The Axholme Academy
Company Number: 0784080

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board
held at the Academy on Thursday 26 June 2025 at 4.30pm

Present:

Mrs Nichola Shaw (Chair)	
Dr Karen Andrews-Longbone (KAL)	Mr Damien Keogh - Principal (DK)
Mrs Tamara Fox (TF)	Mrs Tamara Pullan (TP)

In Attendance:

Ms Hannah Gardner – Governing Bodies Support Officer (HG)
Miss Sophie Leggott – Business Leader (SL)

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Thursday 27 November 2025 at 4.30pm

Min. Ref	Actions	Action By
1063	HG would email governors a link to complete and sign their business interests' forms	HG
1063	HG would email governors who still needed to ensure they had completed and signed the governors' code of conduct	HG
1063	HG would email governors the link to complete the skills audit	HG
1063	governors were requested to complete the MS form to confirm whether or not they had lived, worked or studied abroad for a period of three months or more in the last five years **Overseas Check for Governors** if they had not yet done so	All

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	Statutory / LA Business	
1063	**Welcome, Apologies, Declaration of Interests and Chair's / Governance Professional Updates** The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting. It was reported that apologies had been received from Mrs Forbes, Mrs Merchant, Mr McNiff and Mrs Foster. It was reported that apologies had not been received from Ms Fairey and Mrs Brickley. **RESOLVED:** consent be given to the afore-mentioned absences of Mrs Forbes, Mrs Merchant, Mr McNiff, Mrs Foster, Ms Fairey and Mrs Brickley.	
	Declaration of Interest / Governors' Code of Conduct Governors were requested to give consideration to any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests they may have with regard to the agenda items. Governors were also asked to complete and sign the new business interests form sent in a link by email. No declarations were made in relation to any items on the agenda or governor interests. HG informed governors that Mrs Merchant was still to complete her declaration of interest form from the autumn term. **ACTION:** HG would email governors a link to complete and sign their business interests' forms. Governors were reminded that all governors were required each year to review the governors' code of conduct, this had been sent in a link via email and governors were required to complete this confirming their agreement to the code. HG informed governors that Mrs Merchant was still to complete her code of conduct form from the autumn term. **ACTION:** HG would email governors who still needed to ensure they had completed and signed the governors' code of conduct. Governors were reminded that all members of the governing body are required to review the annual skills audit. A link to the audit was circulated via email during the autumn term. HG informed governors that she had only received five responses to date. As a result, completing the RAG rating process would not be efficient at that time. **ACTION:** HG would email governors the link to complete the skills audit.	HG HG HG
	Overseas Confirmation Governors were reminded that all governors were required to complete the overseas check for governors' form, this had been sent in a link via email during the autumn term. HG informed governors that Mrs Merchant and KAL had not yet completed their overseas form. KAL noted that she would complete her form	

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	prior to the end of her term of office to ensure all paperwork was up to date before her departure. **ACTION:** governors were requested to complete the MS form to confirm whether or not they had lived, worked or studied abroad for a period of three months or more in the last five years **Overseas Check for Governors** if they had not yet done so.	All
	GIAS HG reminded governors of the requirement to update GIAS with governors' information and the register of interest to be included on the school website.	
	Chair's Comments The Chair reported that no urgent action had been taken, and no correspondence had been received since the last meeting.	
1064	**Membership of the Board of Governors** Governors noted the following membership changes: • to consider the community governor vacancy due to the resignation of Mr Cooper on 27 January 2025 • to consider the community governor vacancy due to the resignation of Mrs Shaw effective from 31 August 2025 • to consider the community governor vacancy due to the resignation of Dr Andrews-Longbone effective from 31 August 2025 SL confirmed that an advert had been posted on Facebook. As all vacancies were for community governors, they were open to any eligible member of the public. It was agreed that recruitment efforts would continue into the next term.	
1065	**Previous Minutes** **RESOLVED:** governors approved the following minutes which had been circulated with the agenda: ● full governors' meeting held on 27 March 2025 ● standards committee meeting held on 1 May 2025	
	Matters Arising from the Minutes There were no matters arising from the minutes. The Chair noted that the minutes from the Standards Committee meeting were particularly reflective and effectively captured all key discussions.	
1066	**Clerking / Governor Development SLA** The Governance Professional reminded governors that they had previously agreed to buy into the clerking SLA for one year.	

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	The Governance Professional reported that the SLA increase was 7%. The Governance Professional reported that the governor development SLA for 2025/2026 would not include automatic access to NGA training modules. Following analysis of the usage of the NGA subscription paid for by governor services on behalf of schools who purchased the governor development SLA, only 16 courses were completed over the previous year, which did not represent value for money. Governing bodies would still be able to optionally purchase access to NGA training modules at an approximate additional cost of £72 which was a discounted rate. This cost would be in addition to the governor development SLA cost. If schools buy this themselves, it costs £235 per single school. The Governance Professional advised the increased costs were as follows: • clerking – from £1,964.18 to £2,102.00 (an increase of £137.18) • governor development – from £874.18 to £936.00 (an increase of £61.82) • governor development NGA access - £72 • committee meetings - from £146.06 to £157.00 (an increase of £10.94) • additional full governors' meetings – from £236.53 to £253.00 (an increase of £16.47) • complaints and pupil exclusions – from £297.67 to £307.00 (an increase of £9.33) • training course attendance- from £17.44 to £19.00 (an increase of £1.56) The Governance Professional offered to withdraw from the meeting whilst this item was discussed but was not asked to do so. **RESOLVED:** it was agreed to purchase the clerking SLA for a year to 31 August 2026. **RESOLVED:** it was agreed not to buy into the governor development SLA for 2025-2026. HG noted that she had greater flexibility in her diary on Wednesday evenings and, therefore, would be able to continue clerking the Standards Committee meetings if they were held on Wednesdays. The Full Governing Body meetings would continue to be held on Thursdays. Finance Committee meetings would also continue to be held on Thursday evenings. **RESOLVED:** Standards Committee meetings would be moved to Wednesday evenings to accommodate clerking availability.	
1067	**<u>Reports and Policies from Local Authority for Consideration</u>** Following consultation with professional associations and trade union representatives the pupils' school holiday dates for 2026/2027 had been agreed, copies of which had been previously circulated. Governors were reminded that where possible schools would need to set all five non-teaching training days outside the dates shown on the pupils' school year. Governors would also need to inform the LA of these five staff training days when the school would be open for staff training during the pupils' holiday period	

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	(or equivalent twilight training sessions) as well as any changes to the holiday dates listed. Governors noted the requirement for the school to be open to pupils for 190 days in each year. **RESOLVED:** governors approved the 2026/27 dates at the Standards Committee meeting held on 1 May 2025.	
1068	**<u>Election of Chair / Vice Chair for the Autumn 2025 Meeting</u>** Governors were informed that the positions of Chair and Vice Chair would need to be considered at the autumn term meeting. The Governance Professional reminded governors that they had previously agreed to use a self-nomination/nomination process. Any governor wishing to be considered for either role should make this known at the meeting or ensure their name was included on the autumn term agenda. Due to the resignation of Mrs Shaw, the current Vice Chair, Mrs Fox, would open and chair the autumn term meeting until a new Chair was nominated and appointed. No self-nominations for the role of Chair or Vice Chair were received at this meeting.	
	Academy Specific Business	
1069	**<u>Principal's Report</u>** The Principal reported that the below document had been uploaded to the Google Drive: PDF Principal's summary report June 2025.pdf The Principal shared a reflective overview of the academic year, acknowledging that it had been a year of challenges and growth. The impact of the "Ready to Learn and Able to Learn" strategy was becoming evident, particularly in the engagement of students and the quality of teaching. The focus had shifted from managing issues to prioritising learning and development. Follow-up processes from external scrutiny were now more consistent, and the senior leadership team was able to concentrate on strategic priorities, with the RTL strategy working effectively in the background. The Principal expressed pride in the school's position at the end of the year, especially given the uncertainties faced throughout. Despite challenges, staffing had remained stable, with only one member of staff leaving through retirement. Recruitment had been successful, with strong replacements in place. The new ECT in History had made a positive impact and was already well integrated.	

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	A curriculum review was pending, and while the updated Ofsted framework had not yet been released, the school remained focused on maintaining and building upon recent improvements. Benchmarking visits to other schools had provided valuable insights, particularly from a visit to a school in Liverpool, which may inform future practice. The school had scheduled a Challenge Partners review for November 2026, allowing time to act on any recommendations. Attendance would be a key focus moving forward. The Principal also acknowledged the strength and cohesion of the senior leadership team, noting that their collaborative approach was helping to drive the school forward. Special recognition was given to Richard Thorpe, who would be leaving after 26 years of service, and thanks were extended to Nichola Shaw for her time, availability, and valued contributions as Chair. Appreciation was also expressed to KAL for her support. The Principal wished to formally record those acknowledgements and thanks. Following leadership discussions, three strategic priorities had been identified for the next academic year: Consistent Implementation of "The Axholme Way": This included everything from morning roll call to the delivery of Period 6. There was now a clear understanding of what "The Axholme Way" entailed, enabling leaders to hold staff and students accountable to shared standards. Quality First Teaching: The focus would be on maximising all available learning time, including Period 0 and Period 6. While the principles of effective teaching were embedded, the next step was to increase pace and challenge throughout lessons to ensure students were pushed to always achieve their best. Whole-School Focus on Attendance: A new relational approach would be introduced, including the use of positive language and recognition strategies. For example, Friday detentions would be replaced with Friday morning rewards for students with full weekly attendance. Data showed that 12% of students currently missed a day every two weeks, and that casual approach to absence needed to be addressed. <u>Leadership and Planning</u> The extended leadership team had already met to introduce the priorities and formed sub-groups to develop action plans. The plans would be brought forward for sign-off, including costings and implementation timelines. The school had seen a 20% improvement in Year 11 attendance during study support, and that proactive approach would now be extended to Year 7, starting with a restructured welcome evening that set clear expectations from day one. Persistent absence had improved by 5% that year, and while the trajectory was positive, further progress was needed. <u>Safeguarding</u> The Chair queried the use of yellow highlighting on the safeguarding concerns log. The Principal confirmed it was part of the template and that the appropriate	

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	response was "Yes." Safeguarding incidents had occurred and were being managed appropriately. Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) Update The Principal provided an update on the school's progress toward establishing an SRP, focused on cognition and learning. The school was currently working through the consultation process, having received the formal documentation and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). Support was being provided by Jamie Rowbotham, Lead Officer SEND and Rachael Haigh, Head of SEND and Children's Disability. The SRP would not require capital investment, as the focus was on staffing and resources. The provision would accommodate up to 10 students, equivalent to the current I Group, and would be staffed by two teachers and two teaching assistants. A funding bid of £200,000 had been submitted to support that. The SRP would serve students residing in North Lincolnshire. While the school currently supported several students from Doncaster and East Riding, the SRP would prioritise local pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Parents would need to apply through the local authority, and fees would apply for students from outside North Lincolnshire. The Principal shared that analysis of current Year 6 referrals identified nine students who would meet the SRP criteria—seven from North Lincolnshire, one from East Riding, and one from Doncaster. The school would retain flexibility to support its own students who may benefit from SRP-style provision. The SRP was expected to launch in September 2025, pending final approval following the consultation. The provision would be led by Emma Leigh, with curriculum alignment to ensure students could transition smoothly into mainstream lessons where appropriate. Students would access core subjects such as English, maths, and study skills within the SRP, while also participating in subjects like art, textiles, and science with specialist teachers. The leadership team had already begun planning for future phases, including a potential Key Stage 4 pathway. The SRP model was designed to be sustainable and scalable, with no estate remodelling required. The Chair noted the importance of securing contributions from other local authorities for out-of-area placements. The Principal agreed and confirmed that early reviews would be conducted for all SRP students to ensure appropriate support was in place from the outset. The SRP was seen as a positive development for the school, providing much-needed capacity and structure for supporting students with additional needs. It also reflected the school's inclusive ethos and commitment to meeting the needs of its community.	
1070	**Financial Position and Other Resources Matters** Governors were informed that the budget had been reviewed in detail at the Finance Committee meeting. SL had shared with governors the budget proposal prior to the meeting. The first two pages of the report outlined the school's reserves, which included anticipated funding that the Principal was working to secure. The replacement of a senior staff member with a newly qualified teacher had contributed positively to the financial position. SL confirmed that the school	

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	had set a balanced budget for the current year and was aiming to do the same for the following year. While future years often showed a less favourable outlook, the current position was stable and supported by reserves. **RESOLVED:** Governors approved the 2025/26 budget. Transport Costs SL reported that transport costs were projected to rise by approximately 10%, with three bus routes seeing increases. Historically, a 5–10% increase had been budgeted, but current quotes suggested a 10% rise was more realistic. The average cost per day was expected to increase from £3.07 to £3.22. Governors discussed the impact on families, particularly those out of catchment, and the need to balance affordability with the school's ability to subsidise transport. It was noted that the school was currently heavily subsidising transport, and while the number of students affected was relatively small, the financial impact was significant. Governors agreed to: • implement a 10% increase in transport charges • maintain termly billing, but explore the option of half-termly reminders and payment plans to support families • investigate the feasibility of direct debit options (e.g., via GoCardless) to improve payment flexibility • continue to offer support for families in financial hardship, where requested **RESOLVED:** Governors approved a 10% increase in transport charges, with termly payments and additional support measures. Staff Pay Progression Governors were informed that staff pay progression was reviewed on an April–March cycle. At the last pay progression meeting, staff appraisals were reviewed, and those on track were recommended for progression to the next grade. **Chair: Is that built into the budget?** SL: Yes. **RESOLVED:** Governors approved the proposed staff pay progression.	
1071	**Governors' Monitoring and Training** Future Training Dates Governors had received the dates of the local authority's training for the rest of the summer term. Governors should use Services to Education to book onto any training. Governor Training Record Governors were reminded to keep HG updated on any training they had completed, including training not delivered by the local authority. This was to ensure that the training record remained accurate and up to date.	

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	Governor Visit Reports KAL and TP had met with Kate Causier to discuss the work of the RTL and ATL teams and the wider inclusion provision. The visit highlighted the significant and complex needs of many students, including a high number of Looked After Children (LAC) and pupils from outside the local area. Key Observations: • high levels of need: staff were managing many students with significant needs, including those with ASD and SEMH. The RTL team had a deep understanding of those students, but there was a recognised need to increase awareness and understanding across the wider staff body • staff awareness and training: there was a perception among some staff of a lack of understanding around student needs, as reflected in the staff survey. This could lead to misjudgements or missed opportunities for appropriate support. The leadership team was addressing this through regular Monday briefings, spotlighting individual students and sharing relevant updates • communication and relationships: the importance of relational approaches was emphasised. Staff were encouraged to engage directly with the RTL team to better understand student circumstances. There had been a noticeable improvement in communication and trust between teaching staff and the RTL team • behaviour and sanctions: the process for managing behaviour was discussed, including the role of the RTL team and the importance of staff taking ownership of follow-up actions, such as contacting parents. The school was working to ensure that sanctions were applied fairly and with an understanding of individual student needs • pen portraits and cognitive load: the school was refining its use of pen portraits to align with teaching principles and reduce cognitive load for staff. Those tools helped staff make informed decisions and adjustments for students with complex needs • inclusion and consistency: the school was working to ensure that all staff, not just those in specialist roles, were equipped to support students with diverse needs. That included planned training on relational approaches during the September 2025 INSET day • positive impact of RTL/ATL: the visit confirmed that the RTL and ATL teams were having a positive impact on student behaviour and engagement. For example, the Reflection Room was empty during a recent walkaround, indicating improved behaviour and fewer escalation . Recommendations and Next Steps: • continue to build staff awareness and understanding of student needs through regular briefings and targeted training • ensure consistent communication between teaching staff and the RTL/ATL teams • maintain a focus on relational approaches and inclusive practice across the school • consider how to better support staff in making reasonable adjustments, particularly for students with complex or changing needs KAL and TP thanked Kate Causier and the RTL/ATL teams for their openness and dedication. The visit reinforced the importance of whole school understanding and collaboration in supporting all students effectively.	

Chair ’s initials ....

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	Governing Body Self Review / Signatures of Risk Governors were reminded that it was considered best practice to review the effectiveness of the governing body annually. This review was typically carried out during the summer term, providing an opportunity to reflect on the work of the governing body over the past year and to inform development planning for the year ahead. To support that process, the Governance Professional recommended using either the NGA Twenty Questions or the Governance Signatures of Risk framework, both of which comprehensively covered all areas of governance.	
1072	**Academy Policies** There were no policies presented for governors to review at the meeting.	
1073	**Dates of Future Meetings** **RESOLVED:** the following meeting dates were agreed: full board meetings: ● Thursday 27 November 2025 at 4.30pm ● Thursday 26 March 2026 at 4.30pm ● Thursday 25 June 2026 at 4.30pm standards committee: ● Wednesday 24 September 2025 at 4.30pm ● Wednesday 12 November 2025 at 4.30pm ● Wednesday 28 January 2026 at 4.30pm finance committee: dates and times would be confirmed ● w/c 17 November 2025 ● w/c 9 March 2026 ● w/c 8 June 2026	
1074	**Any Other Business with Prior Approval from the Chair** The Chair acknowledged that Doreen Millward (DM) had completed the Safeguarding Annual Report and queried whether the level of detail included was appropriate. The Chair noted that she personally found the report informative and appreciated the depth provided. It was suggested that benchmarking the report against those from other schools could be beneficial. The Principal agreed to take that forward. Governors commended DM for her thorough record-keeping and her collaborative work with Kate Causier on safeguarding matters. The Chair also recalled that Julie Harrison (JH) previously produced a separate SEND report, which included a breakdown of specific needs such as dyslexia. It was proposed that JH be invited to a future Standards Committee meeting to present on SEND.	