



North Ridge Academy Council Meeting Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 13:00 North Ridge Academy

Those Present:	Role:	Initials
Claire Garbutt	Governor / Vice Chair – Acting Chair for the meeting	Chair
Lisa Suter	Executive Regional Director / Chair	LS
Sue Kenny	Staff (Support) Governor	SK
Sam Lee	Staff (Teaching) Governor	SL
Sam MacDonald	Headteacher	SMcD
Also Present:		
Jade Soler Alcaraz	Observer (Deputy Headteacher / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)	JSA
Becky Allard	Executive Assurance Partner (Observer)	BA
Renata Robins	Governance Clerk	Clerk
Apologies:		
Olivia Bennett	Community Governor	OB
Jim Phillips	Parent Governor	JP

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
<p>1.1. To receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies received from OB and JP. LS stated she would be arriving late.</p>	
<p>1.2. To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies accepted from OB and JP. LS arrived at 13:25.</p>	
<p>1.3. Confirmation of Vice Chair – Claire Garbutt</p> <p>The academy council unanimously approved the confirmation of CG as Vice Chair, with one abstention by CG.</p>	
2. OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS	
<p>2.1. Presentation to staff nominee(s)</p> <p>This term’s nominee was Lauren Cawston. Lauren had joined the school from an agency, then to a permanent member of staff and now stepping into more of a developing teacher role. She had recently taken on a cover supervisor position and worked in every area of school and was thriving. North Ridge were really impressed with her classroom management.</p> <p>Due to staff shortages, Lauren was not able to attend the Academy Council meeting to accept her award. Governors asked SMcD to pass on their congratulations and thanks.</p> <p>Action: SMcD confirmed that he would be presenting the award on Monday and sharing the news with staff.</p>	<p>Action: SMcD 09.12.24</p>
3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>3.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>None.</p>	
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
<p>4.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda.</p> <p>None.</p>	
5. NORTH RIDGE ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNANCE MINUTES	
<p>5.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held 3 July 2024 were approved as a true record.</p>	
<p>5.2. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>Agenda Ref 6.5. SMcD confirmed that Pupil Parliament minutes were shared with the academy council and that the newly elected Pupil Parliament Chair would be invited to provide an update to the next meeting in March, as per the agenda. Action: To invite Chair of Pupil Parliament to report on activities to March meeting.</p>	<p>Action: SMcD / Clerking Services</p>

<p>Agenda Ref 6.1. It was agreed that there would be a presentation to governors on Behaviour & Attitudes at the next meeting on 12 March 2025. Action: SMcD to invite Hannah Jarred, Assistant Headteacher, to present an update on Behaviour & Attitudes to the 12 March 2025 meeting. Action: Clerking Services to update agenda accordingly.</p> <p>All other outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.</p>	<p>Action: SMcD / Clerking Services</p>
<p>5.3. Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>6. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED</p>	
<p>6.1. Curriculum Update</p> <p>JSA delivered a detailed curriculum update via a PowerPoint presentation. Governors were pleased to learn that North Ridge had developed a broad and balanced curriculum, shaped collaboratively with all stakeholders, which was instrumental in achieving its overall 'Good' rating from Ofsted. The curriculum was described as dynamic and ever-evolving, with children firmly at the centre of all the school's efforts.</p> <p>Notably, during the summer of last year, the school celebrated an impressive achievement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of students met or exceeded their targets in all areas of English. • 97% of students met or exceeded their targets in Maths. <p>BA asked if there had been an opportunity to moderate the school's outcomes? SMcD confirmed that internal moderation had occurred but not yet against the Nexus grids, which North Ridge had planned to address. SMcD noted the challenge was bridging the gap between the school's focus on writing and its limited relevance to students' readiness for life beyond school.</p> <p>Governors thanked JSA for her very insightful presentation.</p>	
<p>6.2. Headteacher Report</p> <p>As the report had previously been circulated, SMcD took the governors through the key points and was very pleased to report on the Ofsted overall grade of Good.</p> <p>LS enquired if there was data available regarding absences, noting the importance of understanding underlying trends. For example, instances where specific groups, such as EYFS, might consistently experience issues like sickness bugs? SMcD reported that during Autumn Term 1, absences primarily affected the secondary phase, while in Autumn Term 2, they impacted the primary phase. Typically, a pattern emerged where a large number of pupils became unwell first and, upon their return, staff began falling ill.</p> <p>BA enquired about the school's process for managing staff absences due to dependent care?</p>	

SMcD clarified that the policy allowed for dependent leave, which was typically unpaid and expected to be of a reasonable duration. Staff were generally required to arrange alternative care after the first day of absence. HR supported this process by facilitating wellbeing meetings as needed.

SMcD acknowledged that this was SL's final meeting, as she had been promoted to Assistant Head at Heatherwood. He extended heartfelt congratulations on this significant milestone in her leadership journey. While expressing how deeply she would be missed, describing her as a cornerstone of the team, SMcD emphasised that her promotion was well-deserved recognition of her exceptional contributions and leadership potential. Governors echoed SMcD's sentiments and extended their best wishes to her for success in her new role.

The Acting Chair commented that it was really helpful in the report that, rather than a full commentary, SMcD presented the data to show QA evidence.

The Acting Chair asked if EYFS targets were challenging enough?

SMcD responded that they were.

The Acting Chair asked another question about the data drop that was blue; was it being pitched right, could children be challenged more, was it around the curriculum?

SMcD responded that it was curriculum to assessment, so the school was reviewing assessment. The assessment allowed the students to accelerate their progress. The statements were fewer. There were five statements in one of the levels rather than 20, so making 10% for two stars.

The Acting Chair asked a question about a Year 13 on a part-time timetable. What did the student do the other two days?

SMcD clarified that the student was in school every day, just left earlier. Another statutory student had an online offer to access at home when not in school, which he chose not to access. School visits home twice a week and seen by his team three times a week. Another student was in school once a week but was supported by other agencies who see him so there is a shared responsibility.

BA asked if the school was required to submit specific paperwork to Doncaster?

SMcD confirmed that the school followed the Doncaster system up to 16 but there was no provision for post 16.

On behalf of JP, who was unable to attend the meeting due to illness, LS read out JP's congratulations to all on the successful Ofsted outcome at North Ridge.

The Acting Chair formally congratulated SMcD on the Ofsted outcome and asked that this was passed on to all staff.

The governors thanked SMcD for a very comprehensive report and supporting documents.

6.2.1 School SIP

The Acting Chair asked whether Widgets might create confusion for children who were accustomed to using Makaton signage?

<p>SMcD explained that a Widget enhanced understanding by building vocabulary and context, offering greater flexibility than Makaton, which used single symbols for words like "big." This shift was essential to meet the evolving needs of North Ridge's students, supporting broader communication and richer language development. Despite initial hesitation due to prior investment in Makaton, adopting Widget was the right choice for the changing cohort.</p> <p>The Acting Chair also enquired whether using Widgets might cause confusion if Makaton was used at home?</p> <p>SMcD explained that Makaton was primarily a physical and visual system, with its symbols being more abstract and requiring a higher level of understanding to interpret. In contrast, the physical actions in Makaton were more intuitive and accessible. Widgets, however, offered a different approach, focusing on layering understanding through more concrete visual representation.</p>	
<p>6.2.2. School SEF</p> <p>The Acting Chair mentioned that she did not remember reading the AFI in the overview of how the school had moved on year from year and asked if that needed to be included in the SEF?</p> <p>SMcD explained that the Ofsted report had not been published at the time his Headteacher report was prepared, so only the grading was included. He added that future planning would focus on areas identified for improvement, particularly in building momentum from the 2024–2025 academic year, ensuring those efforts were reflected in the quality of education.</p>	
<p>6.3. Draft School Dashboard Summary</p> <p>Summary received.</p>	
<p>6.4. Budget Report</p> <p>Report received.</p> <p>SMcD stated that the school was addressing school structure challenges, including leadership taking on teaching roles, while planning to maintain a surplus for future projects. Key priorities included improving lower primary outdoor spaces to better support the current cohort, building on successes in secondary and post-16 areas. Financial planning was underway, considering Trust contributions and long-term needs.</p> <p>The Acting Chair queried the fact that leaders were going to go back into class?</p> <p>SMcD clarified that when he was talking about leadership capacity, he was referring to line management responsibilities for phases. SMcD stated that the school was underfunded but he was not prepared to take the school into a deficit to grow at leadership level. North Ridge was a different school to when it was opened and the funding was correct at that time. The school has a circa £160k surplus which would give SMcD the leadership capacity that he would need.</p>	
<p>6.5. Teaching Staff Appraisal Outcome Report</p> <p>Received for information.</p>	
<p>7. TRUST MATTERS</p>	

<p>7.1. Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues</p> <p>LS shared with the meeting that due to VAT changes, supplier invoice processing would move from the school to the Trust, eliminating the £6,000 financial support fee. This shift would not impact the school's administration, as the affected staff member already managed payroll and recruitment.</p> <p>SMcD stated that the school had strengthened its administration team, appreciated by parents, and planned to maintain this capacity. To ensure continuity, the School Resource Manager would take on purchase order duties, safeguarding operational efficiency.</p>	
8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>8.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
9. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK	
<p>9.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None.</p>	

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING	
----------------------------------	--

Wednesday 12 March 2025	13:00 – 15:00	North Ridge Academy
Wednesday 2 July 2025	13:00 – 15:00	North Ridge Academy

Minutes approved.

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE