



Ruskin Community High School

Leadership, Management & Environment Committee
18th November 2025 at 4:00pm
Venue - School

MINUTES – PART ONE

Present:	Dean Postlethwaite (HT) John Rhodes (JR) (Chair) Denise McCumskey (DK) William Ollier (WO) Duncan Burrow (DB) Don Higgs (DH) Margo Veitch (MV) Peter Thorpe (PT) Peter Storey (PS) Milena Kwaczynska (MK) Neha Shahi (NS) Emma Szymura (ES)	Headteacher LA Governor - Chair of Committee Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Co-opted Governor
Apologies:	Debbie Jones (DJ) Duncan Burrows (DB)	Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor
In attendance:	Hazel Goodwin (GH) Sarah Robson (SR) Natalie Burke (NB) Natalie Cross (NC) Claire Harrison (CH) Su Garbutt (Clerk)	School Business Manager Staff Staff Staff Staff Senior Governance Officer

AGENDA ITEM 1	ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR
Discussion:	The Board unanimously elected Mr John Rhodes as Chair of the Committee for a period of one year, or until the first committee meeting of the 2026/27 academic year.

AGENDA ITEM 2	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
Discussion:	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced and welcomed the two new parent governors. All apologies received were accepted by Governors.



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AGENDA ITEM 3	CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, (PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE)
Discussion:	The Headteacher informed the meeting that he was a HT representative on the LA Schools Forum.

AGENDA ITEM 4	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	Two items of AOB were raised and agreed to be discussed under item 16 of this agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dance Studio• Maths in the school

AGENDA ITEM 5	APPROVAL OF THE PART 1 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING
Discussion:	Governors approved the minutes from the meetings held on 17 TH June 2025 as a correct record and the Clerk was asked to send the minutes to be signed virtually by the Chair.
Decision:	Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the above meeting.
Action:	The Chair to sign a copy of the minutes and provide for school for retention.

AGENDA ITEM 6	MATTERS ARISING
Discussion:	<p>Governors reviewed the Governors' Action Log.</p> <p>The following actions were discussed and closed:</p> <p>Disability access – this had been raised today with Cheshire East during the health and safety inspection.</p> <p>Additional LME – the additional meeting had taken place</p> <p>SDP – this would be presented to the FGB on 3rd December 2025.</p> <p>Governor elections – 2 parent governors had been elected</p> <p>Contract extensions – the update would be brought to this meeting.</p> <p>Increase in PAN – The Headteacher had spoken to the LA regarding the increase, and the dialogue would continue once the final intake figures for 2026 were available.</p> <p>The following actions were reviewed and carried forward:</p> <p>Governor training – All governors were reminded to complete Safeguarding and Cyber training before the end of the term.</p>



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	<p>Governor profiles – All governors were reminded to update their training profile of Governor Hub</p> <p>There were no other outstanding actions.</p>
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AGENDA ITEM 7	LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS (LME)
Discussion:	<p><u>Health and Safety</u></p> <p>PT attended the LA H&S audit, and it was noted the school had received a good outcome. However, PT stated he felt the audit covered a wide breadth, but not in any depth. Minor actions had been received as a result of the audit outcome.</p> <p><i>Governor question: How much do we pay Cheshire East for the audit?</i> <i>Response: The cost is £1,800.</i></p> <p><i>Governor question: Which areas do we think should be looked at in more depth?</i> <i>Response: Risk assessments and how up to date and relevant they are. The RAs are all in place, but until they are tested it is difficult to know how they would be executed.</i></p> <p>Governors were informed that the school currently employed three site officers who have site meetings every week. The school also had an audit from RPA which is much more rigorous and stringent. However, this is a desktop exercise as they do not visit the school.</p> <p>A governor commented they felt that a visual inspection was important for a health and safety audit. Discussion took place as to whether RPA would do an in-person audit.</p> <p><u>Energy and Catering</u></p> <p>PT had met with Ian Bailey to discuss the savings which had been achieved regarding the school's water bill. It would be possible to extend the remit to include gas and electricity costs. However, the Board noted that whilst this would give information to enable the school to budget effectively and to have accurate annual spend, Mr Bailey could not guarantee any savings.</p> <p>The Headteacher informed the meeting that the school's energy was currently purchased from the LA which bought in bulk from West Mercia. However, the school only receives a bill. There is a lack of transparency as to how much energy the school is using and how the bill is costed. This has been investigated previously, but legally the LA does not have to share the information with the school. The Headteacher felt that the school was potentially over-paying.</p>



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	<p>The contract with the LA was due for renewal in April 2027. However, the school was being asked to commit to a new contract now.</p> <p>Governors noted that Mr Bailey had identified around £15k savings in the water costings overall.</p>
Decision:	Governors agreed the school would conduct its own tender process for electricity and gas, and not continue the contact with the LA.
Action:	<p><u>Health and Safety</u> The Headteacher and SBM was asked to contact RPA to ascertain if they would conduct and on-site visit and if so, the cost. (Action HT/SBM)</p> <p>The clerk would add the approval of the LA H&S audit to the spring term LME agenda. (Action: Clerk)</p> <p><u>Electricity & Gas contracts</u> Another meeting with Mr Bailey would be scheduled and all governors were invited to attend. (Action HT/SBM)</p> <p>Mr Bailey would be invited to present to the LME committee in the Spring or Summer term. (Action HT/SBM)</p>

AGENDA ITEM 8	SITE & BUILDINGS REPORT
Discussion:	<p>The Site and Buildings report had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Projects In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>IT strategy</u> - 37 student laptops are required.• <u>Glazing in main hall</u> – due for completion in September/October 2025 but staff shortages have caused a delay.• <u>Bell Tower repairs</u> – due for completion in September/October 2025 but staff shortages have caused a delay.• <u>Decarbonisation project</u> - due for completion in September/October 2025 but staff shortages have caused a delay.• <u>Asbestos remedial work</u> – 3 quotes have been received. Remedial work would be undertaken during February 2026 half term. <p>The SBM informed Governors that £50K has been allocated in the budget for going IT maintenance/updates.</p>



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	<p>Planned Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Library & Inclusion Centre Relocation</u> – this had now been completed and governors were invited to visit. £80k had been budgeted for this work and the final costings were around £97k. This was due to additional works being undertaken. The full costings had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting for governors to view.
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AGENDA ITEM 9	FINANCE UPDATE
Discussion:	<p>The Finance documents were circulated on Governor Hub prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The SBM gave a brief update:</p> <p class="list-item-l1">a) The School Fund information and audit certificate were available on Governor Hub prior to the meeting. The school had moved to be cashless and some formulas on the original spreadsheet didn't work, so originally it could not be signed off. These had now been adjusted. The School Fund had approximately £20k.</p> <p class="list-item-l1">b) The 2025-26 budget v actuals to date were reviewed. The SBM informed the meeting the school was on target. Governors noted the clawback figures and that £320k would be earmarked for future projects.</p> <p>Governor question: The service fees and charges are showing as £50k over prediction. Why is that?</p> <p><i>Response: The Novus Managed Service invoice didn't fall into the previous financial year and therefore next year this line won't be as high.</i></p> <p class="list-item-l1">c) The 3 Year Plan was projected carry forward for Year 1 is £412K with a small deficit in Year 2 (£18k) and a large deficit in Year 3 (£516k). However, the SBM was confident the deficits would be negated with in-year savings and/or the use of earmarked reserves.</p> <p>Governors noted the following budgeting assumptions:</p> <p>Expenditure</p> <p><u>Pay increases:</u></p> <p>Teachers - 2026-29 3% per annum for 3 years (DfE 6.5% over next 3 years in total)</p> <p>Support Staff - 2026-29 3% per annum for 3 years</p> <p>UPR move up one step each year</p>



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	<p>Support Staff Grade 2 move to Grade 3 from April 2026 (cleaners, middays, exam invigilators)</p> <p>TLR – FTE pay for PT staff as per directive from September 2026</p> <p>Pension employer contributions:</p> <p>Teacher pension contribution £28.68% each year</p> <p>Support staff pension contributions £22.1% 20256-26, 21.5% onwards</p> <p>Inflation 2% on goods/services (2% ISBL Assumption)</p> <p>Income</p> <p>Funding 1.5% increase built in 2026-27 onwards (1.5% ISBL Assumption)</p> <p>The 3-year plan was cautious but the expectations which had been built in were regarded as reasonable.</p> <p>Pupil numbers were discussed. The PAN was 140 and current admissions figures were at 128. However, it was noted this figure did not contain any SEND pupils. The school kept a spreadsheet of admissions requests throughout the year.</p> <p>Dining Hall debts – Governors were informed the school had reduced the permissible debt from £20 per pupil to £3 per pupil. This has resulted in a substantial decrease in parent debt and feedback had been positive from parents.</p> <p>d) The SBM informed Governors that the 2024/2025 SVFS had been received, and the report had included several action points. The report had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting for governors to view. Governors noted that one of the actions was for governors to question more during LME and FGB meetings.</p> <p>e) The Manual of Interval Financial Procedures contained updates on change of personnel.</p>
Decisions:	Governors agreed the updates to the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures (MIFP).

AGENDA ITEM 10	DATA PROTECTION
Action:	The Data Protection Officer report had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting for all governors to view. Data breaches were always reported and the committee noted the school had received 6 subject access requests since March 2025. Two had been received this term. Novus can generate the emails requested, but these required anonymising. However, Co-pilot can



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complete this function. The school was encouraging staff to delete any emails which did not require to be kept.

The school had received a Cyber Attack threat on 8th October 2025. This came through a submission form from the school website. This was believed to be a credible threat. The IP address linked to the form was in Brazil. A staff meeting had been held, and everyone had been advised to be extra vigilant. The threat had been linked to the attack 4 years ago.

The school had conducted a simulation attack this term. 9 people had clicked on the link and of these, 4 had supplied their credentials. However, 30 members of staff had reported the email/link as suspicious. Those who had clicked the link and/or supplied their credentials had received additional training.

Governor question: How does this fit with governors school email addresses?

Response: If a governor has received our simulation email and clicked the link, then they will have been sent to training. However, we haven't seen any governor names on our reports.

Governors expressed concerns regarding the Brazil connection as this was where the cyber-attack which took place 4 years ago had originated. The SBM stated that a large amount of the schools information was now stored in The Cloud.

AGENDA ITEM 11	HEALTH & SAFETY
Discussion:	<p>Governors noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All policies were up to date and risk assessments had been reviewed and monitored.• Staff were reporting any concerns through TEAMS and these were all logged.• The Bell Tower was still on the action plan, but these was currently with Cheshire East for completion.• Training had been completed through The Key and the compliance audit had taken place today.• The PE equipment audit had taken place.• The Fire door audit was complete.• Asbestos remedial work would be completed using the DFC.• Legionella remedial work was underway and had been budgeted for.• The accidents and near misses report had been uploaded to Governor Hub.• The school was campaigning for a 20mph speed limit on Ruskin Road.• A RIDOR incident had been reported – an accident in a science class.



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	<p><u>Staff sickness absence:</u> 1 staff member was on long term absence and was at Stage 3 of the policy. 1 staff member on long term absence had resigned.</p> <p>Governor question: Do you conduct back to work interviews? <i>Response: Yes, these can be formal or informal depending on the length of absence. They are all done face to face.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Are there any occupational health referrals? <i>Response: Yes, these are through SAS. Any member of staff can be referred or self-refer. We have referred 3 or 4 members of staff this year.</i></p> <p><u>Wellbeing:</u> Staff had been offered free flu jabs. A health screening day for staff was being held on 20th January 2026.</p>
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AGENDA ITEM 12	STUDENT & STAFF WELLBEING BUDGET
Action:	<p>The Student and Wellbeing Update was circulated on Governor prior to the meeting. NC briefly talked through the report for governors highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The School's Advisory Service (SAS) continues to support all staff in school. Staff are reminded of the SAS regularly, with counselling, GP service, mindfulness, nurse support, weight management, physiotherapy and the SAS gym all available to staff.• On World Mental Health Day (Friday 10th October 2025) students had the opportunity to wear yellow for 'Hello Yellow' day, to raise money for 'Young Minds'. £245.00 was raised by staff and students. <p>Governors noted the following support available for students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lynda Thorley: School Counsellor 1 day a week• Lisa Nolan: VISYON Counsellor 1 day a week. Lisa is also now offering a drop-in session for students at Wednesday lunch time.• Her Place (previously Motherwell) still support females in Year 9 and above. Referrals are made and students are now added to a waiting list, with support offered as soon as possible.• Mental Health Support Team: Continue to work 1:1 with students and with families. The team also attended the Personal Development Evening on Wednesday 22nd October to highlight to the community the services that they offer. They are running a Year 10 Relationships workshop during Autumn Term 2.• SAS have one place for a student to receive counselling every year.



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Governor question: Do we have any issues with vaping?

Response: It does happen and is difficult to police if off site. We can only check students if we purchase the wands and these are extremely expensive. We have had 3 instances this year, so it is rare. If a student is caught vaping they go to the inclusion centre and interventions are in place to help them stop.

Governor question: Do we give information to students about the dangers of vaping?

Response: Yes, this is covered in English and also PSHE.

Community Cover Scheme

ES informed the meeting of the new opt in scheme for staff to cover for absence colleagues. The scheme helped the school remain settled as cover was from known staff rather than having to source supply teachers. If a staff member covered on 2 separate occasions, they could then book one day off as a wellbeing day.

This scheme did not cover long term absence cover, only short term absence. However, the SLT reported they had noticed a difference. Personal leave requests were still made, but had significantly reduced.

Governor question: Has there been any issues with unions over this?

Response: 90% of the staff have opted in. The unions have recognised that we are trying to run the scheme as fairly as possible. It is an opt in scheme so staff can make their own decision as to whether or not to join.

Governors noted that the school had not used any external supply since the scheme started. The budget for this was £30k, but had been reduced to £5k.

AGENDA ITEM 13	DIRECTORS REPORT
Discussion:	<p>The Directors Report had been uploaded to Governor Hub at the beginning of term for all governors to view. Governors noted the following changes to personnel within the Local Authority:</p> <p>Claire Williamson had resigned as Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration and had been replaced by Iain Peel as Interim Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration.</p> <p>Helen Wallace was the current Interim Head of Education but would be moving to SEND. Laura Rogerson would be taking over as Interim Head of Education.</p>



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AGENDA ITEM 14	POLICIES
Discussion:	<p>The following policies were reviewed and approved by Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Absence Management (GOH)b) Leave & Time Off (GOH)c) Prevention of Extremism & Radicalisation (VIT)d) Records Management Policye) CCTV policy <p>Governor question: Section 2.1 of the policy outlines governor responsibilities regarding usage. Can we be sure this is being done, and if so, how?</p> <p><i>Response: The policy will be reviewed as we are putting in more CCTV cameras around the inclusion centre. We will look at the section you mention and bring this back for discussion once we have the new cameras installed.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Do the camera's run 24/7?</p> <p><i>Response: Yes, they do. We have added information into the Home School Agreement, so parents and students are aware of the CCTV, particularly around the communal area of toilets.</i></p> <p>A governor commented that they had raised a question regarding whether sufficient notice had been given regarding the use of CCTV in the toilet areas and had been informed that this is signposted for all students.</p>
Decision:	All policies above were approved by governors.
Action:	CCTV policy to be reviewed and brought back for further discussion.

AGENDA ITEM 15	MEETINGS
Discussion:	The next meeting was confirmed as 10 th March 2026 at 4:00pm.

AGENDA ITEM 16	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	<u>Dance Studio</u> A presentation had been given to the board last year regarding the Dance Studio and this had stated a further presentation would be received regarding the impact of moving the library, HIVE and the dance studio. The library report had been received but the board had not received any information regarding the impact of the Dance Studio.



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	<p>Governors were informed that there had been more concerts held in the dance studio but that a review would require at least 12 months usage and the studio opened in January 2025.</p> <p>Governors requested an impact report be added to the Autumn 26 committee agenda.</p> <p><u>Maths within the school</u></p> <p>At the FGB meeting held earlier in the term which had focussed on school data, concerns had been raised about maths. A governor questioned whether the school was missing a plan or road map as to how maths would be improved?</p> <p>In response, the Link Governor for maths stated that there had been big steps forward achieved since the beginning of term. These included smaller classes, an additional teacher, and a change to the exam board used. Lots of steps had been taken but it would take time to see the impact of these. The Link Governor had seen the detailed department plan and the latest School Improvement Partner report had also focused heavily on maths improvements.</p> <p>A governor suggested that the Head of Maths should be invited to the Spring Term TLA committee to present the work the department was doing to improve outcomes for students.</p>
Action:	Clerk to add Dance Studio Impact Report to Autumn 2026 LME agenda. Clerk to add Maths Presentation to the Spring 2026 TLA agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 17	IMPACT STATEMENT
Discussion:	Governors helped to move the school forward in this meeting by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion and review of the schools financial performance which was on track for the next 2 years• Discussion of the wellbeing of staff and students and the work being undertaken by SAS, members of the SLT, teachers and counsellors.• Discussion and understanding of the Community Cover Scheme and how this is working for the staff and school.• Energy discussions and the decisions taken to review the costings and tenders.

The meeting part 1 ended at 5.22 pm. The meeting moved to part 2 agenda.

Chair..... Date.....