

Hindhayes School



Full Governors Meeting – Thursday 10th July 2025 starting at 5.00pm – Chestnut Classroom

Minutes

Present: Louise Melia (Chair), Kate Nester (Headteacher), Lucy Shakesby, Sue Court, Neil Howiantz (Vice Chair), Linda Monaghan, Helen Clark, Ben Amos (attended virtually).

Absent: Michelle Heap (apologies accepted)

In attendance: Jenny Warrington (Clerk to Governors)

The meeting started at 5:00pm.

1. (77/2425) Welcome (including observers) to meeting and apologies received
The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no observers.
2. (78/2425) Opportunity to declare Pecuniary Interests
None
3. (79/2425) Governance – Vacancy and vote on re-appointment
The governors were reminded of the vacancies on the governing body.
The governors voted to reappoint Michelle Heap as governor for another four years.
4. (80/2425) Headteacher update report

The headteacher started with a discussion of the school development plan which was updated in July (black text in the document) and was shared with governors before the meeting.

The Headteacher has been working through the effective professional development strand and has replaced the PFSA hours, four hours funded by the local authority and the governors were interested to meet the new staff member, who has already began taking on the role and attending school events.

A governor asked how the PFSA was already working with families before she had started the role?

The PFSA has been working with families via the agreement with Street and Glastonbury Community Learning Partnership (CLP) to build up relationships with families where a relationship has broken down.

The leadership team are reviewing the school development plan for September and will still have a strand focusing on support staff. This year's induction process and recruitment and induction of new staff has worked successfully. The headteacher summarised support staff arrangements for September for each class. A governor queried cover arrangements for the deputy head. The redundancy process in school is now complete.

Year 1 phonics results were up to 69% or 68% from 60% last year and the team was keen to keep the momentum going. The governors said the increase was a massive positive and well done for these efforts. A governor queried what the national average (usually around 80% or 82%) was and when children retake the assessment (at the end of Year 2). A governor said what they saw of the teaching of Soundwrite phonics system showed enjoyment, encouragement and engagement and the commendation for the success should be passed onto the team.

A governor asked what a Soundwrite learning walk was?

A learning walk focused on a particular subject is a lighter touch observation where someone may visit a class for a short (ten minute) session and visit multiple classes to see the range of the issue across the school.

The leadership is doing it's best to keep up with training commitments under the current pressures. The deputy head has done two Soundwrite and two reading fluency observations and the feedback has been really useful to prepare a staff member for a change of year group for September and allowed positive feedback and points for development. A teacher moving from Year 2 to Reception has had Bouillion Number Sense training for maths, attended nursery visits, induction evening and stay and play. Teachers have had planning sessions in staff meeting time to work with their teaching assistant and prepare for September. The Headteacher is covering classes when staff are out for training instead of buying in supply cover.

A governor asked whether the funding for the Bouillion Number Sense training will continue next academic year?

There will be less funding next academic year, 6 core development days are expected.

The music curriculum is amber as more focus is wanted on the assessment of Music. The curriculum intends for assessment evidence to be videoed and recording electronically.

A governor asked who looks at the electronic music assessment data?

The Music Lead looks at the electronic data for subject monitoring purposes.

There is a new Somerset Schools Partnership starting lead by Millfield, The Blue School and Wells Cathedral School to offer support to the community. There has been a history event at The Blue School and an art event is planned. The first year it is free to be part of, after that the Head is unsure whether membership will be possible. The governing body see it as a positive venture and are interested to see how it develops for the second year.

A governor asked whether it overlaps local authority support?

No, the local authority support is separate and integral.

Action: The governors would like the anacronym list updated for the school development plan.

The Head and Deputy Head and Sarah Simmonds have passed their training courses this year. There was a new government white paper, Best Start Family Hubs, out on July 5th 2025. The Headteacher wants to retain the focus on the last strand ensuring teacher competency & avoid professional overload using the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) suggested model, for which there was no update for in July 2025.

There were no further questions.

5. (81/2425) Attendance report from Local authority

The local authority attendance report for Spring 2025 was shared with governors before the meeting and questions were asked following this.

Why is there no attendance data for EYFS?

School is not statutory until the term a child is 5 years old so there is no data before then.

A governor asked why the report was about Spring Term?

The new report says it will be sent every half term. Hindhayes has only received the Spring Term report so far. It is a comparative document.

A governor asked about the difference between Universal Free School Meals and Free School Meals.

All infant aged children up to Year 2 receive universal free school meals (Universal FSM). If a child is eligible they may receive Free School Meals (FSM) beyond Year 2, which may mean they are in a pupil premium or disadvantaged group. These attendance scores for Universal FSM and FSM are recorded separately in the report.

Governors noted that there was a significant difference in attendance percentages compared to other schools. A governor noted that the focus on Spring term at the end of winter would have affected the attendance due to seasonal unwellness. The report was said to be easy to read and helpful for governors to review attendance issues.

A governor asked if the building refurbishment last summer had made a difference to attendance?

The school did not have this data but said this would be useful to know. They felt staff attendance had been improved since the building refurbishment.

A governor asked how many Pupil Premium (PP) children there were at Hindhayes currently?

There are currently 25-30 pupil premium children at Hindhayes currently. The government have announced a change in the eligibility for pupil premium which it says more children will be eligible, but it is taking away the Ever 6 category which means children who have had FSM continue to get it for six years afterwards to continue their support.

Governors had a discussion about the current difficulties with children's attendance percentages. Adult mental health is seen as a significant cause of young children not coming to school as they cannot bring themselves. Many parents also do not have a network of

support to help them get children to school when they are unable to themselves and there is an increase in parents managing alone. Children are now also taking time off for birthdays which hasn't historically been acceptable to society. Generally, there seems to have been a shift in what reasons communities feel is acceptable for children to miss school because of. The school used to, more than 10 years ago, collect children in a minibus locally if they missed school without an authorised reason but this no longer happens. There are no consequences for unauthorised absence from school. Parents only come to school for key events such as nativities, and Sports Days and Year 2 leavers so there is less of a cohesive community than there used to be. Governors felt the discussion was interesting and would continue to monitor the situation.

6. (82/2425) Safeguarding

The Headteacher reported the difficulties in arranging the statutory Safeguarding Training for herself and the deputy headteacher with only a small capacity for education training which has resulted in the Deputy Headteacher booking training during the summer holiday and the Headteacher booking the training on a Saturday. The leadership team would appreciate more training being available during the academic term to enable teacher to complete this key statutory training.

Keeping Children Safe in Education also dictates that schools must provide Safeguarding cover during the summer holiday which means the summer break is negatively impacted. The Headteacher is covering the first 3 weeks of the summer holiday Kate, and the Deputy Headteacher will cover the last two weeks of the holiday. The Business Manager is still to complete the Designated Safeguarding Leader training.

Action: The vice chair said he would write to the local authority to ask for more training to be prioritised to teaching teams during the academic year.

7. (83/2425) Finance update

The Business Manager sent his apologies for missing the meeting and shared a finance report update with governors before the meeting:

- 2024/2025 Year end position – Year End Report (April '24 to march '25) recently completed. In summary the last report of 2024/2025 indicated an overspend of £105,663 and the year ended on £106,750. This figure also includes approximately £7000 which has been carried into 2025/2026 for this summer's building project, being a balance of the original refurbishment. Although the school is not happy about the deficit position, the business manager is pleased with the variation in the projected year end of only £1,087, on an overall budget of £991,302, when considering all of the changes and pressures the school has had to deal with in the past year. This demonstrates that the projections were robust.
- Month 3 Report – The Business manager will shortly be working with the local authority the Finance Team to produce a Month 3 Report (covering the period April to June 2025). This report will factor in the reductions from the recent redundancy process as well as some changes to staffing. The report will be circulated for comment when it's ready.
- Sign off of CFR – As part of the process to sign off budgets, the CFR (Consistent Financial Reporting) document needs to be signed by the Chair of Governors. The CFR has been reviewed by colleagues in the Central Finance Team to ensure that all processes have been followed correctly.
- Finance Audit Report – An independent Audit from SWAP was undertaken in June and was a full day's review of Finance and Governance at Hindhayes. The audit said

the school had good finance and governance controls in place. Administrative improvements were recommended to ensure transparency in decision making and oversight. The school is in deficit and this is predicted to continue for the next three financial years and the school is working with the council to improve the financial situation but the recovery meeting could not identify any actions as the school had already made all the changes they can to reduce staffing costs as the biggest expenditure area. The business manager is very positive about the audit undertaken at a time of change when moving from the longstanding finance system FMS to Bromcom. Some of the minor areas the audit highlighted were already in the business managers work plan to change and update. Feedback from colleagues in the School's Funding & Accounting Team, Jackie Cottey stated 'Well done on your audit report Mike – Looks very positive, a few minor things to put right but there will always be something!'

- Utility contracts – Further to the emails circulated regarding changing Electricity supplier, now the school are out of contract with the Somerset Council provider (EDF), the business manager sought approval to move to a new broker and provider (Northern Gas & Power Ltd). 8 of 9 Governors gave approval for the change which will result in a significant saving on the kwh rate. Based on a full 12 months costs and applying the new rate could result in a saving of up to £9,415.61. The Business Manager is currently working with Somerset Council to approve the change but they know there will be significant savings to be made.
- Building project (Summer 2025) – Following the successful refurbishment of the Year 1 & 2 side of the school in 2024 the school leadership team have been working on phase 2 of plans to make the classrooms on the Reception side of the school better rooms to work and learn in. The business manager sought a quote from the builder the school worked with last year (and have also ensured the quote is competitive) to install 4 suspended ceilings plus LED panel lighting in 4 rooms. The school has been able to fundraise for this work and have a provisional start date of for the work. The result of the lower ceilings will mean that the temperature in the rooms during the colder months will be better managed and this will have the positive impact seen in the already refurbished area. This has and is a significant piece of work for the business manager. Currently however it is not clear whether Somerset Council will give Hindhayes approval to proceed with this project due to changes in the Procurement Act 2024 and the local authority saying that the main roof will be replaced within 12 months and are not wanting to install a suspended ceiling before this work. The school has doubts whether the new external roof will be done within 12 to 24 months so are keen to progress with the suspended ceilings for this summer. This will mean the school can gain the benefits of that now and make savings in terms of heating but more importantly help reduce absence in the children and staff due to illness.
- Website compliance – the business manager received the latest document from Governance Services about what schools are meant to publish on their website. The Business manager will work through this and ensure the latest documents are published on the website by the relevant deadlines.
- WRAP expansion grant – the school is working with the Local Authority to apply for additional funding to support the possible expansion in before and after school WRAP placements as well as finishing at 18:00 instead of 17:30 daily.

The governors agreed it was a thorough and positive finance audit and that the utility contract would be changed to Northern Gas and Power Ltd.

There was a discussion about the current problem regarding the local authority support for the proposed stage two of the building work. The school feels the project last summer was a success and has improved the Year 1 and 2 class environment for children and staff. The leadership are acutely aware of the school of two halves currently with the Reception side not equitable to the refurbished side. Following a condition survey, lowering the ceiling and changing the light seems a sensible way to move forward, the school has found funding and contacted a builder who could do the project in two weeks in the summer holiday. The asbestos check was also fine. The proposed quote for the project is £17,000. The leadership is ready to go and staff were preparing to pack up classes but have been told not to proceed by the local authority. The local authority project manager has been asked to visit the school and discuss the proposal but this hasn't happened as yet. The school is concerned about the condition of the reception classes where young children and staff are working in black mould, damp and extreme cold. The governors are concerned for the conditions of the reception classes for the coming winter. There is no guarantee the full roof replacement will happen in the coming years and an internal ceiling could be removed before this happens. The governors wait to see if the project can go ahead this summer.

8. (84/2425) Presentation on School Values for discussion

The Headteacher talked governors through the presentation on School Values which staff had received at the beginning of the academic year. Governors discussed the meaning of values as a standard of behaviour and the difference between personal values and organisational values. Hindhayes has organisational values in a framework including honesty, everyone counts, accountable, respectful, teamwork. These are extended within the school self-evaluation form (SEF). The values will be revisited during staff INSET in September 2025. Organisational values should be aspirational and long term.

A governor asked how staff responded to the values presentation in September?

The presentation was received positively. The Headteacher still has the group notes from this and still hopes to follow up on this. It was most beneficial for induction for new staff to learn the school values rather than identifying any changes. The schools emphasis on a relational policy with compassion as a strand of the curriculum. This needs to be remembered by staff as much as the children. The school motto is Hindhayes kind ways. This should come first for all interactions.

Governors felt it was important to hold the image of what the school should be and to be accountable for it. They said it was interesting to discuss this. One governor felt the values come through clearly in the school policies.

9. (85/2425) Sports Premium Report

This is being prepared before the July 31st deadline and would be shared with the minutes for comment and agreed with governors.

10. (86/2425) Draft Behaviour principles

The governors reviewed the Behaviour Principles document and suggested couple of minor changes before approving this.

11. (87/2425) Policies to be agreed:

The following policies were approved by governors at the meeting:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Gifted and talented
- Governor visits
- Staff discipline, conduct and grievance policy
- Safer Recruitment
- SEN policy

12. (88/2425) Minutes of the last Meeting (7th May 2025) to be approved

The minutes of the governors meeting of the 7th May 2025 were approved without amendment.

13. (89/2425) Action points from previous meeting

The action points from the previous meeting were reviewed and updated.

14. (90/2425) Any other Urgent Business

The governors noted the approval by email before the meeting (on 19th June 2025) of the move to Northern Gas and Power.

15. (91/2425) Clerks briefing paper for information.

The governors noted the Clerk's briefing paper, circulated with the agenda before the meeting.

A governor asked about the Teachers pay award of 4% - 1% told be found from efficiencies by schools.

The Headteacher said that the recovery plan was still in progress. There was no clear plan for finding the 1% currently. As the finance audit found, earlier in the meeting, efficiencies had already been made.

16. (92/2425) Governor School Visits and Training


Louise Melia – Safeguarding training

Louise Melia and Neil Howiantz - Finance training for governors

17. (93/2425) Date of next meeting – Wednesday 24th September 2025 at 5:30pm in Chestnut Classroom

The meeting ended at 7:00pm.

Agenda item	Action by	Agreed Action	Update for next meeting
23/2425	MS	The Business Manager will look at the checklist for what must be published online	In progress
43/2425	KN	Head to number pages of school development plan	
80/2425	KN	Anacronym list included in the new school development plan	
82/2425	NH	The vice chair would write to the local authority to ask for more training to be prioritised to teaching teams during the academic year.	


 Signed by Chair of Governors
 Date: 24.09.2025
 Vice Chair