ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday 11th May 2026
Time: 5.00pm
Venue: Didsbury High School

Clerk: K Warhurst
Present: J Game, K Houghton, A Clayton, M Hopkins, R Watt, M Abadi, B Moss, J Taylor and D Woolley

Action	Initials
School tours for new Governors to be organised	KH
SEND link update to be delivered at next meeting	RW
Newsletters to be sent to Governors for relevant year groups	KH
Governors to inform the Clerk of any changes to their Register of Business interests	All
Full School Development Plan to be provided at next meeting	KH
Safeguarding and SEND Link visit forms to be sent to the clerk	MA/RW
Governors are asked to complete the mandatory training	All
Clerk to contact Governors regarding their learning plans	KW
Clerk to send out dates for 2026/27 meeting	KW

Agenda – Part 1				
Category		Item	Notes	Action
1	Governance Arrangements	Ofsted updates	D Woolley presented an update on Ofsted inspections and talked through the new framework. He explained the new framework should look and feel different for everyone involved and the key categories are Achieve, Belong and Thrive for all areas. He advised the Academy Committee that governance came under Thrive, along with Safeguarding and Leadership. Leadership, inclusion and Safeguarding were the key areas of focus when gathering evidence in all areas being evaluated. He stated that the grading for Safeguarding is either 'met' or 'not met'. Other areas will be graded as either Expected, Strong or Needs Attention. DW went through the grading for Leadership and Governance and highlighted the key points the governors needed to be aware of. DW talked through the plan for the 2-day visit, the number of inspectors who would be involved and informed the Governors they would be required to	

			come into school on the 2nd day to talk about their role. He advised the Governors need to be knowledgeable about their statutory duties, and carry them out effectively. He confirmed Ofsted would be looking to see evidence of support and challenge from the Academy Committee. They would want to see the Governors have been in to school, asking questions, building relationships with parents and building trust with them. He emphasised the link governors need to understand their specific role and have meaningful dialogue about their role. He mentioned the Laurus Institute have training for link roles. DW went on to say Ofsted would gather evidence to demonstrate the Academy Committee hold leaders to account on various areas including the impact of school's professional learning programme for staff, school's support and provision for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Ofsted will also gather evidence relating to the factors that statutory and non-statutory guidance, professional standards, research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to leadership and governance. Q – With the change to Ofsted inspections, has this changed what school does? A – There has been no change in our day-to-day practice as what we do it right for the students, to ensure they are doing well, safe and happy. It is contentious that attendance and behaviour are measured together as one can limit the other. The new framework concentrates on inclusion and it is the first time young carers are mentioned. Shining a spotlight on vulnerable students is not a bad thing. DHS is an inclusive school and PP students do well here. Disadvantaged students are a far broader range now as many factors impact on students' lives. DW was thanked for his presentation.	
		Apologies	Apologies were received from H El-Jarn	

		AOB items	None received	
		Declarations of interest in any of the agenda items	There were no declarations of interest made in any of the agenda items.	
		Register of Business Interests	The Register of Business Interests was circulated by the Clerk and Governors are asked to record any changes to their record.	All
		Part 1 Minutes	Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2026 as an accurate record of the meeting. KH confirmed tours with the new governors are being organised. The governors have not been receiving the Year group newsletters. KH will ensure this is actioned.	KH KH
		Membership: Recruitment Update/Succession Planning	The Academy Committee now had a full cohort of governors.	
		Scheme of Delegation	It was confirmed there were no material changes to note to the Scheme of Delegation.	
		Trust Board update	Governors reviewed the report from the February 2026 meeting. **Q – With the Laurus Trust growing, is there a limit to the number of schools that will join the Trust and will it get to a stage where it is counterproductive?** A – We have to consider economies of scale with free school growth and also consider the type of school to join the Trust as primary schools have approximately 210 pupils but secondary schools have over 1,000 students.	

2	School Performance & Accountability	Review Head of School including the School Development Plan	Governors reviewed the Head of School Report. KH informed the Academy Committee that she had spoken with JG and agreed that next years' aims section of the report will tie in to Ofsted and will start to link the language and connect the thinking of leadership and the Academy Committee. The teacher predicted grades are looking very positive for the current Year 11 cohort. They had 150 students attend an extra revision session on Saturday morning. Q – How are predictions looking for different categories such as SEND and those with additional challenges? A- The data looks positive for vulnerable groups, particularly EHCP and PP students. Students on free school meals do better at DHS than those students who pay for lunches at other schools. Last year's PP students came in on high ability, whereas this year there are fewer in 7+ category therefore we expect this may fall. Q – If the predicted grade ends up being higher than the actual grade, this is disappointing for the student therefore should teacher predicated grades be lower? A – Asking people to predict grades is hard. Teachers need to keep students motivated and don't' want them to switch off if they feel they are going to fail. The teacher predicted grades are also used for college applications so they have to be realistic. We also need to know who may not pass so school can offer intervention. Grade 7,8 and 9 are hard to predict. KH went through the professional learning for staff to keep teachers at the top of their game and they set aside time, mainly in departments. Q – How does this feed into professional development and progression? A – There are opportunities to develop and get additional teaching and learning responsibilities. There are growth and promotion to leadership opportunities, for example our Teacher of Music has recently been promoted to Head of Music at	

			another Trust school and our Head of English has just been promoted to Trust Director of English. This opens up opportunities for other staff to step up. There are opportunities for Learning Support Assistants to be promoted to specialist roles such as SEMH Specialist. Staff are committed to the cohort and know it's important to be on top of their game to work with students. Q – How do exam results link to attendance? A – There is tight correlation with not attending and not attaining, if the students turn up, they will do well. Attendance is a big job to manage and takes a lot of extra work to improve / intervene. The school would like to recruit someone to work on attendance full time. Q – Is this one of the key aims for the school? A – Yes, with attendance and behaviour linked, we need to focus on this. Q – What is the more important headline for attendance, whole school attendance or persistent absence? A – One doesn't matter more than the other but persistent absence is the one we want to change more; however, we are aware some students can't improve for health reasons. One issue is around those who take holidays in term time which effect. School just needs the resources to tackle this. Q – What about if a child is ill during the school day? A – School has an excellent First Aider who will review the child and encourage them to keep going as sometimes they just need 5 minutes before going back to class but some are ill and will be sent home. The First Aider knows the students well. Q – Looking at the attendance per year group, some do well one year but the attendance drops the following year. A – School is aware they may see an impact on attendance with certain year groups. For example, from Year 12 to 13. Also, the transition from Year 7	

			to 8 can impact on attendance. Q – Could G Clarke attend a meeting next year to talk about Sixth form, especially as we will have a full Sixth form next time Ofsted visit? A – Yes, she can attend the February meeting after the Autumn results. Q – The possession of a vape is categorised as possession of a weapon – does it have to be recorded this way? A – The coding has to be this way as this is national guidance. Vaping is a fixed term suspension which has been agreed across the Trust. We have been doing work in Belief & Values to make students aware it is harmful and sharing vapes could make someone ill and they need to be aware what the sanction will be. Q – Is there a health and wellbeing angle to this? A – Yes, we can make Eclipse referral if it is identified during a return to school meeting that the student is struggling with substance abuse. If a student comes to us to say they have an issue with vaping, we don't sanction them for seeking out support. Q – Most suspensions are for persistent disruptions involving SEND students, is there an unmet need? A – We identify and put students on the SEND register following a suspension if unmet needs are highlighted. We use internal suspensions before a fixed term suspension. They spend lots of time with our SEMH specialist to unpick behaviour. KH advised the governors that the full School Development Plan is overwhelming with all the actions therefore she had produced a document for the governors to summarise the full plan. The 3-year plan keeps her on track but the thematic goals are what is most important now. KH to provide live document at next meeting along.	

				KH
3	Governor Monitoring	Finance update including pupil numbers, bench marking and value for money	Governors reviewed the Management Accounts to. 28th February 2026	
		Policies – undertake school level reviews and note phase/Trust level policies	Governors approved the following policies: • Communication with Parents Policy • Electronic Communications Policy • PSHE Policy • Uniform Policy	
		Ensure Curriculum Policies (Religious Education and Relationships, Sex Education), Behaviour and Welfare policies are in line with statutory guidance	KH confirmed all curriculum policies are in line with statutory guidance.	
		Safeguarding and SEND Link Governor updates	MA provided a verbal update on his Safeguarding Link visits during the autumn and spring terms and confirmed the summer term meeting was planned for 3rd June 2026. MA to send clerk a copy of the completed record of visit document. It was agreed that R Watt would provide a SEND Link update at the next meeting and will send the completed form to the clerk. JG advised there were more link governor roles if any of the new governors would be interested.	MA RW

4	Governor Development	Review Trust Training Plan	Governors were reminded as to how to access the online training courses and were asked to complete the 4 mandatory training modules. They were also made aware of additional courses available for new governors and specialist courses for link roles. The clerk will email Governors individually regarding their training plans.	All KW
		Minute any training undertaken by Governors since the last meeting	Governors were asked to notify the Clerk of any training undertaken and provide certificates.	
5	Community Engagement	Stakeholder Engagement	JG advised that once the governors receive the newsletters for the allocated year groups, they can look to attend events taking place.	
6	AOB		None received	
7	Meeting Dates:	To note	Dates for 2026/27: Monday 5th October 2026 at 5.00pm Monday 8th February 2027 at 5.00pm Monday 10th May 2027 at 5.00pm	

Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes
DW delivered a training update on Ofsted
Governors reviewed the Trust Board update from February 2026
Head of School report was reviewed
Management Accounts were reviewed
Governors reviewed the School Development Plan Overview
Four policies were approved

Meeting closed at 7.00pm

J Game
Chair of Academy Committee
05.10.2026