



YORK HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4th December 2025

Present: Gavin Kumar(Principal) Val Roddis
Andy Pope (Chair) Carl Law
Sally Gordon Ian Savage
Andrew Waller

In attendance: Victoria Bettney (Personal Development and Careers Lead)
Sophie Triffitt (Clerk)

		Action
1.	Welcome, Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were received and accepted for Clare Besant and Sarah Hammond. There were no declarations of interest to note. Governors were reminded to read Keeping Children Safe in Education and complete the confirmation form.	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 9th October 2025 <i>(previously circulated)</i> Resolution: Governors agreed the 9th October 2025 minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting and they were approved. Governors confirmed they were satisfied with the governor link allocations. Challenge: A governor referred to the comment on CYC proactivity with issuing absence fixed penalty notices and asked if that position had improved. The Principal confirmed not but CYC had linked with school and a representative would be coming into school one day per fortnight to support attendance meetings and door knocking which was a positive move. Challenge: A governor asked if there was an update on the NEET focus group. Ms Bettney explained that as part of the vulnerable learners promise a pupil mentoring framework had been designed with focus on confidence, emotion coaching and goal setting and was designed to be a four to five week programme to make incremental progress as a starting point on the students own journey. The programme was launched to mentors identified by the Principal and training had been delivered that would be trialled over the spring term. The programme was designed to impact as many young people as possible without being too time consuming for staff. A governor suggested linking with The Island to share best practice. <u>Matters Arising and Action Plan</u> Action 1: The leadership structure was provided as part of the meeting agenda. Action 2: The Chair noted that he had an update on governor membership to be shared later in the meeting. Action 3: Rewards data was included as part of the meeting agenda. Action 4: Training requirements were circulated to governors.	



3. **Careers**

The Principal introduced Ms Bettney who had responsibility for careers this academic year and had made a significant impact and improved the careers offer in a short time.

Ms Bettney explained the change to Gatsby Benchmarks from the 1st September 2025 and the government pledge of modern work experience which would require from September 2026 five days of work experience in KS3 and KS4.

Ms Bettney noted that she had written a new careers policy and plan, which was on the agenda for approval, that provided the opportunity for all stakeholders to understand their role. The aim was to enhance links between careers and curriculum and help young people see the value and importance of the taught curriculum. There would be differentiated delivery and content for different year groups.

Ms Bettney noted that in addition to having leadership responsibilities for Personal Development across the Trust she had also qualified, with distinction, as a Careers Lead.

Mr Bettney informed governors that there was a focus on disadvantaged and highlighting opportunities within the community and wider. Significant strides were made on the offer in the autumn term with focus on embedding the plan and informing staff and the next phase would focus on that plan becoming embedded into the curriculum.

Ms Bettney tabled a copy of the Gatsby review.

Ms Bettney invited governors into school as part of the careers programme, particularly to help with the mock interviews for Year 9 and Year 11.

Challenge: A governor asked if there had been contact with Young Enterprise. Ms Bettney confirmed there was that link and the enrichment programme included a Business Club.

Ms Bettney informed governors that every young person would have experiences and gave the example of a Year 10 visit to York St John which covered a higher education visit and careers day activities. There was an aim to refine the offer so that activities covered more areas of the benchmarks. Ms Bettney explained that she wanted to enable informed decisions from a variety of opportunities.

Challenge: A governor asked how students got a real feel for a workplace over a period of time when they have shorter experiences of lots of different work places. Ms Bettney explained that the enterprise model for KS3 was focused on variety. More businesses were removing the option for one / two week placements due to cost and time commitments so the plan was to build in a three day project as an extended opportunity and would include engagement with employers.

Ms Bettney reported that the careers programme was ahead of the government requirements.

Ms Bettney informed governors that York High had been identified by the Careers Hub as not having had a fair share of their funding so York High would be part of the modern work experience pilot they were running.

A governor asked if the school was open to work places making contact for work experience pilot opportunities. Ms Bettney confirmed she was.

Challenge: A governor asked for an update on the enrichment programme. Ms Bettney reported that 75% of students had accessed the programme including 52% of Pupil Premium and 44% of SEND students. Ms Bettney explained that the autumn term focus was on trying clubs and then clubs from January would run in slightly longer blocks. The next steps were to look at cultural capital gaps and identify opportunities to address high aspirations through the club offer.

Ms Bettney invited governors to support school clubs.



	The Principal informed governors that he had appointed a cover supervisor with sports expertise so they would be utilised to then release their counterpart to cover elsewhere and ensure enrichment could continue through staff absences. Challenge: A governor asked if there had been progress on reporting attendance at enrichment clubs. Ms Bettney explained that initially there had been a communication home to confirm sign up details and then if a student did not attend a session there should have been a text home. Round three was trialled as a drop in model to enable flexibility for Year 11 mock intervention and was a shorter period. The school was moving to a new MIS system, Arbor, for registering so would be able to issue alerts for clubs going forward. Governors thanked Ms Bettney for the update and for all her hard work. Ms Bettney left the meeting at 6.35pm.	
4.	Principal Feedback <u>Attendance (previously circulated)</u> The Principal highlighted that attendance continued to be the greatest risk area for the school. The Principal reported that female attendance was tracking lower than male and explained that the change of uniform protocols (skirt length, lashes, nails) had impacted attendance early in the school year. The Principal emphasised that there was a need to establish improved uniform standards but as a result a number of female students chose not to attend which impacted attendance early in the term. The data was improving and attendance was high profile across school with staff doing everything possible. The Principal felt that some form of EBSA (Emotion Based School Avoidance) provision could help if that could be facilitated in the budget. The Principal informed governors that The Place had provided £1k per month to fund attendance rewards. The Principal explained that it had been the right thing to do to hold strong expectations with uniform and he was disappointed that it impacted attendance. Challenge: A governor asked if the stance on the wearing of lashes and nails was worth the impact to attendance. The Principal explained that there was a health and safety aspect to the decision and he also wanted to reduce social pressure on the young people to feel they needed to spend a significant amount of money to come to school in a certain way. The Principal was confident it was the right decision and despite the initial challenge the pupils were coming to school in line with the expectations. The Principal added that the uniform standards were in line with other local schools. The Principal emphasised the desire to reduce the additional monetary pressure on families and raise expectations for the young people at York High. Challenge: A governor referred to the SEND and non SEND attendance data and noted that each year the gap was increasing. The Principal agreed this was an area of concern. Through the new deep support structure there were meetings where every SEND student with below 90% attendance was reviewed with a focus on removing barriers to attendance. The Principal noted that there were some students with significant SEND need and zero attendance. The priority was to ensure school has done everything possible to support attendance.	



Challenge: A governor asked if a blended provision was offered if it would impact attendance. The Principal explained not due to attendance coding and online provision not providing attendance marks. The Principal felt that an EBSA provision to support anxiety, depression and mental health provision in school would help. Ms Scaum who was joining as Vice Principal in January 2026 has expertise in this field and would support. Challenge: A governor asked how the current attendance rate of 86% aligned with the expectation from Ofsted. The Principal explained that the Ofsted framework was that if attendance was below national average for three years it would be flagged as an area of focus and the school would need to evidence an improving trend and a robust offer to improve attendance. Mr Reynolds had written an attendance and behaviour narrative that could be used with Ofsted to explain what was in place and preemptively answer a range of questions they would have. Challenge: A governor asked if Ofsted would take that narrative on board. The Principal confirmed they would. Action: Principal to present the attendance, safeguarding and behaviour narrative documents at the February 2026 meeting. The Chair invited governors to visit school to see the volume of work being done across school to improve attendance. The Principal also encouraged governors to visit school. <u>Pulse Update (previously circulated)</u> The Principal informed governors that the Year 11 mocks had reported positively noting that long standing exam invigilators had reported them as the best cohort for effort, application and behaviour that they had seen. The exam analysis was looking positive and suggested strong final outcomes in the summer. The Principal highlighted that the suspension and reflection figures remained high and would be a focus for Ms Scaum when she started in January 2026. The Principal reported that the Link provision had been effective for six Year 9 pupils who were being transitioned back into mainstream classes. The offer included full SEN and academic screening, literacy and numeracy mornings and a varied curriculum which delivered a really powerful offer but it was important to reintegrate these young people back into the mainstream classes. Mr Row had presented to the school on reintegrating and had written profiles to support that process. The next cohort would be from Year 7 and on reflection that year group would be the first for 2026/27 academic year to support the transition to secondary. The building works should be completed for next term. Mr Row was the provision lead supported by an agency Teaching Assistant Level 2 as they were still recruiting for TA3 for the provision. Challenge: A governor asked how the suspension data compared to the same period last year. The Principal reported that the number of suspensions were down by 38 and there was a three year improving trend. There was a focus on removing barriers whilst also maintaining high standards and the Principal was confident that with a review of the inclusion offer from Ms Scaum the numbers would continue to reduce. Challenge: A governor asked if there was a risk that staff were less able to address behaviours due to wanting to reduce suspensions. The Principal confirmed not. Behavior across school was outstanding but there was a cohort of high tariff pupils that needed to be	Principal
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catered for which was a driver to launching the Link. The Principal explained that schools were seeing much more complex cases and there was a reduction in services outside of school so there was a need to have an offer that served the York High community.

Challenge: A governor asked if any of the high tariff pupils were getting caught up with the incidents of local antisocial behaviour. The Principal confirmed that two students had been involved with that behaviour and had Safer School and Youth Justice working with them and significant pastoral wrap-around.

Challenge: A governor asked if agencies outside of school were fulfilling their responsibilities. The Principal noted that there was very little support and explained that if school was to put a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) referral through there was no funding for the services so the recommendation would be for a school based FEHA (Family Early Help Assessment) but school were unable to have the impact needed out of school. Previously there would have been PCSO presence at the school gates. The Principal noted frustration at the lack of services but understood it was a national pressure all schools were facing.

Challenge: A governor noted that there was a significant gap with PCSO provision and neighbourhood policing.

The Principal reported that the quality of education in Science was assessed and was confident that the teaching and learning and curriculum delivered a high quality offer. The Science teachers were engaging some of the most challenging cohorts and the department was delivering best practice.

The Ark curriculum for KS3 English was delivering impact and the next stage was focused on vocabulary development and literacy levels.

The Principal informed governors that Ms Taberna who was joining the school in January 2026 would bring strong curriculum expertise.

Challenge: A governor asked if there were staff surveys. The Principal confirmed that there were termly surveys for all stakeholders and followed by focus groups.

Challenge: A governor asked for stakeholder survey data and resulting actions to be included on the February 2026 meeting agenda.

School Improvement

Making School Unmissable (previously circulated)

The Principal presented the framework and actions being taken to increase the sense of belonging for young people in school.

Challenge: A governor questioned the 'staff feel safe' statement being included as an action. The Principal explained that staff and student voice reported positively on feeling safe but agreed that was not an action and would review.

Staffing / SLT Structure (previously circulated)

The Principal presented the SLT staffing structure from January 2026.

The Principal noted that he was sad to lose Ms Burns from the team but wished her well. Following recruitment, a strong SENCO had been appointed to the vacancy.



	The Principal explained that the SLT now had a mixture of long standing staff who know the school and its community well and new staff coming in which would make an exciting team to drive the school forward. Governors recorded thanks to the staff moving on and wished them all the best in their new roles. The Principal invited governors to the new SLT induction on Thursday 12th December 2025 from 3.30pm to meet the new members of the team. Challenge: A governor noted that cultural change could be difficult and takes time but if high expectations were set it would bring the young people who need it to rise to those levels. The Principal agreed and noted that the majority of students were meeting those expectations and felt that having high expectations would show the children they are valued and raise their own expectations and aspirations. Challenge: A governor noted that with setting these expectations there needed to be care not to create a problem that was not there before. The Chair explained that the behaviour approach has nuance and enables consideration to individuals. The Principal noted that there was a need for boundaries and expectations but there needed to be a focus on the pastoral, intervention and support offer. The Principal informed governors that too many children were in reflection and detention which suggested the system was not working and needed to be reviewed. The Principal left the meeting at 7.30pm. <u>Rewards (previously circulated)</u> Carried over to the February 2026 meeting.	
5.	Chair Feedback <u>BRAG – Pulse Trends</u> The Chair noted that the Year 11 mocks were reporting better than last year's Year 11 at the same stage and they had started from a lower base. Teaching and Learning around Maths, English and Science was strong and all leaders were confident in the strength of the team and the support they received. <u>Attendance</u> <u>Behaviour</u> <u>SDP</u> The Chair shared comparative data to the previous year and noted that suspension figures had increased when the Principal was not in the building and explained that the Principal had a calming presence and could deescalate individuals. Challenge: A governor noted the need to ensure the school operated efficiently when the Principal was not on site. The Chair explained that the SLT team was reduced in capacity and a full team would be in place from January 2026. The Chair noted that the school felt calm which supported teaching and learning. Challenge: A governor questioned how long the new team would need to be in place to see an improving trend in suspension and attendance data. Challenge: A governor asked if there was something the existing staff were not doing that would mean the new members of SLT would deliver improvements. The Chair	



	explained that teaching and learning was strong and the new team would bring new experiences, ideas and mechanisms Challenge: A governor noted that no clear identified gap had been presented that needed addressing. Challenge: A governor suggested that for the small cohort of high tariff students it may be beyond the school staff to impact and there needed to be support in the community through local authority services. A governor suggested the school's role was to identify those areas and hold services to account to play their part. Challenge: Governors agreed that they would want to see and understand what changes were implemented by the new team to then understand what impact had been made. The Chair informed governors that he would ask the new members of SLT to meet leaders at Westfield. The Chair encouraged governors with links to local primary schools to encourage links with York High. Challenge: A governor suggested the need to consider how the strategies of SLT would be monitored going forward and for governors to proactively challenge these strategies to be assured of impact.	
6.	Governor Feedback: Deep Learning <u>Teaching & Learning (CB)</u> <u>Governor Visit Report (previously circulated)</u> <u>Writing Framework Audit (previously circulated)</u> There were no questions on the circulated documents.	
7.	Governor Feedback: Deep Experience <u>Assessment (SG)</u> <u>Careers, Aspirations and Destinations (SG)</u> <u>Community (AW)</u> <u>Pupil Premium & Disadvantaged (AW)</u> There was no update to report.	
8.	Governor Feedback: Deep Support <u>Child Protection & Safeguarding (CL)</u> <u>SEND (VR)</u> <u>Attendance (AP)</u> <u>Behaviour (SH)</u> There was no update to report.	
9.	SBM Report <u>Finance Summary (previously circulated)</u> <u>Consolidated Management Accounts (previously circulated)</u> <u>Link Governor Report (previously circulated)</u> <u>iAMCompliant Risk Register (previously circulated)</u> There were no questions on the circulated documents.	



10.	School Policies Resolution: Governors approved the below policies: Careers Policy and Careers Plan (<i>previously circulated</i>) Careers Policy and Careers Plan (<i>previously circulated</i>) Allergens Policy (<i>previously circulated</i>) Anti-bullying Policy (<i>previously circulated</i>) Common Standards for Staff - Dress Code (<i>previously circulated</i>) Music Development Plan Summary 25-26 (<i>previously circulated</i>)	
11.	Governor Business <u>Governor Training</u> (<i>previously circulated</i>) <u>Panels</u> (<i>previously circulated</i>) Documents were noted for information. The Chair informed governors that Sarah Hammond had resigned from her governor role. Governors recorded thanks to Sarah Hammond for her time and commitment as a governor. Action: Invite Kate Smithson to the February 2026 meeting as a potential governor.	Clerk
12.	MAT Update There was no update to report.	
13.	Any Other Business Governors recorded their thanks to Ms Burns and Mr Walker for their hard work and commitment to the school and wished them both well in their new roles.	
14.	Future Meeting Dates: Thursday 5th February 2026 6pm Thursday 26th March 2026 6pm Thursday 14th May 2026 6pm	

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

Approved by governors on 5th February 2026.

Approval



**YORK HIGH SCHOOL LGB – 4th DECEMBER 2025
ACTION PLAN**

	Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.	4	Present the attendance, safeguarding and behaviour narrative documents at the February 2026 meeting.	Principal	February 26
	11	Invite Kate Smithson to the February 2026 meeting.	Clerk / Chair	December 25

February Meeting:

Attendance, safeguarding and behaviour narrative documents
stakeholder survey data and resulting actions
New SLT members to attend.
Rewards

March Meeting:

Internal Alternative Provision - Lead Teacher.