



Local Governing Board to The Learning Partnership

KNUTSFORD ACADEMY LGB

MINUTES – Part I



Date: Monday 28th April 2025 at 4:00pm

Present:

Mrs D. Nicholl-Timmins - Chair (DNT)
Mr D. Walton (DW)
Mrs D. Baines (DMB)
Mrs A. Sennett (AS), left at 5:59 pm.

Apologies:

Mr D. Baxendale (DB)
Dr R. Taylor (RT)

Absent

Mrs Andrea Stott (AST)

In attendance:

Mrs K. Key (KKY) - Headteacher
Mr J Lawes (JLA) - Senior Deputy Headteacher
Mrs A. Thatcher (ATR) - Deputy Headteacher
Mr C Leigh (CLH) - Assistant Headteacher
Mr C. Parr (CPR) - Assistant Headteacher
Mrs H. Weigh-Williams (HWH) - Assistant Headteacher
Mr P. Atkinson (PAN) - Head of Humanities, left after item 2.

Miss M. Page (MPG) – English Teacher
Year 10 students-Grace, Ava and Jess.
(Miss Page and the students left the meeting after the presentation)

Clerk: Mrs S. Pomeroy

Administration

The meeting was preceded by a presentation from students who had performed at the Youth Speaks Competition. Molly Page, English Teacher, introduced Grace, Ava and Jess from Year 10. She explained that they had written and delivered a speech on the misconceptions of feminism at the Rotary Club Youth Speaks Competition. The students had won the first round and progressed to the second heat.

The students delivered their speech to governors. Jess introduced Grace who delivered the main speech and Ava made the closing remarks. Governors thanked the students and commented on their confidence and eloquence and congratulated them on their performance in the competition.

The English Teacher and the students left the meeting.

1. Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy - The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed it was quorate. Apologies were received and accepted from David Baxendale and Bob Taylor. Andrea Stott was absent, and no apologies had been received. There were no additional Declarations of Interest made with the business of the meeting.

All papers and policies referred to had been uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting, unless otherwise stated.

2. Presentation from Head of Faculties-Humanities

PAN shared a PowerPoint presentation with governors on the current position, progress and next steps for the department. He shared a summary of the action plans and highlighted the following points:

- He has identified several areas for development for teaching of GCSE History and Geography as shown in the Subject Progress Index (SPI), a subject specific progress measure like Progress 8.
- Assessment data from trial 1 and 2 is positive and moving in the right direction. Assessments are rigorous and the department is confident going forward.
- There had been an issue with the percentage of 7-9 passes compared to targets. The department is targeting a group of students on 6 to achieve 7.
- The ALPS scores are higher than for last year, except in politics. The numbers taking this subject are small and individual action plans are in place for two pupils.

Governors asked about the difficulties of running small classes for politics. PAN explained that the small student numbers make debate and group work difficult.

- PAN shared the department action plan. There is a focus on the Knutsford Way, adaptive teaching, good pupil-teacher relationships and on marking and feedback. Most actions are in response to student outcomes.
- PAN then shared the Geography action plan. He explained that actions are linked to targets and include the member of staff responsible and review dates.
- PAN also explained that a further set of actions had resulted from the review of Geography carried out by the Laurus Trust in January 2025. This has a focus on reviewing topics and re-arranging the curriculum in Key Stage 3. The aim is to involve the pupils and ensure that the topics are up to date and exciting.
- The Laurus Trust will moderate with the school this year in response to the action plan arising from the non-exam assessment (NEA) report.

Governors challenged whether the Religious Studies approach to helping pupils to achieve well on exam questions could be used more widely. ATR responded that the approach is not always transferable between different subjects but there is work to be done on “command words”. PAN also explained that staff meet regularly as the Humanities faculty to share ideas.

DNT thanked PAN for his presentation.

PAN left the meeting following his presentation.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

Governors approved the minutes of the LGB meeting held on 13th January 2025 as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

4. Membership Update

- a) It was noted that there are two vacancies on the LGB following the resignation of Graham Kelly on 27.01.25. KKY confirmed that she had written to Graham to thank him for his service on the board. The Director of Quality had placed an advert on Governors for Schools. Governors discussed attracting potential candidates from industry and from former students at the school.
- b) Bob Taylor’s term of office is due to expire on 07.07.25. The Chair would contact him to see whether he wished to be re-appointed for a further term of office. This would then be considered by the Governance Committee. **ACTION**

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities
<p>5. Update on School Improvement Plan ATR provided an update:</p> <p>Target 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has continued its work on adaptive teaching with a focus on middle ability boys, SEND and the most able pupils. The aim is to ensure that adaptations are made to meet the needs of all pupils. • Professional development has taken place with a focus on anticipation, adaptation and assessment to promote adaptive teaching strategies. • Learning walks and sharing good practice are planned to focus on adaptive teaching. There is some work to do to ensure that all staff are comfortable with this approach and visiting each other's classrooms. Work has been done to reduce barriers and to ensure that all staff understand that this a non-judgemental process and that the aims are clear. <p>Target 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a continued focus on marking and feedback and on standards of presentation. • A new policy had been introduced and staff compliance has improved. • Good practice is being shared. • The next step is to consider visual displays in the classrooms. <p>Target 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Book Day was observed and provided a good opportunity to raise the profile of reading. A wide range of activities took place and there was good engagement from the students. The school website will be developed to include a section on Reading and Oracy. • An audit of planning documentation will take place, and best practice will be shared. <p>Target 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A KS3 and KS4 study Skills Guide has been produced and published on the website. • Study skills sessions for Year 10 and Key Stage 3 have been planned in advance of end of year assessments. • Year 8 parents had been invited in for a session on study skills. <p>Governors commented on the wide range of links and materials available for students.</p> <p>Governors asked whether the school has considered the use of AI and its potential benefits and downfalls. ATR responded that currently staff are considering how AI can be utilised to reduce workload. Further CPD is required. Both staff and students need to know how to use AI effectively. Awareness of the reliability of materials produced by AI is important. Students know that if they use materials provided by the staff that they are accurate. The Trust is currently working on the use of AI in its schools.</p>
Education
<p>6. Pupil Numbers -CPR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil numbers are stable over this academic year. • The school is expecting to reach its PAN of 230 for Year 7 in September 2025. There are 24 students on the waiting list and 8 appeals pending. • The target for Year 12 is 150 students and the school is confident of reaching this figure. 412 applications have been received in total. 173 are first choice applications (not including external applicants). <p>Governors raised concerns over whether there is enough space in school to accommodate the predicted number of sixth form students. This had been raised by students at the January 2025 LGB meeting where they had talked about the need for a quiet zone. KKY explained that the school had been concerned when numbers appeared to exceed 200 but we don't think this will be realised. The school wants the students to have the best experience. The number of computers has been increased and the outside space is being developed.</p> <p>7. Attendance-CLH</p>

- A Trust-wide Attendance Policy will be in place from September 2025.
- There is now a termly award for attendance. This will be based on attendance within banding groups, rather than on 100% attendance.
- Attendance figures are included on Slide 9 in the Headteacher's report. FFT data now provides comparator information for similar schools. The school is in a strong position.
- A Trust audit of attendance had been carried out. Four areas of development had been identified:
 - Processes
 - Staff responsibilities
 - Tracking of interventions
 - Parental involvement

Governors asked about the impact of the Breakfast Club on attendance. The school responded that it is more effective at the Westfield Drive site with Year 7 and 8. The most important aspect is that students want to come to school and feel a sense of belonging

8. Rewards and Behaviour-HWH

Rewards

- The rewards assemblies have been well-received. The Heads of Year will collate a montage of photographs which showcase a wide range of events and achievements throughout the year to include in the final celebration assembly.
- The school is exploring the idea of a parental awards evening.

Behaviour

- Slide 12 of the Headteacher's Report provides a summary of detentions, suspensions and permanent exclusions. The suspensions detailed for term 2 relate to 19 students. It is a positive picture overall and is better than ever.
- There had been one permanent exclusion in the autumn term 2024 and one in the spring term 2025. This is a reduction from the five issued in 2024-25 which had a positive impact generally on behaviour in the school.
- The support and interventions which the school has put in place have led to a reduction in the number of suspensions.
- Robust policies and procedures are in place and detention procedures have been reviewed. The school is constantly reviewing its procedures to see how it can improve further.

Governors asked whether there was any value in using the experience of excluded /suspended students with this group of students. HWH responded that this has been done in an informal way.

Governors commented that students are aware of the expectations around behaviour and the sanctions for not following the rules.

Governors queried whether having both Year 7 and Year 8 at the Westfield Drive site had had a positive impact on behaviour and attendance in Year 8. HWH explained that behaviour is generally positive in Year 8 and that there is just a small group of students whose behaviour is of concern. A new behaviour support worker is based at the Westfield Drive site and has implemented behaviour support plans at an early stage. Some pupils are accessing the Hub at the Bexton Road site as part of their transition arrangements to Year 9.

KKY informed governors that the Laurus Trust had carried out a review of Personal Development and the results had been overwhelmingly positive. There is a strong enrichment offer at the school which provides a good range and quality of experiences. Uptake is generally higher in Years 7 and 8 and higher amongst non-disadvantaged and non-SEND students. The school is targeting these groups of students to increase participation rates.

JLA informed governors that a programme is in place to embed and promote the school's 3 values and a new values award has been introduced. A student leadership pathway is also being developed. The school is introducing safeguarding training for students to enable them to run clubs for younger students.

9. Update on Progress and Attainment-ATR

ATR referred to slide 16: ALPS Year 12.

- ALPS shows how subjects are ranked. Overall, the ALPS score was 3 last year.
- The school is focusing interventions on the lowest ranking subjects to increase the ALPS Grade. Chemistry and Physics had been impacted by staff leaving. BTEC subjects do not correlate well with ALPS. The BTEC cohort is made up of lower prior attaining students. The staff are working hard to ensure that students meet deadlines and re-submit work if possible.
- There have been significant improvements in Computer Science and English Literature from last year.
- Progress 8 score is +0.13 and this is an improvement from last year.
- There is still a disadvantaged gap, but it has reduced significantly, as has the gap with SEND.

Governors raised the following challenges:

- **Is there was a specific issue with art-based subjects as most are ranked around 6.** ATR responded that this is where the students currently are, but they are still completing work and need the whole teaching time to do this.
- **Is there an issue with Criminology as there are 27 students and all are “blue”.** ATR informed them that the Head of Social Sciences has not taught the subject this year and that there is a rapid action plan in place.
- **Does the school expect to see improvements in Geography results this year?** ATR informed governors that there is still work to do in Geography but that improvements are expected. An action plan has been implemented based on the moderators’ report. The course work grade will be moderated to prevent it being downgraded.
- **Is the situation with science staffing affecting recruitment into the sixth form?** KKY explained that a new Head of Chemistry had been recruited and students had had the opportunity to meet him and ask questions. He will start in post before the end of term.
- Slide 19 shows the SPI for each area for Year 11.
- English Literature has improved from last year and from trial 1. Bespoke, structured revision is in place to close gaps and masterclasses have been run.
- Slide 20 shows the yearly comparison for 4+, 5+ and 7+ in English, Maths and Science.

10. Link Governor Monitoring

- DNT confirmed that Andrea Stott had agreed to take on the role of Careers link governor.
- Governors had decided to hold some informal meetings between the LGB meetings to help and support each other. A useful first meeting had been held and a further one was planned to follow this LGB meeting.
- Governors had discussed sharing the Safeguarding link governor role between two governors as this is an important, wide-reaching role.
- DW had met with CLH for a safeguarding update and had discussed the implications of the school’s relationship with Cheshire East and of the revised Ofsted framework.
- DMB had been unable to meet with HWH in the spring term 2025 but had scheduled two meetings in the summer term 2025.
- DNT had met with ATR and discussed AI and its application in school.

Welfare

11. Safeguarding: CLH

- The Safeguarding Report April 2025 had been shared on Governor Hub. It provided details of CPD and data on the number of referrals.
- Changes in social care could mean that school staff would be asked to lead Child in Need cases. This would lead to a significant increase in staff workload and stress and in the risk carried by the school. **Governors asked** whether the Trust would consider employing its own social worker. KKY explained that the Trust is considering initiatives like having a bank of supply teachers so it could be a possibility that they might

consider this in the future. DW had discussed the implications of this planned change as part of a link monitoring visit.

12. Welfare and Wellbeing- Students: CLH

- The Academy has engaged in a Young Carers Art Project provided through Great Places. Young Carers in Year 7 and 8 were involved in a four- week art project and produced an installation piece for the foyer focused on hopes for the future. It is hoped that Great Places would fund another project.
- The Academy has also engaged in work with Cheshire Young Carers (through the Trust) aimed at identifying best support for all young carers. Action plans will be produced for these students.
- Counselling support from Just Drop-In (JDI) has increased to three days per week. Two days are funded by the charity and one through the school. Demand is high and JDI will now only take referrals for students from the age of 14.
- CLH has agreed to join the steering committee for the Cheshire East Healthy Young Minds Project. He will gain early access to resources.

13. Welfare and Wellbeing- Staff: KKY

- Results of the staff survey are detailed on slide 24 of the Headteacher's report.
- 67 responses had been received from the full range of staff so the survey was statistically significant.
- The school had been pleased with the responses, apart from with the response to question 24. 37% had responded that they agreed that the technology in the classroom supports the effectiveness of teaching.
- Computers had been replaced following the survey and it was hoped that the response rating would improve when the survey was next administered.

Governors asked when the survey would be next carried out. KKY informed them that this would take place in the spring term 2026. **Governors also queried** whether the staff had been provided with the opportunity to add comments to their response. KKY explained that that this had been a short concise survey and did not have a comments section. HWH commented that a staff wellbeing meeting is held at the beginning of each half term where staff are informed of initiatives and events. If they cannot attend the meeting, they are provided with a link to add comments.

Governors asked whether "exit" surveys were carried out with Year 11 and Year 13 students to gauge their feedback, for example on issues like why they had not chosen the school's sixth form. KKY explained that this is done through student voice and through the student parliament, but the school would consider doing this. DNT would provide an example survey. **ACTION**

KKY informed governors that the Ofsted parent and pupil surveys would be issued later in the summer term 2025. The school is also preparing for the Leading Parent Partnership Award, and this involves issuing a survey to parents and pupils.

Governors asked whether the school has considered awards for staff such as employee of the year. The school responded that this could be divisive, but it does have a range of staff appreciation initiatives in place to demonstrate that staff are valued and that their wellbeing is important.

AS left the meeting at 5:59 pm.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

14. Local Policy Approval

- Admissions
- Charging and Remissions
- RSE
- Child Protection

Governors **approved** the policies.

Trust Policies

- Serial and Unreasonable Complaints
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

Governors **noted** the Trust policies.

15. Governor Training Update:

- Governors were reminded to complete the training courses requested by the Trust in the autumn term if they had not already done so.

[Essential safeguarding for governors and trustees | National Governance Association \(nga.org.uk\)](https://nga.org.uk)

[Preventing radicalisation | The Key Safeguarding \(thekeysupport.com\)](https://thekeysupport.com)

- Permanent Exclusion Training

- Governors were asked to complete the NGA training if they had not already done so to be added to the Trust pool of trained governors to sit on permanent exclusion panels. [How to: review suspensions and exclusions | National Governance Association](#)

- Governor Biographies-Governors were reminded to complete their biography for publication on the school website.

16. Stakeholder Engagement -Wider Community JLA

JLA shared photographs from social media and from the school website showcasing a range of celebrations and engagement with the local community including Easter egg collection, French exchange visit, posts from alumni and reward assemblies.

17. Communication- to Trust:

Nothing further for this meeting.

19. Communication- from Trust:

- The report from the recent Equality and Diversity Survey had been published on Governor Hub.
- The Trust annual Governance Conference would take place on Saturday 14th June 2025. Registration was now open.
- Governors had been asked via Governor Hub to complete the Annual Skills Audit.

20. AOB

- DNT asked KKY to pass on thanks from governors to staff who ran revision sessions at Easter 2025. **ACTION**
- It was noted that LGB meeting dates would be moved a week later in 2025-26 to allow the school more time to prepare papers following a school holiday. The clerk, KKY and DNT would agree the schedule of meetings for 2025-26. **ACTION**

The meeting closed 6:11 pm.

LGB meeting dates 2024-25:

Monday 30th June 2025

All meetings to take place in school at 4:00 pm

Apologies to the Clerk via Governor Hub or email to spomeroy@tlptrust.com

Summary of actions

Minute	Action	Action/Date
13	DNT to provide an example of a student exit survey at Year 11/13.	May 2025
20	KKY to pass on thanks from governors to staff who ran revision sessions at Easter.	May 2025
20	Clerk, KKY and DNT to agree the schedule of LGB meetings for 2025-26.	July 2025