

Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation ('Group')

Search and Governance Committee ('Committee')

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 24 February 2026 at 4.00pm at Wakefield College, Executive Meeting Room, WR312 ('Meeting')

Present:

- Andrew McConnell (Chair)
- David Powell
- Tracy Tallant
- Sam Wright (Principal)

In attendance: Head of Governance and Legal Services

Apologies: Dmitry Fedotov

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed those present, noted that the meeting was quorate and had been called in accordance with the Instrument and Articles. Apologies for absence were recorded from Dmitry Fedotov.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. Declarations of interest were invited.
- 2.2. David Powell declared an interest in relation to interview candidate Judith Kidder, having introduced her to the Committee. After careful consideration of the nature of the interest, it was agreed that David would not be required to abstain from voting on this matter.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2025

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2025 were considered.
- 3.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2025 were a true and fair record and were approved.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1. The Committee reviewed actions from the previous meeting, including:
 - 4.1.1. A recommendation relating to David Powell's succession as Chair of the Board. It was noted that this would be put to the Board for approval in July.
 - 4.1.2. The request for a Curriculum and Quality Committee skills mix review which had taken place at the last Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting and resulted in candidates for interview.
 - 4.1.3. Safeguarding training follow-up. It was agreed that this would be addressed later in the Meeting.
 - 4.1.4. The monthly calendar of events for governors. This had been circulated as agreed and an updated calendar would be sent to governors each month.
 - 4.1.5. Review of the Senior Independent Director ('SID') job description, which the Head of Governance and Legal Services indicated he would return to as soon as possible.

5. Board Candidate Interview

- 5.1. The Chair confirmed the interview process and that the Committee would interview candidates for two governor vacancies and a vacancy for a co-opted position on the Curriculum and Quality Committee, with the Committee then deciding whether to recommend appointments to the Board.
- 5.2. The Committee heard an overview of each candidate from the Principal prior to their interview and then held individual interviews with each candidate.
- 5.3. Following the interviews, the Committee discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and the extent to which they met the requisite criteria including the necessary skills identified by the governor skills audit.

6. Membership Update

- 6.1. The Head of Governance and Legal Services provided an update on Board and Committee vacancies and skills needs. He noted a new recruitment need following the resignation of Katie Nicolaou from her shadow governor role. A Board vacancy had been held for Katie and instructions were sought regarding her replacement.
- 6.2. The Committee discussed the Board skills gaps (including estates/property management, technology/AI, and diversity considerations) and noted there were also vacancies within the Curriculum and Quality Committee.
- 6.3. The Committee agreed that the three candidates interviewed should be recommended for appointment (two to the Board and one to the Curriculum and Quality Committee only) and also noted a staff governor appointment (Adam Sawden) and Rachael Martindale (one of the candidates to be recommended for a Board appointment) to the Curriculum and Quality Committee would be included for recommendation.
- 6.4. The Committee also agreed that the Chair should speak with Jayne King about future plans to support forward planning given her first term was due to end before the end of the calendar year.
- 6.5. The Committee discussed recruitment of a Vice Chair for 2026/27. It was agreed that said person did not have to have ambitions to succeed to Chair. Efforts would be made to identify an appropriate Vice Chair candidate.
- 6.6. Questions and answers:
 - 6.6.1. Q: What additional skills should be prioritised for future recruitment?
A: Members discussed the desirability of technology/AI expertise and continuing work on diversity mapping, and the need to consider community/business backgrounds alongside emerging technical needs. The Head of Governance and Legal Services agreed to seek suitable candidates.
- 6.7. IT WAS RESOLVED TO recommend:
- 6.8. The appointment of Julie Lawson and Rachael Martindale to the Board each for a period of four years subject to a one-year probation.

- 6.9. The appointment of Judith Kidder, Rachael Martindale and Adam Sawden to the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

7. Governor Training and Development Plan Update

- 7.1. The Head of Governance and Legal Services provided an update on governor development initiatives and participation and efforts to improve oversight of training.
- 7.2. The Committee noted that much development had been undertaken since the last meeting and acknowledged the personalised training recommendations made to each governor based on skills audit weaknesses.
- 7.3. The Committee discussed ensuring governors completed required safeguarding-related learning, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) reading, and noted that repeated reminders had not resulted in completion for some governors.
- 7.4. Questions and answers:
 - 7.4.1. Q: How should persistent non-completion of safeguarding/KCSIE requirements be addressed?
A: The Chair indicating he would raise the matter with relevant governors when he saw them.

8. Governance Improvement Action Plan Update (including a discussion on the length of meetings)

- 8.1. The Committee noted governance self-assessment themes, including ethical governance and stakeholder engagement.
- 8.2. The Head of Governance and Legal Services introduced a new induction checklist document which, as per the action plan, included a greater emphasis on ethical governance principles and regular induction check-ups during the first year of new governors' terms.
- 8.3. Members were satisfied with the progress made on the plan's actions.
- 8.4. Members discussed the need to evaluate processes such as the buddy scheme and induction, and to ensure the Committee's actions 'held' when tested, while keeping processes proportionate.
- 8.5. IT WAS RESOLVED TO approve the revised induction checklist document.

9. Review of Appraisals Process

- 9.1. The Committee discussed elements of the appraisal and induction paperwork, including the desirability of incorporating structured onboarding feedback for new governors and clarifying how appraisal feedback should be collected for different roles.
- 9.2. Members discussed a pragmatic approach to probation and appraisal, emphasising routine assessment and documenting concerns early to avoid surprises.
- 9.3. Questions and answers:
 - 9.3.1. Q: Should the paperwork include a section for written feedback on induction?
A: Members agreed this would be helpful, particularly for new governors, and that it could sit within induction/training/development wording.
 - 9.3.2. Q: How should appraisal for the Vice Chair be managed?
A: Members noted the need to clarify the process for collecting feedback for the Vice Chair role, potentially through the SID, and to ensure the period under review aligned to the office-holder.

- 9.4. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the appraisal process be approved for 2025/26 including the proposed amended appraisal form subject to the above suggested amendments.

10. Review of Confidential Business

- 10.1. The Committee considered whether historic confidential items could be declassified, noting the principle that items should not remain confidential without good reason.
- 10.2. Members discussed potential redactions where publication could identify individuals responsible for leadership and management during a historic period and noted personal data (including remuneration) would remain confidential as appropriate according to data protection law.
- 10.3. To streamline the process, the Head of Governance and Legal Services agreed to carry out the exercise and present it to members for their review.

11. Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risks

- 11.1. The Committee reflected on the effectiveness of the meeting, noting the need to consider holding interviews (where there are many) separate to Committee meetings.
- 11.2. Members identified risks and considerations including ensuring board skills coverage (particularly estates/property and technology/AI), managing induction and probation processes proportionately, and securing completion of mandatory safeguarding-related learning.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 12.1. The next meeting will be held on 20 May 2026.

Actions

No.	Minute Ref.	Action/Recommendation	Deadline	Responsibility
1	4.1.5	Review the SID job description	The next Committee meeting	Head of Governance and Legal Services
2	6.3	Speak with Jayne regarding future plans to support forward planning.	The next Committee meeting	Chair
3	6.4	Efforts would be made to identify an appropriate Vice Chair candidate.	ASAP	Chair/Head of Governance and Legal Services
4	6.8	Recommend the appointment of Julie Lawson and Rachael Martindale to the Board each for a period of four years subject to a one-year probation	March Board meeting	Chair / Head of Governance and Legal Services
5	6.9	Recommend the appointment of Judith Kidder, Rachael Martindale and Adam Sawden to the Curriculum and Quality Committee.	March Board meeting	Chair / Head of Governance and Legal Services
7	7.4.1	Chair to speak directly with relevant governors regarding completion of	As soon as practicable	Chair

		safeguarding-related requirements (including KCSIE reading).		
9	9.4	Amend appraisal form to include induction feedback.	Next review cycle	Head of Governance and Legal Services
10	10.1 Error! Reference source not found.	Head of Governance and Legal Services to amend historic minutes where confidential items are no longer confidential.	As soon as practicable	All members

Signed:



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Date:

20/05/2026