



Northern Arch

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Standards Committee

held at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

4.30pm, Monday 31st March 2025

MINUTES

Directors present:	Zoe Beach (Chair), Tarryn Lloyd Payne and Tim Fisher (Chief Executive Officer).
In attendance	John Armitage: Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy Laurence Job: Principal, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Angela Sweeten: Head Teacher, Longfield Academy Rachel Sommerville: Head Teacher, Hurworth School Jon Tait: Executive Director of Education Nikki Wade: Strategic Development Officer, Northern Arch Learning Partnership Laura Hawksby: Governance & Policy Officer, Northern Arch Learning Partnership

Item	Description of discussion	Action
	PART A: Procedural items	
1.	<u>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present</u> The Chair welcomed the new Executive Director Education to his first meeting of the Standards Committee. It was confirmed that a quorum was present.	
2.	<u>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</u> Apologies for absence were received and accepted for Iain Clyde (Director), Graham Wynn (Director) and Peter King (Head Teacher Mowden Schools).	
3.	<u>Notification of items of urgent other business</u> None	
4.	<u>Declaration of Personal and Pecuniary Interests</u> None	

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denotes support and challenge provided by Governors

5.	<p><u>Approval of minutes/review of actions/matters arising – Standards Committee 20th November 2024</u></p> <p>Draft Minutes of the Standards Committee held on the 20th November 2024 had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting, a copy of which is held on file.</p> <p>All actions had been completed or included for this meeting of the Committee as requested by Directors. The terms of reference for the Standards Committee would be brought back to the Summer Term meeting of the Committee as requested by Directors.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on the 20th November 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record and should be signed by the Chair.</p>	<p>Governance & Policy Officer</p> <p>Chair/ Governance & Policy Officer</p>
PART B: Business Items for Discussion		
6.	<p><u>Safeguarding ADEMSS Report</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) advised that as the Trust grows it is important to explore ways in which collaboration across the Trust can increase impact through the generation of new ideas, the sharing of best practice and increase efficiency through the de-implementation of ineffective practice and a reduction in duplication.</p> <p>The CEO reported that the Trust is currently exploring the appointment of a trust wide safeguarding lead and working on oversight of safeguarding information, policies and culture across all of the academies. <i>Directors agreed that it was important that information provided to the Board was robust and provides a clear understanding of safeguarding information across the Academies. Directors advised that it was also important that they had an understanding about the Academies' capacity for managing safeguarding.</i></p> <p>Directors noted that safeguarding was one of the key areas for focus by the Partnership's Local Governing Bodies and the Spring term LGB safeguarding updates were reported to Directors, along with safeguarding data and action plans.</p>	<p>CEO/EDE/ SDO</p>
7.	<p><u>Standards ADEMSS Report including Academy Updates</u></p> <p>The Committee discussed ways in which information could be shared most effectively with Directors and ways in which Directors can best drive developments and have a positive impact on standards. It was agreed that the current Academy Updates setting out what is going well; what is being worked upon; current risks and support requirements was helpful for Directors on the Standards Committee. <i>However, they requested a comparative high level data dashboard to be also included in the future so that Directors were able to evidence information through the same metrics and focus on any necessary interventions.</i></p> <p><u>Hurworth</u></p> <p>The Head Teacher for Hurworth School provided an update report to Directors. Results were noted to be strong, with improvements from last year and the second</p>	<p>CEO/EDE/ SDO</p>

highest GCSE outcomes in the Borough. Implementation of the new Choices philosophy is embedding, and attendance is above the national average

Some of the current risks for Hurworth School included a drop in pupil numbers and an increase in Special Education Needs (SEN). There are a low number of pupils opting for Modern Foreign languages. Directors asked what support the Trust can offer regarding the MFL numbers and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) advised that Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College could be utilised to help support/offer experiences for pupils who may potentially wish to take languages.

The site requires some significant updates. Directors asked what is being done to address this and the CEO explained that centrally delivered support at the Partnership is helping to explore and implement potential improvements.

Longfield Academy

The Head Teacher for Longfield Academy provided an update report to Directors. Since achieving 'Good' across all areas at their recent Ofsted inspection the school has been focusing on creating a culture of inclusion, high standards and positive noticing. Personal Development continues to be a significant and continuing focus for the Academy, with a priority of 'developing the whole child.' Pledges have been relaunched, including a primary pledge. A graduation ceremony has been introduced for Year 9 into Year 10.

Although exclusions had slightly risen this term, overall, they were down year on-year. Directors asked what steps were being put in place to help drive improvements in Maths and English and the Head explained that have an 8-week strategic plan leading up to the first Maths and English GCSE exams in May.

The biggest current risk is drop in pupil numbers.

Mowen Schools

The update for Mowden Schools report was noted by Directors. National assessment measures, attendance and teaching & learning were noted to be strong for both Infants and Juniors.

Current risks included falling pupil numbers and Special Educational Needs (SEND) are increasing.

Directors requested that a Deputy be asked to attend the Committee meeting if the Head is not available.

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

The Principal at QE provided an update report to Directors. Strong results and progress have been made at QE across A-Levels, Academic and Applied General qualifications, which are consistently above the national average. Retention is currently the highest it has been in the last 4 years and current number of applications for Year 1 to the College is the highest it has been in the last 5 years.

	<p>Risks included drop in student numbers, curriculum reform and destinations (cost of universities, quality of apprenticeships, employment opportunities).</p> <p>GCSE Maths results were noted to be not as strong as previous years and Directors asked if additional support and interventions are being implemented to help with this emerging issue. The Principal confirmed that is correct and was an area of focus for the College.</p> <p><u>The Rydal Academy</u></p> <p>The Head Teacher of The Rydal Academy provided an update report to Directors. Overall attendance is currently high compared to the previous two years and persistent absentees are down. Growth from Reception baselines continues to be at least double the national average in most year groups. There has been a significant reduction in suspensions and exclusions. The 'kindness curriculum' has had a positive impact and Directors suggested this may be of benefit in the secondary sector of the Trust too.</p> <p>Greatest risks included drop in pupil numbers, a higher number of pupils with Special Educational Need (SEND), attainment against national average, proportion of severely absent pupils and roll mobility. Regarding safeguarding a high number of children were open to the highest tiers of CSC involvement and children in care.</p> <p>Directors noted that the fall in pupil/student numbers was a main risk across all academies in the Trust and asked what was being done to address this. The CEO advised that the Trust is looking to create a post focusing on marketing & admissions to help address the fall in numbers.</p>	
<u>Part C: Concluding Items</u>		
8.	<p><u>Approval of documents for inspection</u></p> <p>Directors RESOLVED 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.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Date and time of future meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated since last meeting to – Thursday 26th June 2025 at 4.30 pm, Hurworth School 	
The meeting concluded at 6.35pm		

Action Log

5.	Terms of Reference Standards Committee – Summer meeting of the Committee	Governance & Policy Officer
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	Minutes – 20 th November 2024 to be signed by Chair	Governance & Policy Officer
6.	Working towards the oversight of safeguarding information across the Partnership	CEO/EDE/SDO
7.	High level data dashboard to be included in future Director's Standards Committee reports	CEO/EDE/SDO

These minutes were approved by the Standards Committee, as follows:

Signed by: (Chair) Z Beach

On: (date) 26/06/2025

Printed name: ZOE BEACH

