p>White Rose has been firmly embedded across the school; this has been a big change and shift in the approach Maths is taught, but it is working well. White Rose supports all children to be able to work at an appropriately challenging level. Children working out of year group have made very good in-year progress. Training and continued professional development has supported this, to ensure the curriculum is accessible for all children.</p>
8.2	<p>The school has been working closely with the local secondary school, Astor College to support both children and staff in ensuring a smooth transition from to primary to secondary school; particularly for those vulnerable children who require additional support.</p>
8.3	<p>Attendance currently stands at 92.1% to date. While this is below the most recent national average of 93.3% (DfE Week 21 data), the school remains focused on improving this through consistent support and interventions.</p> <p>Currently, 79 pupils (24%) are identified as persistently absent (PA). The main factors contributing to persistent absentees continues to be term-time holidays, ongoing pupil health issues and external challenges faced by parents, including their own mental health.</p> <p>The number of children on reduced timetables have been reduced, with some children successfully reintegrated back into the classroom. Two children who were on reduced timetables have left and are on reduced timetables at a specialist school.</p> <p>Five (5) children account for eighty-two (82) out of the one hundred and fifty-four (154) sessions of school lost to suspensions. A high number of the suspensions issued are due to physical assault towards members of staff, which has included biting, throwing furniture and punching staff. It was commented that some suspensions have been managed off-site at a different school in the Trust. The number of suspensions issued have reduced over the last two months. Governors support the need for suspensions to be issued and agree that staff should not be subject to physical and verbal abuse when at work.</p>
8.4	<p>According to the DfE, Priory Fields is classed as being overstaffed. Two members of the teaching team are relocating to Vale View for the new academic year; the staff involved are comfortable with the changes. Two teachers have also resigned to leave at the end of the academic year.</p>

	<p>Governors were informed that from the date of appointment to new employment, staff are able to submit a flexible working request. There are eight legal reasons for why flexible working request cannot be granted. The Headteacher has received several flexible working requests within the last month, from both teaching and support staff. Governors were made aware of the impact flexible working requests can have on the workload of key staff at the school. Governors were comfortable in offering support to the leadership team if there is a way the LGB can support the Headteacher with flexible working requests. So far, the school has been able to accommodate all the flexible working requests submitted.</p>
9	<p><u>Leadership</u></p>
9.1	<p><u>Year Four (4) Multiplication Check</u></p> <p>The Year Four (4) team has worked hard across the year and made significant in-year progress to secure good results in the times tables multiplication check; data has improved in comparison to last year. 30% of children achieved full marks and 65% of children scored between twenty (20) and twenty-four (24) marks. There is no 'pass mark' for the multiplication check.</p> <p>The school has facilitated effective phonics interventions in key stage one, leaving only four (4) children who did not pass the phonics check. These four children will be monitored in year three (3), with additional phonics interventions in place to secure the gaps in learning.</p> <p>GLD (Good Level of Development) in EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) has decreased to 61% this year, but this is cohort specific and due to some significant learning needs in EYFS.</p> <p>Year six (6) SATs data will be published on the 8th July and therefore shared at the next LGB meeting. 67% of children have achieved the expected standard in writing, which is slightly lower than what was targeted, but still higher than last year.</p>
9.2	<p><u>Staff Well-Being</u></p> <p>Posters displaying an overview of the staff well-being surveys were shared with Governors prior to the LGB meeting. The CEO has initially met with focus groups to work through some key areas. Key strengths were identified as staff feeling safe at work, support from each other, the positive working relationships and job satisfaction. Areas to improve were identified as support with behaviour, considerations for workload and to ensure consistency in responses provided from the senior leadership team.</p> <p>Having fewer teaching assistants has led to an increase in responsibilities for more members of staff. Coaching conversations are being and will continue to be held with key members of staff to ensure consistent responses from the leadership team.</p> <p>It was commented that marking was not raised as an area of concern for staff; the new medium-term plans implemented for English has not created any additional workload for teachers. It was highlighted that Priory Fields is below the national comparison for staff workload.</p> <p>Supporting high level behaviour has been a challenge; staff absence within the leadership team has impacted significantly across the year, in addition to additional absence from the pastoral support team.</p>
10	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>The annual Safeguarding Report was made available to governors prior to the LGB meeting. The external safeguarding audit was very positive; with some areas identified for improvement. The CEO and Headteachers from the Trust are due to attend Educational Visits training, as training is now out of date and requires renewal.</p>

	<p>The school aims to continue to reduce the number of persistent absentees; the Headteacher will continue to with the FLO (Family Liaison Officer) and PSA (Parent Support Advisor) to reduce the number of persistent absentees.</p> <p>A Governor asked if the school is informed if social services are involved due to child protection matters. It was confirmed that all professionals involved would be informed. The school gets notified of any Op Encompass incidents and attend meetings and liaise with other agencies as required.</p>
11	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p>
11.1	<p><u>Meeting Day and Time</u></p> <p>Governors were asked if the current day of the week and time would continue to be suitable for all Governors for the new academic year. All Governors present agreed to change the meeting day to a Thursday at 4:15pm.</p>
11.2	<p><u>Governor Hub</u></p> <p>Moving forward, the school and Governors will use Governor Hub to access governor documentation and governor knowledge base.</p>
11.3	<p><u>Class Sizes</u></p> <p>Governors were informed that due to reducing pupil numbers, the school are considering mixed year-group classes in key stage once. Governors were informed the school has not reduced its PAN and would need to be mindful of this this moving forward.</p>
11.4	<p><u>Branding</u></p> <p>The trust has rebranded the logos for the trust and the individual schools. The re-brand plans to provide uniformity across the trust and support marketing opportunities, help improve pupil numbers and promote the Whinless Down Academy Trust.</p>
12	<p><u>Confidentiality of Proceedings</u></p> <p>Items of a confidential nature were not discussed within the meeting.</p>
13	<p><u>Publication of Minutes</u></p> <p>These minutes will be approved and published following the next meeting.</p>

<u>Action Points</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Chair of LGB to write letter to PG.</i> - <i>School to advertise for a new Staff Governor.</i>

Minutes taken by Governance Professional, Katie Banes

Signed by Chair of Governors:  Date: 29/10/2025

Henry Coates

