



ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

YORK HIGH SCHOOL

Date:

Thursday 14th May 2026

Time:

6:00 PM

Venue:

York High School

IN ATTENDANCE

Gavin Kumar, Principal	Clare Besant
Andy Pope, Chair	Val Roddis
Ian Savage	Kate Smithson
Sally Gordon	Laura Backhouse
Andrew Waller	

Sophie Triffitt, Governance Advisor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were approved at committee on 9 July 2026.

	Action
1. Welcome, Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Carl Law was not present at the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.	
2. The Link Item was carried over to a future meeting.	
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 26th March 2026 (previously circulated) Resolution: The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were approved. <u>Matters Arising and Action Plan</u> Action 1: Narrative documents were included on the agenda. Action 2: It was confirmed that thanks was passed to Ms Bettney. Action 3: Staff survey report carried over to the July 2026 meeting. Action 4: Principal to confirm if access could be provided to all Pulse documents. Action 5: It was confirmed that the attendance report was circulated. Action 6: Computer Science GCSE update included as part of the agenda. Action 7: Year 9 options and setting / streaming were included as part of the agenda. The Chair of the Committee explained that as part of the meeting he wanted to review the agenda focus in line with the committee remit and ensure that meetings facilitated the right areas of challenge and support of the school.	

4. **Principal Feedback**

Ofsted Narrative Documents - Achievement, Attendance and Behaviour, Curriculum and Teaching, Inclusion, Safeguarding (previously circulated)

The Principal explained that the leadership team were readying for the Ofsted window. The self assessment was at Expected Standard for all areas of the Ofsted criteria. The Principal expected areas of particular scrutiny to be 'behaviour and attendance' and 'achievement'.

Achievement: The Principal reported a significant upward trend in student achievement. Following two years of outcomes significantly below the National Average (NA), the most recent results aligned closely with the NA. Current forecasts for the 2025/26 academic year suggested record-breaking performance. The Principal noted that two years of sustained improvement, alongside positive internal data tracking for the current Year 10 cohort, provided a strong evidence base to support Expected Standard status.

Behaviour and Attendance: The Principal reported that current attendance stood at 86%, while this was below the NA of 91%, the data reported a sustained three-year improving trend across all categories of attendance. Following a robust healthy challenge discussion with the Central Team, the Principal expressed confidence in the case for Expected Standard. As part of the DfE RISE programme that the Principal had volunteered to be part of, the Principal had met with Laurel Academy who had identified areas of best practice to adopt from York High and offered no further recommendations for improvement, providing external validation of current school systems.

The Principal reported that he was very confident in the team and their preparation. Case study documents had been produced for any areas that could potentially be borderline to address challenge and present the case for Expected Standard.

The Principal informed the committee that he had invited the CEO, who was an experienced Ofsted Inspector, into the school to conduct a mock inspection and provide quality assurance of the school's self evaluation. The process had validated the school's evidence base and the readiness to present for Expected Standard status.

The Principal noted confidence that attendance would show significant improvement in the forthcoming academic year and provided context that the rise in uniform expectations at the start of the year had a short-term impact on the attendance data particularly for girls, however this was a necessary phase in embedding higher standards across the school.

The Principal informed the committee that a number of external visitors to school including Local Authority representatives, other Headteachers and the Poverty Proofing Audit had all provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on the school.

The Principal reported that forecasted outcomes for Year 11 would represent the school's best-ever results, expressing pride in the students' hard work. There were 121 students on roll in Year 11 and the Principal commended staff for their intensive efforts to re-engage and improve attendance for students who had previously been persistently absent. A timetable for success had been implemented and included

structured revision sessions. The Principal highlighted the need to shift strategic focus for support and intervention plans lower down the school. The BRAG tracking process had already been introduced for Year 10, and a specific Key Stage 3 focus would commence next academic year.

Pulse Update (previously circulated)

The Principal reported on the positive trends for attendance and behaviour and noted that the school felt positive and staff were doing great work.

The reduction in the number of suspensions and reflections resulted in more children in classes learning and teachers were supported to manage behaviour through purposeful and strategic CPD for classroom strategies and emotion coaching.

Challenge: A committee member suggested an Ofsted readiness session for the committee. The Principal confirmed the Ofsted window opened from September 2026 and expected a visit late in the autumn term. It was agreed to include an Ofsted readiness session on the first meeting of autumn 2026.

Challenge: A committee member suggested ensuring that challenge from committee member discussion was reflected through minutes.

Challenge: It was noted that an example of evidence of good challenge was the challenge on the Triple Science offer.

Challenge: A committee member asked how stretch and challenge was included in the BRAG process. The Principal explained that the BRAG focus was currently on securing the basics at grades 4 and 5. Ms Taberner would be starting work to focus on grades 7+. **The committee member linked to Assessment referred to their visit with Ms Taberner on 25th February 2026 and the associated visit report which addressed discussion on this area.**

In response to a committee member the Principal confirmed that Progress 8 would apply next academic year.

The Principal informed committee members that Ms Taberner's expertise supported a review of the curriculum to ensure courses deliver strong outcomes for the young people alongside having a broad and balanced KS4 offer. The Principal noted that a Design Technology Subject Leader post was being advertised and the specialism of a successful candidate would inform what subjects were offered.

Challenge: A committee member asked if there was a limit in what the school could offer. The Principal explained that there was a need to have a financially viable curriculum offer and have the right young people in the right classes.

Challenge: A committee member questioned the alignment of the Principal reporting projected best ever results against the Pulse report which has predictions well below targets. The Principal reported that he expected the cohort to achieve slightly above the Basics 4+ 62 / Basics 5+ 42 targets with 65 and 42. The Principal added the caveat that with a smaller year group each child was more statistically significant.

The Principal explained that there was a need to focus on outcomes lower down school and actions to remove barriers in KS3 particularly for the vulnerable.

School Development Plan (previously circulated)

The Principal explained that the SDP fed into Subject Development Plans and that some actions would feed into the next academic year.

Challenge: A committee member asked what action was being taken to move the 'close the SEND attainment gap' to green. The Principal reported that he expected the gap to have closed and would finalise the RAG rating when the outcomes were confirmed.

Challenge: A committee member asked if there was adequate support centrally in the city to support work on the SDP. The Principal noted that the school had made a formal complaint to the Local Authority on the lack of support for attendance fines, since then ten Notices to Improve letters had been issued. The Principal noted that there were areas of healthy challenge to the LA and leaders were liaising with key contacts.

In response to a committee member the Principal confirmed that staff survey outcomes would be shared at the July 2026 meeting.

Challenge: A committee member asked if the new members of SLT had settled in well and asked about their wellbeing. The Principal reported that they were very happy in their roles and had a strong level of staff buy-in. The Principal confirmed that their wellbeing was good.

Challenge: A committee member asked about parent buy-in and engagement. The Principal reported that attendance at parents' evenings and 'Slice of Advice' for Year 11 were lower than he would want and work was underway to increase parent engagement. A committee member suggested consideration of supporting families with childcare. The Principal confirmed that they had previously put on a creche for events to support attendance. The Principal reported that he would have expected a higher than 67% attendance at the Year 7 parents evening. The Principal noted that he felt there was a lack of trust with parents but he maintained an open door policy and was confident it would improve.

Challenge: A committee member asked if attendance at online parents evening sessions through Covid supported higher engagement rates. The Principal felt it was important for in school face to face communication and discussed the potential of a hybrid model. Parental engagement would form part of an Associate Assistant Principal role for next year. The Principal emphasised the need to consider removing the barriers for families who were less likely to engage.

Challenge: A committee member asked for an update on The Link. The Principal reported that there had been an inclusion review against the needs of the school. The Link was initially established as an SEMH (Social Emotional Mental Health) provision but the priority need had changed from those at risk of exclusion to young people with SEND who were struggling in KS3 due to working at below age related standards and could therefore not access the KS3 curriculum. Mr Rowe had developed a curriculum offer to support those vulnerable learners working at KS2 standard.

Challenge: A committee member asked how young people at risk of permanent exclusion would be supported. The Principal confirmed that they

would still be supported in The Link up to half term and explained that work across school had removed many of the barriers and where appropriate some young people would have access to Ofsted registered external alternative provision. The Principal invited committee members to visit The Link.

Challenge: A committee member asked for a written rationale of the change in the offer of The Link. The Principal explained that inclusion underpinned the Ofsted framework and explained that the provision would include timetabled intervention alongside support for more dysregulated students. The Principal noted that the best place for any student was in class with a qualified teacher.

Action: Principal to provide a summary on a page of the change in focus of The Link provision.

Principal

Challenge: A committee member asked if the Early Talk for York had impacted the working at levels of those transitioning up to York High School. The Principal was unsure if that work had fed through to secondary level yet but noted there was a Reading audit scheduled for 2nd June 2026.

Challenge: A committee member asked for an update on enrichment attendance and pupil voice. The Principal reported that attendance was good. Ms Taberner had reviewed the offer against the needs of securing outcomes. The initial offer was fantastic but needed to be reduced to support Year 11 intervention. The aim was to ensure attendance at one club per week and a new sign up wave was scheduled. The student leadership team met last week to provide feedback on the enrichment offer.

Challenge: A committee member suggested that communication of the offer and attendance tracking needed to be revisited. The Principal confirmed that work had been done on this and would go live in September. The Principal explained the aim of establishing an interesting offer balanced against capacity and educational outcomes.

Curriculum Update

Year 9 Options

The Principal reported that nine GCSEs would be offered next academic year and the appointment of a Head of IT and Business Studies would put the school in a position to offer GCSE Business Studies and Computer Science next academic year.

Setting / Streaming

The Principal explained that research suggested that statistically setting had a detrimental impact on the lowest attainers. Maths was streamed and next academic year there would be top, mixed and bottom sets in English. The Principal confirmed he did not foresee any other areas of the curriculum that would be streamed in the near future.

Challenge: A committee member asked if streaming was manageable within the timetabling. The Principal confirmed it was, and was confident that moving to streaming for English was the right thing for the young people and allowed for stretch and challenge.

Curriculum Policy (previously circulated)
Noted for information.

Rewards Scheme

Carried over to the July 2026 meeting.

Making School Unmissable Framework (previously circulated)

The Principal reported that work would take place in summer 2 half term and explained that the aim was to have the content of the document lived across school.

Challenge: A committee member suggested finding ways to share elements of the framework with the community.

The Principal added that the '50 Things' at primary school was being used as best practice to develop a pledge for experiences at York High.

The Principal informed the committee that the educational visits offer was being reviewed to ensure any visits were impactful and aligned with the curriculum.

The Principal left the meeting at 7pm.

5. **Chair Feedback / Deep Leadership**

BRAG and Pulse Trends including Attendance and Behaviour (previously circulated)

The Chair reported on attendance trends, noting that the rate had declined from 89% in Week 1 to 81% at the time of Ms Scaum's appointment. Current attendance had since risen to 86%, which the Chair attributed to the positive impact of ongoing strategic interventions.

There had been robust challenges to attendance at the round table and the Principal had presented a strong argument for meeting the 'three year improving trend' element of the Ofsted framework and was working towards a strong start for 2026/27.

The Chair reported that there was an atmosphere of building relationships with young people who presented the greatest displays of behaviour whilst maintaining a level of challenge and expectation. Students had responded positively to the approach.

The Chair acknowledged the improvements currently being delivered across the school and noted that there was still work to do to meet the Principal's goals for the school.

Challenge: A committee member asked if the EBSA provision had impacted attendance.

Action: SEN Link Committee Member to ask about EBSA provision impact to attendance data.

Challenge: A committee member noted that it would be helpful to have access to a breakdown of causes for absence. A committee member noted that local dentist policies had changed to no longer offer appointments for children outside of school hours and suggested that it would be helpful to identify areas of absence that were within the control of the school to impact. The Chair noted that the greatest impact to attendance outside of illness was term time holidays and suspensions. **A committee member noted that there was still a social impact from Covid on the relationship families had with schools.**

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6. Deeps Feedback, Challenge and Support

Deep Learning

Deep Experience

Deep Support

Business Manager Reports

Link Report (previously circulated)

Financial Summary (previously circulated)

Consolidated Account P7 (previously circulated)

There were no questions on the circulated reports.

7. Committee Business

Agenda Planning

The committee referred to the Academy Committee Remit and Strategic Guide and discussed agenda planning going forward as a committee and requested:

- A section on the agenda for a brief (five minute) verbal summary of any committee member visits to school.
- SLT updates
- Chair to drive agenda based on fortnightly meetings with the Principal.
- Principal to attend the full meeting.
- Format to support evidence of effective challenge and support.
- Community
- Making school unmissable.
- SEND funding and impacts to school
- Transition arrangements and relationships building with Westfield Primary School as the most significant feeder primary school.
- Aspirations and opportunity for success.
- Pulse Report - attainment, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding

Challenge: In reference to community engagement and stakeholder voice a committee member asked if York High Families should be reintroduced. The Chair suggested that could form part of an Associate Assistant Principal role.

Action: Chair to discuss York High Families with the Principal.

Action: Governance Advisor to share the Record of Contact form with committee members.

Action: Committee members to inform the Chair if they require updated identification badges and lanyards.

Training (previously circulated)

Committee members were provided with an updated training record.

Panels (previously circulated)

Provided for information.

Code of Conduct Governance Roles (previously circulated)

Provided for information.

Scheme of Delegation (previously circulated)

Chair

Complete

Cttee/
Chair

Provided for information.

8. **Any Other Business**

There were no items for discussion under AOB.

9. **Future Meeting Dates**

Thursday 9th July 2026 6pm

Committee Member Drop In Sessions:
Wednesday 17th June 2026 9.30am - 11am

Governance Network:
Monday 6th July 2026 5.30pm - 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 8pm

York High School Committee Actions

	Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.	3 (5.2.26)	Trends / themes from the staff surveys to be shared with committee members.	Principal	March 26
2.	5 (5.2.26)	Committee members to be given access to ongoing Pulse documents to see trends outside of a committee member meeting.	Principal	February 26
3.	4	Provide a summary on a page of the change in focus of The Link provision.	Principal	July 2026
4.	5	SEN Link Committee Member to ask about EBSA provision impact to attendance data.	V Roddis	July 2026
5.	7	Discuss York High Families with the Principal.	Chair	July 2026
6.	7	Share the Record of Contact form with committee members.	GA	Complete
7.	7	Committee members to inform the Chair if they require updated identification badges and lanyards.	Committee members / Chair	June 2026

July Meeting Agenda Items:

- Poverty Proofing Audit
- Stakeholder Survey Data and Action Plan
- Rewards Scheme
- Reading Audit

Autumn 1 Meeting Agenda Items:

- Ofsted Readiness