

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Summer (2) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 17th July 2025 at 9.30am
Location: At the academy

Membership

'A' denotes absence

- A Mrs D Carter
Mr P Gawthorpe (chair)
Mrs K Heaton
Mr R Lilley (principal)
Mrs C Middleton (vice-chair)
A Mrs M Norton Allen
Mrs K Phoenix (vice principal)
A Mrs M Pimm
Mrs S Sparks
Mrs S Wichmann

In attendance

Miss J Littlewood (clerk to the governors)
Mrs V Dashper (school business manager – SBM)

FGB/58/25 Apologies for absence Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs D Carter (personal);
- Mrs M Norton Allen (work commitments);
- Mrs M Pimm (personal).

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to these absences.

FGB/59/25 Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for items of business on the agenda.

FGB/60/25 Review of membership and terms of office ending in the next 12 months

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the governing body membership list.

The clerk highlighted the following vacancies on the governing body:

- 1 x partnership governor; and
- 1 x parent governor (from 31 July 2025).

In addition, the clerk drew attention to the following ends of terms of office:

- Mrs S Wichmann (parent governor) – 20 March 2026.

The principal alerted governors to an expression of interest received for the partnership governor role – he outlined the skills, experience and expertise of the applicant and the benefits his membership would bring to the governing body.

Governors **NOTED** and **DISCUSSED** the information available, and it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the appointment of Mr Michael Bland as partnership governor (effective 1st September 2025), subject to the satisfactory completion of all required documentation and statutory checks.

Clerk

The SBM also reminded governors of the resignations received (see **F&P/25/25**) of:

- Cllr N Turner (effective 5th May 2025); and
- Mrs M Norton Allen (effective 31st July 2025).

Governors formally **RECOGNISED** both resignations and that thanks and appreciation had already been shared with Cllr Turner.

Governors **EXTENDED** thanks and appreciation to Mrs Norton Allen for her dedication and commitment to the role of governor and for her energy and enthusiasm in supporting the school, staff, pupils, governors and wider community – they wished her well for the future.

Q. Governors enquired about the parent governor vacancy created by the resignations?

A. The principal assured governors that a parent governor nomination/election process was planned for the autumn term when a new cohort of parents would also be able to express interest.

RL/VD

FGB/61/25

Approval of minutes of summer (1) term meetings and any additional special meetings

The minutes of the summer (1) term meeting held on 1st May 2025 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was **AGREED** that the minutes of 1 May 2025 were to be signed electronically by the chair.

Chair/
Clerk

Actions in the minutes were reviewed. It was noted that they had been undertaken, were subject to the following update or were to be discussed in the meeting:

FGB/51/25 Approval of in-service training days 2025 – 2026

The principal requested that governors revisited the discussion re. in-service training days to agree for one day be disaggregated – 27th July 2026.

Q. Governors asked about the impact of the additional in-service training day on the length of the school year?

A. The principal reminded governors of the regulations surrounding the length of the school year (see **FGB/51/25**) and the need for governors to formally record the length of the school year in line with the funding agreement.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED**:

- the request to disaggregate the 27 July 2026; and

- the length of the 2025/26 school year as 189 days due to exceptional circumstances.

FGB/62/25 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

Minutes of the following committees were **RECEIVED** and **NOTED**:

- Finance & Personnel Committee (05 June 2025);
- Audit Committee (05 June 2025).

Actions in the minutes had been completed or continued to be in hand within the timescales indicated.

Policies

Governors **RECEIVED**, **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the following policies/documents:

- Academies Trust Handbook;
- F1 admissions policy (including 30 hours);
- lone worker policy;

In addition, governors **RECEIVED**, **NOTED** and **RATIFIED** the pay policy approved at committee.

FGB/63/25 Monitoring and overseeing financial performance

a *2024-25 budget review (updated since 5 June F&P meeting)*

The school business manager (SBM) provided governors with an update in relation to the 2024-25 budget review which incorporated:

- the items highlighted within the F&P meeting;
- other additional variances in income and expenditure;
- **see confidential item.**

b *2025-26 budget – see confidential item*

c *Management Accounts*

The chair **CONFIRMED** that he had received the management accounts for periods 9 and 10, and they had also been uploaded to Governor Hub.

d *Cash Flow (P9 and P10)*

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the cash flow spreadsheet (P9 and P10) in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook – **see confidential item.**

FGB/64/25 Capital Project

a *LED Lighting proposal*

The principal recapped the situation thus far (see **FGB/49/25 b**) and **F&P/28/25**) and reminded governors that a tendering process had been undertaken and four companies had each provided a different solution to deliver a fully working LED system.

The SBM and principal presented an overview and evaluation for each of the companies which ranked them 1-4 against a series of criteria – the rationale and reasons for ranking covered:

- cost consideration;
- survey and assessment;

- technical integration;
- system requirements;
- budget implications; and
- insurance verification.

Q. Governors asked about the preferred choice?

A. The principal concurred that the preferred choice was company 4 (which also ranked 1) and he explained that this solution would be independent of the BMS system.

Q. Governors enquired about the implications to the BMS system of an independent lighting system?

A. The principal advised that the BMS system connected to a degree but would not control the lighting system.

Q. Governors queried the progress with the window actuators?

A. The SBM shared that these were now all installed although a few niggles existed around opening and closing.

Q. Governors questioned whether there were any legal hurdles?

A. The SBM reassured governors there were none – the school would not be using the BMS system for the lights and all health & safety documents were to be completed if necessary.

Q. Governors asked if there was any LA involvement required?

A. The principal verified that there was no requirement to tell the local authority about the project.

Q. Governors enquired whether the money was in the budget?

A. The SBM confirmed that money for phase 1 had already been budgeted for however she cautioned that the remainder might increase in cost depending on when the work started.

Q. Governors queried why company 1 had been ranked 3?

A. The principal clarified that although on the LASER framework, the handling of the survey and subsequent communication had identified that a number of assumptions had been made, and conditions attached to the quote.

Q. Governors questioned how much disruption was anticipated?

A. The principal conveyed that if approved, the preferred company had indicated that the pilot phase could be completed in 3 weeks over the summer holidays.

Q. Governors asked whether the work would conflict with the existing BMS?

A. The principal assured governors there would be no conflict with the existing BMS system.

Q. Governors enquired about the timeline for the rest of the work following the pilot?

A. The principal added that the hope was for the rest of the work to be completed over the October half-term.

Following comprehensive discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the appointment of Company 4 (first-ranked tender) to install the LED lighting system at a total project cost of £101,301.02.

The SBM added that the work was to be delivered in two phases:

- **Phase 1** (administration wing, KS1 and the community team office) at a cost of £30,520.61, to be completed during the summer break;
- **Phase 2** (remainder of school premises) scheduled for completion during October half-term, subject to:
 - successful completion of Phase 1
 - receipt of updated quotation for remaining works.

Governors also **APPROVED** proceeding with Phase 2 contingent upon satisfactory delivery of Phase 1 and cost confirmation for the outstanding works.

b *External electrics and water*

The principal outlined the technicalities involved with the planned installation of:

- a breather pipe to help with the dispersal of the unpleasant smell from the grease trap grate;
- standpipes to help with the husbandry of the farm animals and maintenance of the gardening area; and
- electric points to the top of the field and to the animal feed shelter

Q. Governors queried the number of standpipes envisioned?

A. The principal explained that 3 standpipes and three electrical outlets would be needed

Q. Governors questioned costings?

A. The SBM shared the three quotes for the installation of standpipes and electric point.

Q. Governors asked about the impact of not doing the work?

A. The principal advised that the likelihood was that the academy would no longer be able to maintain the high levels of husbandry required to look after the animals.

Q. Governors enquired about total costs?

A. The SBM clarified that total costs = £16,030 and the money was available to complete the work.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the following quotes to complete the water/electrical work:

- installation of standpipes – Lamberts at a cost of £10,518; and
- installation of electrics – BRS at a cost of £5,512.

c *Fencing/Gates*

The principal alerted governors that in line with Martyn's Law, replacement of the part of the fence line, which was too low, had been identified both as a risk to perpetrators gaining access from outside and pupils escaping from school.

Q. Governors queried the cost of this work?

A. The SBM informed governors that the work had been quoted at £9,884.

Q. Governors questioned why the matter was being brought to governors?

A. The principal conveyed that although within the bounds of his delegated responsibility, due to the nature of the work it had only been possible to secure one quote therefore governor approval was sought.

Q. Governors asked when the work was scheduled?

A. The principal reported that it was hoped to complete the work over the summer holidays but at the latest October half-term.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the fencing and gates upgrade with Kingsforth at a total cost of £9,884.

FGB/65/25 Summary of principal's report and governors' questions and challenge

The principal drew governors' attention to the report uploaded to Governor Hub and highlighted the following:

- pupil numbers remained healthy with:
 - waiting lists in some year groups; and
 - three of the year groups over PAN;
- F1 "30 hour" places continued to be popular;
- the wraparound care offer included:
 - breakfast club and remained busy with an average of over 110 pupils per day;
 - after school provision which had broken even;
- pupil premium (PP) levels were high with 45.7% of the school being eligible for FSM;
- SEND – the SIP was to be heavily focus on SEND and inclusion next year – **see confidential item**;
- community team input around early help, mental health and safeguarding;
- safeguarding – **see confidential item**;
- behaviour – **see confidential item**;
- premises – see **FGB/69/25**;
- detailed actions already undertaken and planned to ensure the academy was compliant with Martyn's Law;
- staffing update – **see confidential item**;
- the wide, extensive variety of visits, trips, events and activities undertaken;

Q. Governors enquired about FAD places for September 2025?

A. The principal communicated that there had been 75 (PAN) acceptances.

Attendance

- whole school attendance = 93.8% (YTD);
- persistent absence (PA) = 16.2%;
- information was also present by group: gender; FSM6 and SEN.

2025 summer term outcomes

The principal presented the summer term outcome data and how pleased the academy had been:

- EYFS = 61% of pupils achieved GLD (an increase from last year);
- Y1 phonics = 85.5% of pupils passed the PSC (above national);
- Key Stage 2:
 - 76% of pupils achieved EXS in SPaG, 24% GDS;
 - 76% of pupils achieved EXS in reading, 30% GDS;
 - 76% of pupils achieved EXS in mathematics, 28% GDS;

- 68% of pupils achieved EXS in writing, 3% GDS;
- 62% of pupils achieved EXS combined (RWM).

Q. Governors queried whether the school had been externally moderated this year?

A. The principal confirmed that external moderation had taken place – the inspectors had been complementary of the practice and concurred 100% with the accuracy of the moderation.

Governors **CONGRATULATED** the staff and pupils on the outcomes many of which were above or in line with National – this was particularly pleasing considering the schools context (i.e. 45%+ FSM)

FGB/66/25 Update on appraisal process and well-being for principal and staff

The chair **REPORTED** that a date for the principal's appraisal was to be arranged and appraisal governors to be determined at the next FGB meeting (18 September 2025).

**All to note
/Clerk**

FGB/67/25 Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action

Governors **AGREED** these items had been covered at the summer (1) term FGB meeting

FGB/68/25 General Data Protection Regulations – report from the DPO/Information Governance Link Governor

The SBM verified there had been no data breaches, FoI requests or SARs since the last meeting however, clarification had been sought from the DPO about the content of the newsletter to ensure it was not being used for marketing purposes – reassurance had been given.

All to note

FGB/69/25 Estate Management

The SBM updated governors in relation to the following:

- private day care setting – **see confidential item**;
- fire risk assessment;
- NCC health & safety audit.

The SBM clarified that:

- the fire risk assessment had been undertaken resulting in two recommendations both of which had been actioned or were in hand – the report had been uploaded to Governor Hub;
- the health & safety audit had been completed with no recommendations – the report was pending.

FGB/70/25 Receive report from the Designated CLA teacher – Children who are Looked After (presented at least once per year)

Governors **AGREED** this had been covered in detail in the principal's report (see **FGB/65/25**).

FGB/71/25 Communication received and updates

a From the principal

The principal alerted governors to receipt of the DfE accounting letter re. the publication of the 2025 version of the Academy Trust Handbook and the main changes from previous years – the letter had been uploaded to Governor Hub.

All to note

Q. Governors questioned the academy's progress towards the digital and technology standards?

A. The principal assured governors that an action plan had already been produced.

b From clerk – Governor Newsletter

The clerk drew attention to the content of the second 2025 summer term edition of the Nottinghamshire Governor e-newsletter and highlighted the following items:

- local authority articles to raise awareness of:
 - helping families prepare children to start school;
 - the holiday activity and food programme (HAF);
 - the 2026 governor conference;
- articles related to governor roles such as:
 - governors' role in improving school attendance;
 - making the most of the governor services advice and guidance subscription;
 - retention of governance documentation;
- national updates including:
 - new guidance re. early years funding;
 - does your school have a climate action plan in place?
 - PE and sports premium (primary schools) digital reporting form;
 - PE and school sport inclusion programme (SEND)
 - expansion of school mental health support.

FGB/72/25 Report from training co-ordinator of impact of training undertaken and review of governor training requirements (including safeguarding)

Governors **DETERMINED** that some had still to complete the 'effectiveness' tool on Governor Hub – those who had yet to access the tool **COMMITTED** to doing so as soon as possible.

**All
governors
/Clerk**

Governors **AGREED** that the following training had been undertaken:

- health & safety – Mrs K Heaton, Mrs S Wichmann.

FGB/73/25 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governors

Governors **DETERMINED** that the following monitoring visits had been undertaken or scheduled:

- early years – Mrs C Middleton;
- phonics – Mrs S Sparks;
- safeguarding – Mrs C Middleton.

Governors **PROVIDED** a brief summary of their visits.

FGB/74/25 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account

Governors identified impact through:

- consideration and discussion regarding governance matters including:
 - membership, vacancies and recruitment;
 - governor training and monitoring visits;
- scrutiny and challenge relating to:
 - SEND, safeguarding and CLA;
 - data, specifically summer term outcomes;

- consideration and discussion related to admissions, attendance, behaviour and GDPR;
- increased awareness and understanding of premises and estates management through questions and discussion related to:
 - communication with the local authority and linked parties;
 - advice sought and action considered/taken;
 - lighting and BMS developments including financial implications;
- consideration and discussion related to financial and staffing matters including budget reviews, three-year forecast, staffing changes and appraisal;
- consideration and review of policies and the summer (1) term governor newsletter.

Accountability continued to be evidenced in all governing body and committee meetings through regular review of actions, question and investigation.

FGB/75/25 Confirmation of dates for 2025-26

The governing body

agreed

Autumn Term 2025

- Thursday 18th September 2025 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 9th October 2025 (9.30am) – F&P and Audit Committees;
- Thursday 20th November 2025 (9.30am) – F&P Committee (Streets);
- Thursday 4th December 2025 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 4th December 2025 (after the FGB) – AGM/Members meeting;

All to note

Spring Term 2026

- Thursday 22nd January 2026 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 26th February 2026 (4.00pm) – F&P and Audit Committees;
- Tuesday 26th March 2026 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting;

Summer Term 2026

- Thursday 7th May 2026 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 4th June 2026 (4.00pm) – F&P and Audit Committees;
- Thursday 16th July 2026 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting.

FGB/76/25 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

that there were eight confidential items and that the confidential sections of the following reports:

- summer (1) term FGB minutes;
- principal's report and linked documentation;
- financial report and associated documents;
- governor monitoring visit reports;

be deemed confidential but that all other papers and reports be made available as required.

The meeting closed at 11.14am



Signed:

(chair)

Date: 18th September 2025

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