



# Northern Arch

## LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

**Mowden Schools**

**Local Governing Body Strategy Meeting**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 5.00 pm**

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

### MINUTES

Present (Governors)	Nick Bowerman, Michelle Dunwell, Paul Freeman, Ben Hall, Sarah Heslop, Danielle James, Jonathon Reay, Jackie Saint, Diane Turner and Lexi Wilkinson.
In attendance	Lisa Bainbridge: Deputy Head Teacher, Mowden Schools Alistair Johnson: Deputy Head Teacher, Mowden Schools Angela Taylor: School Business Manager, Mowden Schools Claire Hutton: Head of Admissions and Marketing Laura Hawksby: Governance and Policy Officer

Item	Description of discussion	Action
1.	<b><u>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present</u></b>  The Chair welcomed Lexi Wilkinson, the new Head Teacher at Mowden Schools to her first meeting of the Local Governing Body and Claire Hutton, the new Head of Admissions of Northern Arch Learning Partnership.  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 Helen Livingstone and Rebecca Foster-Snook.	
3.	<b><u>Admissions and Marketing of Mowden Schools</u></b>  Claire Hutton (Head of Admissions and Marketing Northern Arch Learning Partnership) introduced herself to the Local Governing Body. She advised of the support she was providing to Mowden Schools with regards to admissions and marketing.  She would help with marketing the school, highlighting what makes Mowden so special. She would be promoting Mowden on social media, celebrating students and their broad spectrum of achievements.  Governors advised that there was the perception that if you did not live in Mowden catchment area potential pupils would not be able to get into the school. The Head	

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denotes support and challenge provided by Governors

	<p>of Admissions and Marketing advised that the admissions to the school was on an 'equal preference' basis and therefore applying from outside the catchment area did not mean you could potentially lose a place at another school by applying out of area. She advised that she was working hard to help explain this to potential applicants to the school.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be useful to receive feedback from the open evenings to ascertain parents' views.</p> <p><i>(Note: Governor B.Hall left the meeting after consideration of this item.)</i></p>	
4.	<p><b><u>School Improvement Plan Priorities 2025/26</u></b></p> <p>The Head Teacher advised of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) Priorities for 2025/26:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing number of pupils on roll – marketing plan</li> <li>• Assessment system – recording of internal data/data analysis</li> <li>• Early Years – percentage of children achieving GLD (Good Level of Development)</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of children passing phonics screen</li> <li>• MTC (Multiplication Tables Check) – opportunities across the school/provision for children</li> <li>• Writing Key Stage 2 (boys, greater depth)</li> <li>• SEN (Special Educational Needs) provision/SEN Support – target setting.</li> <li>• Essential Letters and Sounds Spelling</li> <li>• Introduction of relationship-led behavior</li> </ul> <p>It was noted by Governors that the current Behaviour Policy was being reviewed and updated. The policy recognised positive behaviour and was to be renamed 'Behaviour and Recognition Policy' to reflect this update.</p> <p>Governors asked if open events would be held for parents/carers regarding spelling and the Deputy Head Teacher (L.B) confirmed the school would be looking into this.</p> <p>Governors asked if progress regarding the SIP priorities would be reported back to the Local Governing Body? The Head Teacher confirmed that they would be reported back throughout the Academic Year.</p> <p>It was noted that AI (Artificial Intelligence) was an emerging issue and how to educate children with regard to its use, as well as children's well-being and screen time. The Head Teacher would be exploring the opportunity of contacting the Director of Northern Arch in order to make links with regards to the experience they had obtained in the University of Northumbria.</p> <p>Governors questioned about the new marketing pictures, whether the school gets the relevant permissions from parents/carers for the use of pupil's images? It was confirmed that permissions are collected from parents/carers and this is checked prior to any pictures being published.</p>	



5.	<p><b><u>Emerging issues for the Local Governing Body's Consideration:</u></b></p> <p><u>Attendance Policy (Mowden Schools)</u></p> <p>Governors considered Mowden School's Attendance Policy and requested the following amendments to be included in the Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The additional changes circulated at the meeting (highlighted in yellow) which were requested prior to the meeting in response to a Governors' earlier questions via email</li> <li>• Pg. 10 any support received from the Local Authority be added.</li> <li>• Reference to certificates provided to pupils for good attendance to be included in the policy (certificates could also be issued for 'improved attendance')</li> <li>• Para 3.6 - to add 's' when referring to parent/adult to ensure they are referred to in the plural.</li> </ul> <p>Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Attendance Policy be approved subject to the inclusion of the above amendments.</p> <p><u>Aims and Values</u></p> <p>The Chair advised that a review of the aims and values of Mowden Schools was currently being undertaken, with the initial view to maintain Mowden's current aims and values.</p> <p><u>Other Policy Review/Updates</u></p> <p>It was noted other policies would be brought back to the LGB as appropriate and when due for review in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.</p>	Head Teacher
6.	<p><b><u>Governor Specific Responsibilities</u></b></p> <p>Further to Minute 15 (Mowden Schools Local Governing Body 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025) Governors agreed to the following areas for Governor Specific Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Communications &amp; Marketing</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Curriculum/Teaching/Attainment</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Careers</li> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Personal Development &amp; Wellbeing</li> <li>• SEN/Inclusion</li> <li>• Premises, Health &amp; Safety</li> <li>• Attendance &amp; Behaviour</li> <li>• Learning Walks</li> </ul>	

	Governors were asked to complete their expressions of interest at the meeting for these roles and the results would be reported back to the next meeting of the Local Governing Body.	Chair
7.	<b><u>Approval of documents for inspection</u></b>  Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning commercially sensitive information in accordance with Articles c.)	
The meeting concluded at 7.15 pm		

#### Action Log

5.	Attendance Policy Updated as per amendments agreed by the Local Governing Body	Head Teacher
6.	Governor Specific Responsibilities – expressions of interest reported back to the next LGB	Chair

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

on: 19-11-25 date

Signed by: (Chair) 

Printed name: PAUL FREEMAN