



Northern Arch

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

The Longfield Academy

Local Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Monday 16th June 2025 at 5.15 pm, The Longfield Academy

MINUTES

Present (Governors)	Angela Sweeten (Head Teacher), Andrew Brown, Angela Cleasby, Victoria Foster and Lisa Morehead.
In attendance	Iain Clyde: Chair of Directors Tim Fisher: Chief Executive Officer Glen Hart: Chief Financial Officer Laura Hawksby: Governance and Policy Officer

Item	Description of discussion	Action
	PART A: Procedural items	
1.	<u>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present</u> In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair it was agreed that Governor Lisa Morehead would Chair the meeting. Everyone was welcomed and it was confirmed that a quorum was present.	
2.	<u>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</u> Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Governors Nicola Bales (Chair), Tanya Singh, and Stephen Goodman.	
3.	<u>Notification of items of urgent other business</u> None	
4.	<u>Declaration of Personal and Pecuniary Interests</u> None	
5.	<u>Membership Document</u> The following was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the resignation of General Governor Vicky Maddison as of 20th May 2025 It was noted there were currently 3 vacancies on the Local Governing Body.	

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denotes support and challenge provided by Governors

6.	<p><u>Approval of minutes/review of actions/matters arising – The Longfield Academy Local Governing Body 17th March 2025</u></p> <p>Draft Minutes of The Longfield Academy Local Governing Body held on the 17th March 2025 had been shared with the Local Governing Body prior to the meeting, a copy of which is held on file.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) provided the following answers to Governors questions arising from the last meeting of the Committee:</p> <p><u>Funding the National Insurance increase:</u> The CFO explained that the National Insurance (NI) increase was to be mostly covered by the National Insurance Grant from the Government, which was based upon a pupil number calculation per school. The April 2025 Management Accounts, as included in the Head Teacher's report for this meeting of the Local Governing Body, included the increase in N.I spend on employers and the N.I funding which had been announced by the Government. The funding is due to be received in September 2025.</p> <p><u>Funding and plans for the 3G pitch, plans to market the gym further:</u> The CFO advised that the sinking fund for the replacement 3G pitch was not currently enough to replace the pitch. Alternative options now included looking at leasing a new 3G pitch when it required replacement. A survey of the current 3G pitch was due to be undertaken in the Autumn Term. A review of Longfield Trading was currently being undertaken and options for further marketing the gym were being explored.</p> <p><u>Current Reserves Position:</u> The CFO advised that the current Reserves position at 31/08/25 was forecast to be £141K, which included the sinking fund for the replacement pitch.</p> <p><u>Increased annual capital funding and what it will mean in relation to Longfield Academy:</u> The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) advised a conditions survey would be undertaken by the Trust which would inform priorities across all the Partnership for allocation of funding.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of the Longfield Local Governing Body 17th March 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record and should be signed by the Chair.</p>	Chair/ Governance & Policy Officer
	PART B: Business Items for Discussion	
7.	<p><u>Chair's Report</u></p> <p>It was noted there were no new updates.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Head Teacher's Report</u></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>	

Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers continued to be the largest risk to Longfield Academy, in terms of pupil recruitment and losing pupils mid-term. There was an increasing trend to pupils moving to Elective Home Education (EHE), which was reflective of a national trend. Governors were pleased to note that first choices for the school had begun to increase. Governors enquired about the feedback from transition days. The Head Teacher advised that there had been extremely positive feedback from staff from other schools, visitors and Y5 transition groups, with the positive culture of the school continuing to grow.

Attendance

Attendance data is continued to be tracked rigorously, with interventions put in place should they be required. Persistent absenteeism (90%) had remained similar to last year. Serious Persistent Absenteesim (50%) has slightly improved from 2.74% in 2024 to 2.24% in 2025.

Suspensions and Exclusions

It was noted suspensions and exclusions were significantly down this year compared to last year.

Alternative Provision

It was noted the increasing complex needs of pupils required the need for Alternative Provision to help support these pupils. Governors asked if this had led to an increase in financial costs for alternative provision and the Head Teacher confirmed that was correct and was a significant cost to the Academy.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding continued to be a focus with no families declining the offer of Early Help due to positive relationships with families. The Governors noted Child on Child abuse continued to be low and reflected the positive culture of the school. All allegations are investigated and actioned appropriately; however, those of concern are recorded as a confirmed case and included additional interventions for both perpetrators and victims.

Quality of Education

Quality of Education continued to be rigorously quality assured by the Senior Leadership team. Positive deep dives had been undertaken in both Maths and English since last reported to Governors. The Academy was now in the phase of moving teaching & learning into the next development phase through the EEF Accountable talk framework, interdisciplinary language and cross-curricular working.

Personal Development

Governors were pleased to note the success of the Pledges system in the school and the positive response by pupils. Year 9 Graduation was planned for July 2025, with the criteria to graduate having improved attendance in Year 9 and pupils' attitudes to learning.

	<p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Governors enquired if reading interventions had demonstrated impact on pupils reading. The Head Teacher advised that Years 7,8 and 9 have all seen a 40-50% increase in reading ability.</p> <p><u>Attainment</u></p> <p>It was noted there were no Progress 8 scores this year, as no Sats had taken place in 2020 due to the pandemic, and that the Academy was working hard for as many pupils to achieve as a minimum grades 4-5 in English and Maths qualifications. Appropriate interventions were put in place to ensure pupils were supported to achieve their best results, whether that be via pastoral or academic support.</p>	
8 a.)	<p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>The Risk Register for Longfield Academy was currently being reviewed further by the Head Teacher and Strategic Development Officer. As requested by Governors the greatest risk reflected in the Risk Register was currently pupil numbers.</p> <p>The Risk Register would be brought back to the next meeting of the Local Governing Body.</p>	Head Teacher
9.	<p><u>Priority Areas of Focus</u></p> <p>Priority areas for focus included increasing student numbers, plus the three priority areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain Based Learning (to be developed further through Accessibility framework and the Accountable Talk framework EEF) • Collaborative Planning – to promote disciplinary language, cross curriculum methodology to improve and apply knowledge and understanding across all subjects. • Developing the Whole Child – the Y9 graduation will be held for the first time this year, pledges to be embedded, enrichment to be well attended, the culture of the Academy to continue to strengthen. 	
10.	<p><u>Chief Executive's Officer's Update Report</u></p> <p>Governors noted the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) June 2025 report, which included several recent changes and developments amongst senior and Central Team personnel.</p> <p>In late May 2025 the Partnership's received more information from the DfE regarding next year's pay increases for teaching and support. Budgets are being set within assumptions and with due regard to ratios stated in the SRMA (School Resources Management Advisers) report and can already demonstrate improved ratios at all academies compared to last year's position.</p>	

11.	<p><u>Thank you – Iain Clyde Chair of Directors</u></p> <p>The Chair of Directors thanked all Governors on Longfield Local Governing Body for their hard work and time given as volunteers on the Local Governing Body. They had done a great job in helping to contribute to the governance of Northern Arch Learning Partnership, whilst keeping the Partnership's vision of each Local Governing Body preserving their local identity.</p> <p>The recent successes of QE being rated by Ofsted as 'outstanding' and Longfield as 'good' had been celebrated within the Trust. New appointments had included the Executive Director Education, Head of Admissions and Marketing and a new Head Teacher for Mowden Schools.</p> <p>A Northern Arch Partnership Development Day for all Governors, Directors and Members was due to be held on the 13th October 2025 which would include a programme of development and collaboration for all those involved in governance across the Trust.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Approval of Term Dates 2027/28</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to school term dates for the 2027/28 Academic Year, a copy of the proposed dates were circulated at the meeting. After careful consideration it was agreed by the Local Governing Body that the term dates be approved, including the Professional Development and disaggregated dates.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the 2027/28 school term dates including the Professional Development and disaggregated dates, as set out in the report, be approved and forwarded to Darlington Borough Council.</p>	Head Teacher
13.	<p><u>Policies:</u></p> <p><u>Trust approved policies Spring Term 2025 were noted for Information:</u></p> <p>Finance Policy (Trust), Reserves Policy (Trust), Investment Policy (Trust), Pay Policy* (Trust), Appraisal Policy* (Trust), Staff Behaviour - Code of Conduct and Addendum* (Trust), Disciplinary Policy & Procedures (Schools), Grievance Policy (Schools), Premises Management Policy (Trust), GDPR Data Protection Policy (Trust), Data Retention & Destruction Policy (Trust), Privacy Notices (Trust), Complaints Policy (Trust) and Code of Conduct for Members, Directors and Governors (Trust).</p> <p><i>* Subject to union approval</i></p> <p>The Longfield Academy Policies:</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the following Longfield Academy policies be approved:</p> <p>Charging and Remissions Policy, Provider Access Policy and School Uniform Policy.</p>	

14.	<u>Link Governors</u> The list of Governors links would be brought back to Governors for consideration of any outstanding vacancies.	Governance & Policy Officer
<u>Part C: Standing Items</u>		
15.	<u>Trust Scheme of Delegation</u> The current Board approved Scheme of Delegation was noted by the Local Governing Body.	
16.	<u>Trust Strategic Plan</u> The current Board approved Trust Strategic Plan was noted by the Local Governing Body.	
<u>Part D: Concluding Items</u>		
17.	<u>Approval of documents for inspection</u> Governors 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.	
18.	<u>Future meetings 2025/26 Academic Year</u> In consultation with the Head Teacher appropriate dates would be identified and circulated to the Local Governing Body once approved by the Board of Directors.	Governance & Policy Officer
The meeting concluded at 6.30 pm		

Action Log

7.	Minutes – 17 th March 2025 signed by Chair	Governance & Policy Officer
8 a.)	Risk Register Brought Back to the Autumn Term Meeting	Head Teacher
12.	Approval of Term Dates 2027/28 to DBC	Head Teacher
14.	List of Governor Links – brought back for Governors consideration of any outstanding vacancies	Governance & Policy Officer
18.	Future Meeting dates 2025/26 – to be circulated to the LGB	Governance & Policy Officer

These minutes were approved by the Local Governing Body of Longfield Academy, as follows:

on: 20/11/25 date

Signed by: (Chair) N Bales

Printed name: NICOLA BALES

APPROVE

