



Northern Arch

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

The Rydal Academy

Local Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Monday 16th June 2025 at 1.00 pm, The Rydal Academy

Present (Governors)	Mark Gray (Chair), John Armitage (Head Teacher), Gaurav Bhatia, Johanna Thurland, Katie Turnbull, Melanie Chapman, Troy Turner, Joanna Reed, Eddy Gnaglo and Joanne Keane.
In attendance	Iain Clyde: Chair of Directors Tim Fisher: Chief Executive 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> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including new Support Staff Governor Joanna Reed. It was confirmed that a quorum was present.	
2.	<u>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</u> Apologies for absence were received from Governor Tracy Vaughan.	
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">• appointment of Joanna Reed as of the 22nd May 2025.	

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denotes support and challenge provided by Governors

6.	<p><u>Approval of minutes/review of actions/matters arising – The Rydal Academy Local Governing Body 17th March 2025</u></p> <p>Draft Minutes of The Rydal 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>All actions had been completed.</p> <p>In relation to Minute 11 - Governors requested that further information be added to that minute to reflect their questions and discussions regarding the role of the Executive Director of Education.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of The Rydal Local Governing Body held on the 17th March 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record and should be signed by the Chair, subject to the inclusion of the following sentences at Minute 11:</p> <p>Governors asked the Chief Executive Officer about the role of the Executive Director of Education and the value it would provide for the Local Governing Bodies? The Chief Executive advised that the position would allow the quality of education to be objectively reviewed across all schools and the college in the Partnership. It would also help support as well as develop the quality of teaching, professional learning and curriculum development across the academies in the Partnership.</p>	Chair/ Governance & Policy Officer
PART B: Business Items for Discussion		
7.	<p><u>Chair's Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>action taken</u> - no new updates • <u>correspondence</u> – no new updates 	
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. Highlighted in yellow throughout the report were updates since last reported to the Governing Body in March 2025.</p> <p>Areas of discussion included:</p> <p><u>In Year Mobility - In Year Transfers</u></p> <p>Governors questioned the relatively high number of in-year transfers? The Head Teacher advised that that this was due for example to a proportion of parent/carers living in rental accommodation who may then move out of area when their accommodation changed, movement of families in the local Women's refuge, allocated places for pupils in Special Schools, and the mobility of GRT (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) pupils. Governors requested further in-depth information regarding the reasons for In-year transfers to be provided to Governors at the next Local Governing Body meeting.</p>	Head Teacher

Severe Absence

Governors noted that the severely absent figure for the Academy had increased and asked for the reasons for this? The Head Teacher advised that the reasons included attendance figures for when pupils were waiting to join another school when they moved out of area and the mobility of GRT pupils. Health issues for some pupils affected their attendance, which would also be reflected in the severely absent figure.

The Academy continued to ensure strategies were in place to support these pupils and their parents/carers, including regular meetings, home visits and attendance solution panels.

Pupil Exclusion Levels

Governors noted that permanent exclusion and suspension levels had decreased from the previous academic year.

Behavior

Governors were pleased to note the success of the Choices behavioral system at the Academy. Governors questioned how pupils are transitioned from the Choices behavioral system to secondary? The Head Teacher advised that this doesn't happen directly, however secondary schools have a similar system in place and The Rydal Academy looks to help support pupils in building resilience and self-regulation which they take forward into the next stage of education.

It was noted that pupils are encouraged to transition back from their ELMS class to their base class, with positive success. The SEND Link Governors supported this view, having spoken to pupils during her Governor visits.

Projected Pupil Numbers

Governors noted projected pupil numbers were forecast to reduce for the 2025/26 start of year, and beyond that academic year.

Homework

Governors questioned how home reading is monitored, and pupils are supported to complete their homework? The Head Teacher advised resources are taken home by the pupils and their progress is monitored via, for example the 'accelerator reader's programme in the school and progress made in phonics sessions. Capacity is created in school for those pupils who do not have a quiet space at home to complete their homework. It was noted students from QE Sixth Form College are also coming across to The Rydal Academy to help listen and support pupils' reading.

The Head Teacher advised that the school, works hard to promote the importance of homework. For example at Open Evenings conversations are held with parents/cares about reading and expectations and information on how parents/cares can support their child.

Governors asked if there are incentives for pupils to complete their homework and the Head Teacher confirmed that pupils are recognized for their hard work and homework completed.

	<p><u>Breakfast Club Attendance</u></p> <p>Breakfast club attendance was noted to have dropped. Governors enquired if more pupils were coming into school not having breakfast? The Head Teacher advised that breakfast club attendance was not necessarily linked to children coming in without breakfast and that the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) monitors and keeps a log on CPOMS to monitor if there were any concerns.</p> <p><u>Format of Head Teacher's Reports</u></p> <p>The Head Teacher advised that he was looking to the next meeting of the Local Governing Body to provide a new format to his Head Teacher's report, which would combine Rydal's Risk Register, School Improvement Plan and data. A new QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) will be created.</p>	
8 a.)	<p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>The Risk Register for Rydal Academy was currently being reviewed and updated by the Head Teacher and Strategic Development Officer, with the latest version presented to Governors at the meeting. Reduction in pupil numbers from the PAN (Published Admission Number) remained one of the key risks. Governors noted that the Risk Register would be brought back to the next meeting in the Autumn Term for further review.</p>	Head Teacher
9.	<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>Governors asked about the role of the new Marketing & Admissions Officer? The Chief Executive Officer advised that the new position addressed one of the Partnership's most significant challenges, being student/pupil enrolment. The member of staff would also take responsibility for Governor Discipline Committees in relation to review of permanent exclusions and suspensions arrangements across the Partnership.</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>	
10.	<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 report is retained on file. After careful consideration it was agreed by the Local Governing Body that the term dates be approved with the addition of the personal development and disaggregated days as set out in the report.</p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the school term dates as set out in the report be approved and forwarded to Darlington Borough Council, with the inclusion of the personal development and disaggregated days as set out in the report.</p>	Head Teacher
11.	<p><u>Policies:</u></p> <p><u>Trust approved policies from the 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>* Subject to union approval</p> <p><u>The Rydal Academy Policies:</u></p> <p>Governors RESOLVED that the following The Rydal Academy Policies be approved:</p> <p>a.) For information: Accessibility Plan, Early Career Teacher (ECT) Policy, Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, reporting to Parents' Annual Cycle, Initial Teacher Education Policy, Home Visits Policy.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Link Governors</u></p> <p>Governors noted and discussed the Governor link reports for the following:</p> <p>a) Behaviour and Attitudes b) Personal Development c) Disadvantaged d) Safeguarding (including E-Safety)</p>	
<u>Part C: Standing Items</u>		
13.	<p><u>Trust Scheme of Delegation</u></p> <p>The current Board approved Scheme of Delegation was noted by the Local Governing Body.</p>	
14.	<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>	
15.	<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.	
16.	<u>Date and time of future meetings</u> Governors requested that a Microsoft form be circulated after the meeting to ascertain which were Governors' preferred days and times for future Rydal Academy Local Governing Body meetings in the next academic year.	Governance & Policy Officer
17.	<u>Thank you – Iain Clyde Chair of Directors</u> The Chair of Directors thanked all Governors on The Rydal Academy 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. 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. A Northern Arch Partnership Development Day for all Governors, Directors and Members was due to be held on the 13 th October 2025 which would include a programme of development and collaboration for all those involved in governance across the Trust.	
	The meeting concluded at 2.45 pm	

	Action Log	
5.	Minutes of the 17 th March 2025 to be signed by the Chair and retained on file.	Chair/Governance & Policy Officer
8.	In-depth information regarding the reasons for in-year transfers to the Autumn Term meeting of the LGB	Head Teacher
8. a.)	Risk Register brought back to the Autumn Term meeting of the LGB	Head Teacher
10.	School Term Dates 2027/28 be forwarded to DBC	Head Teacher
16.	Poll taken of Governors Preferred days and times for future Rydal Academy LGB Meetings in the next Academic Year.	Governance & Policy Officer

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

on: 23/1/26 date

Signed by: (Chair) [Signature]

Printed name: MARK GRAY

Approved

