



North Ridge Academy Council Meeting Wednesday 2 July 2025 at 13:00 North Ridge Academy

Those Present:	Role:	Initials
Rebecca Allard	Executive Assurance Partner / Chair	RA
Claire Garbutt	Governor / Vice Chair - until 14:51	CG
Lisa Suter	Executive Regional Director	LS
Sue Kenny	Staff (Support) Governor	SK
Sam MacDonald	Headteacher	SMc
Jim Phillips	Parent Governor	JP
Also Present:		
Jade Soler Alcaraz	Observer (Deputy Headteacher / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)	JSA
Hannah Jarred	Assistant Headteacher – for Item 6.1.4	HJ
Renata Robins	Governance Clerk	Clerk
Lisa Suter	Executive Regional Director	LS
Apologies:		

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
<p>1.1. To receive apologies for absence</p> <p>No apologies were received.</p> <p>As this was RA's first meeting as Chair, governors took the opportunity to introduce themselves.</p>	
<p>1.2. To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>No apologies were accepted.</p>	
2. BEST WE CAN BE AWARD (OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS)	
<p>2.1. Presentation to staff nominee(s)</p> <p>SMcD gave a verbal update on how the new peer led nomination process was working and invited the members of staff who had received the most nominations from their fellow workers into the meeting separately. Symone and Sue were the lovely recipients and SMcD read out a few of their colleagues' glowing remarks. The academy council members also added their congratulations on their well-deserved recognition.</p>	
3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>3.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and parent governor recruitment. 	
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 4 December 2024 were approved as a true record with one amendment:</p> <p>Action: Item 6.4, last sentence, to amend the word 'shortfall' to 'surplus'.</p>	<p>Action: Clerking Services 02.07.25</p>
<p>5.2. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>Outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour & Attitudes Update 	

<p>Hannah Jarred (HJ), Assistant Headteacher, attended the meeting for this item as the previous meeting had been cancelled due to OFSTED. reported under item 6.1 within these minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet Member & MPs’ Feedback from Pupil Parliament, reported under agenda item 6.5 within these minutes. 	
<p>5.3. Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
6. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
<p>6.1. Headteacher Report</p> <p>As the report had previously been circulated via Governor Hub, SMcD took the governors through the key points and invited questions.</p> <p><u>Context</u> There is a national and local crisis for SEN placements and numbers on roll keep going up – currently 150 and projected 185 for September. This is not an uncommon trend.</p> <p><u>Leadership & Management</u> Looking ahead, JSA has been appointed Head of School from September — a timely leadership change following Ofsted and in response to the school’s growth. JSA’s appointment brings a sense of calm at a time of change at North Ridge. Two strong assistant headteachers have also been appointed, supporting the school’s focus on continuous improvement.</p> <p>Governors congratulated JSA on her appointment.</p> <p><u>Capital Works</u> The modular build at The Bridge is on track for completion by 22 August 2025. Without it, class sizes would exceed 15. The new space allows the school to maintain smaller groups of 8–10 for Year 9 and beyond. This mirrors successful models across the Trust.</p> <p>JP, as a parent governor, thanked the school for its openness and transparency with families.</p> <p>SMc stated that the young people are part of a collegiate feel at The Bridge, but reassured parents that the students were still a part of North Ridge.</p> <p><u>Staff Sickness</u> SMc confirmed the school follows Trust guidance on sickness absence and acts promptly, holding absence meetings without delay.</p> <p>RA noted the link between premises-related sickness and welcomed the use of classroom fogging at North Ridge to help reduce the spread of illness.</p> <p><u>CPD</u></p>	

SMc referred governors to the CPD documented in the report that has taken and will be taking place. To enhance what already North Ridge being practised.

RA mentioned that TAs who were on the Apprenticeship Programme and work at North Ridge have been exposed to a whole-school approach and that was evident within the cohort.

Quality of Education

SMc confirmed that teaching at North Ridge continues to be securely good, noting that CPD and twilight sessions are instrumental in embedding new systems. JSA added that several internal quality assurance activities since the Spring term have further reinforced this position. Governors welcomed the upcoming rollout of the Perspective platform in September, which will support system standardisation and serve as a management and improvement tool aligned with the SIP and SEF.

Governors emphasised the importance of their role not only in providing challenge but also in offering support, highlighting that effective governance included both elements. It was noted that the Trust plays a key role in providing this balance, beyond just quality assurance.

Governors acknowledged SMC's openness to both support and challenge, and commended his proactive leadership in driving improvement. It was recognised that the success of current initiatives was strongly underpinned by effective and inclusive leadership.

Pupil Engagement

Discussion ensued around target setting for pupils and the different pathways available at North Ridge. JSA appraised the governors of the Solar platform where the data is analysed and produces a base line.

RA asked how challenging targets were if 97% of pupils are achieving them and were they aspirational enough?

JSA confirmed that the targets are to be achievable and that there is, therefore, an expectation that all pupils will achieve their targets.

Behaviour and Attitudes

Hannah Jarred (HJ), Assistant Headteacher, attended the meeting for this item and delivered a detailed behaviour and attitudes update via a PowerPoint presentation.

The most significant recent development was the recognition the school received from Ofsted for its work. Understandably North Ridge is very proud of this as it validates the extensive efforts made over the past year and encapsulates the progress the school has made in refining its internal procedures and behaviour support systems.

Over the past year, the school had focused on:

- Updating key processes related to behaviour management.
- Enhancing internal support systems for staff and students.
- Delivering targeted staff training to build confidence and consistency.
- Planning next steps to continue improving its approach.

A collaborative effort—led by HJ and other school leaders—has helped streamline support for classroom staff. While staff were already strong in managing behaviour within their rooms, their goal was to ensure they had clear, consistent support structures behind the scenes.

The school has taken a holistic view of behaviour, recognising it includes sensory, communication, and emotional elements. The aim has been to ensure staff feel confident and equipped to respond effectively across all these areas.

JP asked whether severity was considered in behaviour reporting? Some students may show fewer behaviours, but those behaviours could be very serious. Was there a way the system reflects or weights severity to give a more accurate picture?

HJ explained that behaviour scores are weighted by severity. Each behaviour is assigned a score based on its severity—typically on a scale (e.g., 1 to 3). These scores are then tallied to give an overall picture. The severity levels were predefined by the team.

Governors thanked HJ for her fantastic presentation.

Suspensions

RA enquired about one of the exclusions that had occurred at the school?

SMc explained that due process had been followed for the young person who was a post 16 student and no longer attending the school, having secured an internship at Amazon.

RA also enquired about the use of part-time timetables?

SMc clarified that the intention is never to start a student on one but in certain circumstances when a student cannot manage a full-time timetable, school works with the LA who document that this student is on a part-time timetable on the IDOX system and it does not affect the school's attendance.

Attendance

It was noted that attendance remains above the national average. While some bespoke packages for individual students impact overall figures, these are tailored to meet specific needs.

SMc confirmed that all holiday requests are being managed strictly in line with current DfE guidance. Respite and charity-related holidays are authorised where appropriate, in accordance with the regulations.

RA enquired whether the school fund the AP element?

SMc said that the LA fund some of this but the school has to contribute its day rate towards it. It depends on the AP activity as some schools get full funding and some don't.

Personal Development

SK spoke about the amazing experiences the students at The Bridge had when five of them went down to London on the train to receive their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards at Buckingham Palace. They were in awe of the capital city. The SMc Year 14 group went down to London as their Leavers' Day, again having truly wonderful experiences.

<p>SMc praised the team working around the sixth form preparing them for adulthood, working alongside outside agencies who come into The Bridge.</p> <p>The governors thanked SMc and his team for a very comprehensive report and supporting documents.</p>	
<p>6.1.0.a. Summer RAG Rated Pupil Premium Strategy 2024-25</p> <p>Received for information.</p>	
<p>6.1.0.b. Spring RAG Rated Pupil Premium Strategy 2024-25</p> <p>Received for information.</p>	
<p>6.1.1. School SIP</p> <p>Received for information and through the Headteacher Report (7) detailing the main areas for development for the next year.</p>	
<p>6.1.2. School SEF</p> <p>SMc advised that it would be presented to governors in the new format in the Autumn term.</p>	
<p>6.2. Draft School Dashboard Summary</p> <p>Summary received by governors. SMc confirmed the dashboard showed that the school remained 'good' across all areas, with a renewed focus on continuous improvement post-Ofsted.</p>	
<p>6.3. Budget Report</p> <p>Report received. Governors were pleased to learn that the school remains in a strong surplus position, reflecting sound financial management and stability.</p> <p>RA queried what came under 'asset finance' at the bottom of the report? SMc explained that this was related to the Central Trust team's buy-back arrangement for procurement services and other support functions.</p>	
<p>6.4. Next Year's Budget and Staffing Structure</p> <p>Verbal update received as part of 6.1 - Headteacher Report.</p> <p>SMc explained the staffing structure to governors from September onwards and would attach a copy to Governor Hub for information. SMc explained the appraisal process going forward as well.</p> <p>Action: SMc to upload the Staffing Structure for North Ridge 2025-26 onto Governor Hub.</p>	<p>Action: SMc/ Clerking Services ASAP</p>

<p>6.5. Cabinet Member & MPs' Feedback from Pupil Parliament</p> <p>Governors welcomed McKenzie, the First Prime Minister of the Pupil Parliament, to the meeting. Governors were delighted to receive McKenzie's in-person update and feedback from the Pupil Parliament and highlight of their activities throughout the year, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music being played in school • Child friendly clocks to be installed in each classroom • Decided on the focus for Diversity Day • Sports Day and Summer Fayre • Sponsored Walk • School Dinners Survey <p>Governors expressed their appreciation to McKenzie for attending and providing such a valuable update.</p> <p>SMc noted that McKenzie was an exceptionally fair Prime Minister, highlighting his willingness to listen to all perspectives and ensure decisions were made collaboratively.</p>	
<p>6.6. Skills Audit Feedback</p> <p>The document was circulated in advance and was self-explanatory. The Chair noted that it was created to facilitate shared learning through Governor Hub, including web links to relevant training. Governor Hub portal continued to expand its resources and training opportunities. Governors were encouraged to visit the portal and engage in self-directed learning to improve skills in areas identified during the audit.</p>	
<p>7. TRUST MATTERS</p>	
<p>7.1. Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues</p> <p><u>Nexus Trust Update</u> LS informed the meeting that a Trust-wide letter was sent out regarding a consultation on a potential merger with Ebor Trust, proposed to take effect from September 2026. LS emphasised that there will be no changes to how the Trust currently operates. The merger is intended to enable greater collaboration and the ability to utilise expertise across both Trusts to benefit all schools involved.</p> <p><u>GDPR Update</u> Adam Cloney, Corporate Governance Manager, has circulated an email regarding GDPR. He has encouraged governors to refresh their understanding by reviewing the guidance provided. The update is brief and intended to support governors in maintaining awareness of current data protection responsibilities.</p> <p><u>Informal Academy Council Meetings 2025-26</u> LS urged governors to start thinking about suitable dates and times for the three informal academy council meetings throughout the year that occur before the formal scheduled meetings. LS referred to the SIP and SEF meeting in the Autumn term before the academy council meeting in December.</p>	

<p>Action: Governors to email and liaise directly with the school about suitable dates and times.</p> <p><u>School Events</u> LS requested that SMc arrange for key school events—such as Sports Days and Christmas activities—to be shared as early as possible in the new academic year, so that dates can be added to diaries in good time.</p> <p>Action: SMc to arrange for key school event details to be shared with governors as soon as possible in the new academic year.</p>	<p>Action: Governors ASAP</p> <p>Action: SMc September 2025</p>
<p>7.2. Register of Interests – Annual Review</p> <p>Guidance notes were circulated in advance to help governors make their declarations of interest and other confirmations online via Governor Hub. The Clerk demonstrated to the governors how quick and easy it was to complete the process.</p>	
<p>8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</p>	
<p>8.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair</p> <p><u>Governor Recruitment</u> The governors discussed in detail the need to recruit for a parent academy member and a staff (teaching) academy member.</p> <p>Action: SMc to place an advert on the school website for a parent governor and actively seek to recruit for a teaching staff academy member for the next meeting. SMc to reach out to the local community and the Central Team to recruit for additional governors. RA to liaise with the Corporate Governance Manager about supporting recruitment of a professional or someone with wider experience to join the academy council.</p> <p><u>Resignations</u> Governors formally accepted the resignations of Olivia Bennett and Sam Lee, which had been due for ratification at the March meeting.</p> <p>Action: Clerking Services to facilitate necessary amendment on GIAS and internal records.</p>	<p>Action: SMc/RA 03.12.25</p> <p>Action: Clerking Services 03.07.2025</p>
<p>9. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK</p>	
<p>9.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None.</p>	

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 3 December 2025	13:00 – 15:00	North Ridge Academy
Wednesday 18 March 2026	13:00 – 15:00	North Ridge Academy
Wednesday 1 July 2026	13:00 – 15:00	North Ridge Academy

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE
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