

Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting for Alfreton Park School held on Thursday 17th July 2025 at Alfreton Park School

Governors present: Mrs F Franklin (FF)
Mr J Glasby (Chair)
Mrs C Higgins (CH)
Mr W Jowett (WJ)
Mrs D Kennady (DK)
Mrs J O'Donnell – Headteacher (HT)
Mr R Sowter (RS)
Mrs L Squires (LS)
Mrs B Wells (BW)

In attendance: Ms R Dallman – School Business Manager (SBM)
Mrs E Durham – Deputy Headteacher (DH)
Mrs J Osment – Clerk

Meeting opened at 1.30pm

24/86 Apologies and quorum

The chair noted and accepted apologies from Mrs C Davies (CD). The meeting was quorate.

With ten governors in total, the quorum for a meeting is five governors. Nine governors are present so the meeting is quorate.

24/87 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest in any items on the agenda.

24/88 Appointment of new parent governor

Donna Kennady was appointed uncontested as a parent governor. Her term of office started on 19 May 2025.

24/89 Agree any other urgent business

No other urgent business.

24/90 Minutes of the Full Governors Meeting held on 15th May 2025

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and will be electronically signed by the Chair on GovernorHub.

24/91 Matters arising from the minutes

24/79 The assessment by Josh's Care concluded that we need one nurse and two healthcare assistants – copy of the assessment to be requested (HT) – completed.

24/84 GQ – There has been an incidence of a taxi driver uploading dash cam footage to social media, however this included travel to a special school and pupils were captured on the footage. This is a matter for DCC Specialised Transport, but we will contact them and follow-up to ensure that this cannot happen (HT) – completed.

24/85 We still need to consider how pupils will be dropped off in the morning. We are hoping drivers won't mind doing two drop-offs. We will start the conversation with Specialised Transport now. **This is ongoing and will carry over to next meeting (HT)**

24/92 Standing item - HT report, School Development Plan and School Self-Evaluation

The HT report, School Development Plan and School Self-Evaluation report were uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

GQ – Do we have robust plans in place for the 47 new pupils starting in September? Yes, we have completed transitions and home visits, permissions and care plans and ensured we have the right staffing in place.

GQ – Does it compare to the previous increase? We have learnt from the previous increase and realised we need extra safeguarding staff in place – we have appointed an Attendance Officer to start in September.

GQ - Does the new Attendance Officer have experience in this role? Yes, we are confident she will be able to support us.

GQ – Are all of the new pupils roughly the same age? No, there is a range of ages throughout the school.

GQ – Is there the same number of boys and girls? There are more boys.

GQ - How many new classes are being created? There will be two additional classes (which will be located in the social skills room and the common room until January 2026) and the EYFS classroom which will be ready in November 2025.

GQ – Attendance - do we have any pupils who are severely absent? Yes, one pupil who has been off since January has just returned, and is now classed as persistently absent.

GQ – The DfE has a tool for monitoring absence, do we use this? Our attendance is well monitored, we just want to be a lot more proactive instead of reactive.

GQ – Do any particular groups of pupils have attendance concerns? Our biggest area is medical absence. This is not included by some other schools, but we do include this in our absences. We want to look at how we support pupils with medical absences to improve attendance.

GQ – How are severely absent pupils monitored at home? Through regular phone calls. Some of them also access respite care. All our pupils with any safeguarding concerns do attend regularly.

GQ – The School Self Evaluation form is excellent, however it is a very long and detailed read;

- **BW and CD to review and give feedback.**
- **HT to provide a summary for the rest of the governors.**

GQ – The school development plan for next year – does this include new targets and objectives? Yes, this year's have been completed and we will start new ones.

GQ - How confident are you in the strengths and weaknesses identified? We are very confident, we are realistic and perhaps too self-critical.

GQ - How far off outstanding do we think we are? We are so close, we are looking at the fine details, the main things like quality of education are now in place.

We have been using the new Ofsted toolkit, and we will be doing preparations with teachers and governors, including a Q&A session with an Ofsted inspector. We can expect Ofsted from May 2026 onwards.

GQ - How do we compare to other special schools in Derbyshire? We have appointed staff from Brackenfield and Ashgate Croft for September 2025, so we will get a feel of how it compares.

Thank you to Leanne Squires, for all the long term plans. Despite a lot of change and a lot of work all the teachers are positive and teaching observations are excellent.

24/93 Standing item – Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

There is nothing of significance to report.

24/94 Standing item – Health & Safety

The Health & Safety Report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

Governors noted the Health & Safety governor still needs to complete Institute of Occupational Safety and Health training and the lockdown drill is still outstanding.

24/95 Standing item – GDPR

The GDPR Report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

All incidents have been reported and investigated.

Governors gave unanimous approval for the following DPIA's:

- Arbor 2025
- Claude 1.0 2025
- GroupcallXporter 2025
- MyConcern Tes 2025
- TeachMateAI 01.05.25

24/96 Standing item – Personnel report

The personnel report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

Governors gave unanimous approval for the staffing requests in the personnel report.

GQ – Staffing for the early years classroom is fully funded for the first 12 months, is this included in the budget after that? Yes, it is included.

GQ - Will we be overstaffed before the early years classroom opens in November? No, the staff and pupils will just be in different classes.

GQ – Absence monitoring – the report is complicated and unclear.

SBM explained the information in the report. Governors agreed that they would just like to see the headline figures, including whether sick days have increased or decreased.

Sick days have increased this term. It is thought this is due to exhaustion and the hot weather.

GQ – Is this an indication that staff are overworked? Governors are interested in the reasons for staff absence and whether anything can be done to improve absence levels.

Back to work discussions are held with all employees who have been off sick.

DH will provide some non-confidential information about absence reasons and patterns.

24/97 Standing item – Finance

The finance report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

GQ – Have we received the funding for the new builds yet? No.

GQ - Will we receive any interest on the money whilst it is in our account? Yes, the amount will depend on interest rates at the time.

GQ – What was the £7k donation? It was from Griffith Foods for the library.

The in-year surplus/deficit and reasons for it was discussed, it was agreed this doesn't need to be included in the governor's report.

Teachers will receive a 4% pay increase from September 2025, with 2.8% of this funded. The proposed support staff pay rise of 3.2% is still under negotiation.

Governors would like it noted that they believe a cost of living increase should be the same for all staff.

24/98 ILP Data

The recent data has been really positive. Pupil premium pupils are now performing better than non-pupil premium pupils. All areas have shown improvement.

Two classes of concern have been identified – the concerns have been addressed and these will be monitored next year.

Teachers and support staff are becoming more confident with setting ILP targets and recording data. We will discuss with teachers whether to change to setting targets twice a year instead of three times a year.

GQ – What are the plans for bringing new teachers up to speed with our systems? We have shared our curriculum expectations with the new teachers, they will have an induction on their first day and they will be allocated a buddy and a mentor. We are also starting a buddy system with LSA's.

The next set of ILP data will be provided in October which will have the data from the summer term.

GQ – How will the new pupils impact the amount of pupils in each pathway?

The preformal pathway will have less pupils, the informal and formal pathways are increasing.

GQ - How often and in what format are we reporting to parents?

All pupils have one annual review, one parent's meeting and a record of achievement. Parents should also receive their pupils ILP targets (not the data), however this may not be consistent across school.

GQ – Is a long absence to visit the family's home country an approved absence? We realise it is beneficial for our pupils to take a holiday when it is quieter in term time. We approve up to 5 days a year for this and the rest is unauthorised. For long absences we request the address of the pupil abroad and keep in touch with video calls.

GQ – Would unauthorised absences receive a fine? Fines are decided by Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

GQ - How much is the fine? It depends on how quickly the fine is paid and the number of offences.

GQ – Who is the designated teacher for looked after children? The Headteacher.

GQ – Does the HT have the required capacity to be the designated teacher? The work is often delegated to an Assistant Headteacher or our Family Liason Officer.

24/99 PE and Sport Premium Expenditure Reporting

The report will be shared with governors after the meeting and uploaded to the school's website.

24/100 Wellbeing

We have purchased a national wellbeing award, which gives us a framework for supporting staff, working on the basis of happy staff; happy children; better outcomes. This will start in September 2025.

GQ - How is this going to be reported to governors? A visit record will be completed.

Staff wellbeing meetings are in progress.

24/101 Healthcare provision update

HT and JG met with DCC and the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The ICB promised they would provide information regarding the quality assurances we seek for NutureCare. The information they provided was identical to the information they previously provided.

Joe Wilson, Director for Education at DCC, agreed to write a position statement from the Local Authority, including stipulating that it is illegal for funds for education to be used for healthcare.

A meeting was held with the Headteachers of local special schools. Out of 11 schools, only two are using NutureCare, and these two schools were unhappy with the provision provided. All the heads have concerns about NutureCare and agreed to join together to pursue a legal challenge against ICB.

The issues that all the special schools have include:

- Lack of transparency
- Lack of consistency (some schools are getting favourable treatment)
- Lack of guidelines as to what healthcare school staff can offer
- Integrity of NutureCare's leadership and current barred status
- Lack of explanation as to why we can't use other providers
- ICB said there is a 'tight financial envelope' for providing healthcare. Only two special schools are using NutureCare, so where is the remaining money that is allocated to healthcare?

The starting costs of legal proceedings are about £30k, which could rise, especially if we are unsuccessful. However the alternative, paying for our own healthcare, is also costly. The financial costs and risks of legal proceedings would be spread across all the special schools. We would need commitments and contracts signed by the other special schools before proceeding.

ICB's suggestion was that the governing board override the headteacher's safeguarding concerns.

The Chair asked the governing board to confirm the following:

Q - Does any governor think we should override the HT's safeguarding concerns?

A - No.

Q – Does any governor think we should proceed with NutureCare?

A - No.

Q – Does any governor think we should approve the full cost of Josh's Care for the next year?

A - No.

Q – As this may not be resolved by September, does the governing board approve to continue with Josh's Care in September on a rolling 28-day contract?

A – All governors approved the school funding another rolling contract.

Q – Do all governors approve, subject to reasonable cost sharing contracts in place, to pursue legal proceedings?

A – Yes

GQ – Can we find out what other ICB's are doing with regard to health provision in schools? There are plans in place to merge ICBs, which may complicate matters further.

Other special schools did try keeping their pupils at home until this is resolved, but they still haven't been successful in securing funding. It is illegal to refuse pupils due to medical issues. This is not something we are considering.

Parents and press have not yet been utilised, so this is another option to look at.

GQ - Is the Josh's Care provision as good as we had previously? Yes, it is very high quality provision.

24/102 Post-16 Block, Deer Shed and EYFS classroom update

It has been confirmed that the Post-16 Block will fall under permitted development so we don't need full planning permission.

GQ – The EYFS building is due to arriving on 19th August. Will anyone be inspecting it before it arrives? HT and SBM will be onsite when it arrives.

We will go and check the Post-16 Block after it is built and before it is shipped here.

Car park works are due to start on 4th August. 17 additional spaces will be created, however this is still not enough spaces for parents dropping off or picking up.

There are more pupils being dropped off and picked up by their parents, and on Specialised Transport there are a lot of pupils on individual transport due to transport contracts, location and behaviour, meaning more vehicles at school.

We won't receive the Specialised Transport list until September, so it will be a rush to allocate parking spaces and permits to transport and parents.

GQ - Will there be any additional spaces for staff? No, they will have to park off site.

GQ - Do we check that all cars that come on site have a permit? Yes

GQ – Do any parents complain about not being allowed onsite? Yes, they do have right of appeal and we do review each case.

GQ – What about staggered drop off times? We have looked at it, but we're not going down that route yet.

Providing school dinners to the Post-16 Block has been resolved. Catering will provide a taxi to transport dinners cooked by our kitchen.

24/103 Standing Item – Policies for approval:

Privacy Notice – Pupil and Family

Privacy Notice – Workforce

Governors gave unanimous approval for the policies.

24/104 Governors Annual Impact Statement

Governors approved the Governors Annual Impact Statement. A signature and date will be added before it is upload to the school website.

24/105 Agree FGB dates for 2025-2026

The following dates were agreed, all on Thursdays at 1.30pm at school:

16 October 2025

11 December 2025

05 February 2026

19 March 2026

14 May 2026

16 July 2026

Thursday 6 November 2025 was proposed for the finance meeting.

GQ - Are we still doing learning walks?
Yes, we are planning these for next year.

An invite will be sent to governors (LS)

GQ – Is there a focus in the School Development Plan that we could look at during learning walks? Yes, we are triangulating the School Development Plan, monitoring, and the School Self Evaluation.

The HT thanked all the governors for their time and support throughout the year.

The Chair thanked all the governors, this has been a particularly challenging year.

24/106 Any other urgent business

No other urgent business for this meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.20pm

Next meeting 1.30pm on 16 October 2025