



# Northern Arch

## LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Mowden Schools

Local Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 at 5.30 pm

Mowden Junior School, Conyers Avenue, Darlington, DL3 9DE

### MINUTES

Present (Governors)	Nick Bowerman, Michelle Dunwell, Paul Freeman, Sarah Heslop, Peter King, Danielle James, Helen Livingstone, Jackie Saint and Diane Turner.
In attendance	Tim Fisher: Chief Executive Officer, Northern Arch Learning Partnership Nikki Wade: Strategic Development Officer Alistair Johnson – Deputy Head Teacher, Mowden Schools Angela Taylor: School Business Manager, Mowden Schools Laura Hawksby: Governance and Policy Officer

Item	Description of discussion	Action
	<b>PART A: Procedural items</b>	
1.	<b><u>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present</u></b>  The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and introduced Danielle James as this was her first meeting at the Mowden Schools Local Governing Body.  It was confirmed that a quorum was present.	
2.	<b><u>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</u></b>  Apologies for absence were received from Governors: Rebecca Foster-Snook, Ben Hall and Jonathon Reay.	
3.	<b><u>Notification of items of urgent other business</u></b>  Pupil Admissions would be discussed as part of the Head Teacher's report.	
4.	<b><u>Declaration of Personal and Pecuniary Interests</u></b>  None	

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Page 1 of 6

denotes support and challenge provided by Governors

PART B: Business Items for Discussion		
5.	<p><b><u>Approval of minutes/review of actions/matters arising</u></b></p> <p>The following draft minutes of were considered and had been shared with the Local Governing Body prior to the meeting, copies of which are held on file.</p> <p>All actions had been completed and there were no matters arising.</p> <p>Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the following Minutes were confirmed as accurate records and should be signed by the Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Finance &amp; Audit Committee of Mowden Schools – 27th November 2024</li> <li>b) Governing Body of Mowden Schools - 29th January 2025</li> <li>c) Special Meeting of the Local Governing Body – 5th March 2025</li> </ul>	Governance & Policy Officer/ Chair(s)
6.	<p><b><u>Chair's Report</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair advised a new Head Teacher had been successfully appointed to Mowden Schools, who would commence in September 2025. The Chair thanked Governors and the Trust for their support during a very thorough process.</li> <li>• It was noted that a new Declarations of Interest Form would be circulated to all Governors on the Local Governing Body for them to update since joining Northern Arch Learning Partnership.</li> <li>• A Skills Audit would be circulated to all Local Governing Body Governors in the Summer Term for their completion which will help inform future training needs and any future recruitment to the Local Governing Body.</li> </ul>	<p>Governance &amp; Policy Officer</p> <p>Governance &amp; Policy Officer</p>
7.	<p><b><u>Name of Schools</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the naming of the schools having previously been referred to as The Federation of Mowden Schools.</p> <p>Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the schools be referred to as Mowden Schools subject to there being no legal reasons for moving away from being referred to as a Federation.</p> <p>As part of the formation of the new Local Governing Body of Mowden Schools Governors requested an away day strategy event in the Autumn Term 2025.</p>	<p>SDO</p> <p>SDO/ Governance &amp; Policy Officer</p>
8.	<p><b><u>Head Teacher's Report</u></b></p> <p>The Head Teacher provided a comprehensive update report to the Local Governing Body, a copy of which is retained on file.</p> <p>Areas of discussion included:</p>	



	<p><u>Attendance</u></p> <p>Attendance remained strong for Mowden Schools and was above the national average, with attendance also higher than schools with similar levels of deprivation. Persistent absence remained below the national average.</p> <p><u>Numbers on Roll</u></p> <p>Numbers on roll have fallen for both the Infants and Juniors, which is concerning.</p> <p>Governors asked what the Trust could do to help support in relation to pupil numbers/admissions? The Chief Executive Officer advised that the Trusts Risk Register reflected the importance of pupil numbers and was a number one priority/focus of the Trust. A post within the Trust for admissions/pupil numbers was currently being created.</p> <p>It was noted that Mowden Pre-School was currently reviewing their Admissions Policy to align with Mowden Schools. Governors requested that in relation to Mowden Schools Admissions Policy research be undertaken regarding the timeline for any updates or amendments and be brought back to the next meeting of the Local Governing body in the Summer Term.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>Safeguarding remained strong in Mowden.</p> <p>The Internet and Digital Media Use Policy would be reviewed at the Summer Term Mowden Local Governing Body.</p> <p>The Single Central Register check was to be completed by the Safeguarding Governor link.</p>	<p>SDO</p> <p>Head Teacher</p>
8 a.)	<p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>The Risk Register for Mowden Schools was noted by Governors. It would be reviewed further by the Chair, Head Teacher and Strategic Development and be aligned with the Trust Risk Register.</p> <p>Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that Mowden Schools' Risk Register be brought back to the next meeting of the Local Governing Body.</p>	<p>Head Teacher/ SDO</p>
8 b.)	<p><u>School Development Plan</u></p> <p>Governors noted the progress made in the School Development Plan from last reported.</p> <p>The Head teacher advised that Governors had taken part in February's maths learning walks. They had observed good learning taking place and were impressed by the variety of problem solving, data handling and reasoning in the lessons. All teachers had received feedback. Earlier last term work scrutiny in Religious</p>	

	Education was completed involving middle leaders, with the pupils' books demonstrating good progression through the year groups in the subject.	
9.	<p><b><u>School Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR)</u></b></p> <p>The School Inspection Data Summary Reports (IDSR) for both the Infants and Junior schools were noted. The national assessment measures for both the Infants and Juniors are strong.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Chief Executive's Officer's Update Report</u></b></p> <p>The process of bringing Mowden Schools into Northern Arch Learning Partnership has progressed smoothly and the transfer was completed on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025. There are six academies now in the Trust all rated Good or better.</p> <p>A new Executive Director of Education had also been appointed also within the latter half term.</p> <p>A successful Schools Resource Management Advisors (SRMA) report was produced last term, helping the Partnership identify further how it may be efficient and resilient.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>Business Manager's Report</u></b></p> <p>The Business Manager provided a comprehensive report regarding building development &amp; premises, health, safety &amp; security, finance and personnel.</p> <p>Regarding the Schools' solar panels, Governors noted the success of reducing the amount of electricity bought alongside the sale of surplus energy back to the grid during the summer months.</p> <p>Options for the remedy and repair of the footpath leading from the Junior car park into the playground owing to tree roots were underway.</p> <p>A summary of the January 2025 monthly Management Accounts were noted by Governors. The largest variance in the year to date was due to repairs and maintenance of windows and roofs, as well as purchases of capital items.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25</u></b></p> <p>An update was provided on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25 which was currently progressing through Parliament. The Bill aims to improve children's social care and education.</p>	
13.	<p><b><u>Trust Governance Update</u></b></p> <p>The role of Local Governing Bodies is being reviewed and refined to ensure that the lines of communication between the LGBs and Trust Board are clear and effective, and that the Trust can make the best use of the LGBs' insights and contributions for</p>	



	<p>the benefit of all its young people. Local tier of governance provides Trustees with insight into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by their communities</p> <p>The Trust's Strategic Plan and Scheme of Delegation will be brought back to the next meeting of the Local Governing Body once the latest versions have been reviewed and approved by the Trust Board.</p>	
14.	<p><b><u>Link Governors</u></b></p> <p>Governors were linked to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding: Rebecca Foster Snook</li> <li>• Special Educational Needs (SEN), Looked after children (LAC) &amp; Previously Looked After Children (PLAC): Jackie Saint</li> <li>• Finance: Nick Bowerman</li> <li>• Premises Health &amp; Safety: Paul Freeman</li> </ul> <p>Further consideration of the Link Governors would be given at the next meeting of the Local Governing Body.</p> <p>Governor Jackie Saint advised that she had undertaken a SEN (Special Educational Needs) learning walk and that the school had joined the Darlington Inclusion Charter.</p>	Governance & Policy Officer/Governors
<b><u>Part C: Concluding Items</u></b>		
15.	<p><b><u>Approval of documents for inspection</u></b></p> <p>Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers/staff and commercial sensitive information in accordance with Articles 125 a.), b.) and c.)</p>	
16.	<p><b><u>Date and time of future meetings</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mowden Schools LGB – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 5.30 pm</li> </ul>	
<b>The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm</b>		

## Action Log

5.	Minutes – to be signed by Chair(s)	Governance & Policy Officer/Chair
6.	Declarations of Interests and Skills Audit Form circulated for completion to LGB	Governance & Policy Officer
7.	Confirmation no legal reason school has to be still referred to as a Federation	SDO
7.	Away Day Strategy Event date and arrangements	SDO/Governance & Policy Officer
8.	Admissions Policy – timeline	SDO
	Safer Internet & Digital Media Use Policy to be reviewed next LGB	Head Teacher
8.a.)	Risk Register – Bring back next meeting of LGB	SDO/Head Teacher
14.	Further discussions regarding Link Governors of Mowden LGB to be brought back to the next meeting.	Governance & Policy Officer/Governors

These Minutes were approved by the Local Governing Body of Mowden Schools, as follows:

on: 18-06-25 date

Signed by: (Chair)

Printed name: PAUL FREEMAN.