



MILLTHORPE SCHOOL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors
held in person on Thursday 19th June 2025 at 4.30pm

Present: Kavina Rothenburg (Principal) Abigail Gaines
Trevor Charlton (Vice Chair) James Else
Janet Edgar

In Attendance: Rob Beever (Vice Principal) – *item 3*
Alex Collins (SBM)
Sophie Triffitt (Clerk)

Action

1. **Welcome, Apologies, Declaration of Interests, Any Items for AOB**

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted for Lee Probert and Craig Figures. In the absence of the Chair the Vice Chair chaired the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest to note in relation to the meeting matters.

2. **Minutes of the 8th May 2025 meeting** (previously distributed)

Resolution: The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were approved.

Actions / Matters Arising

There were no actions to update.

3. **Principal Report / Pulse** (previously distributed)

Behaviour and Attitudes Review (previously distributed)

The Vice Principal highlighted that overall, the review was positive. The thorough review process was undertaken by Claire Kitchen, Director of School Improvement and James McGann, Executive Principal with information triangulated with student discussions, conversations with staff and discussion with the Vice Principal.

The Vice Principal noted that it was reassuring that feedback included reference to 'calm, orderly and safe' and that staff felt behaviour was better than the previous year following changes to systems.

The reduction in suspensions for those in receipt of Pupil Premium was recognised and student feedback included comments on how attendance was a priority.

The Vice Principal accepted the feedback in relation to uniform, appearance and punctuality and these had been areas of focus led by a united approach from the Principal down and a clear message of high expectations across all areas of school.

Actions to address feedback on punctuality include having two members of staff in the attendance team (an attendance lead who has returned from maternity leave and admin support to ensure capacity). The attendance team will be based on the late gate to build relationships and manage communications.

In response to a governor the Vice Principal confirmed that half an hour after the start of school day (9.16am for Millthorpe) was considered by the DfE to be recorded as an absence.

The Principal explained that there were two elements to focus on for punctuality, those coming after 9.15am and those in before that but still not on time.

The Vice Principal explained that there was a clear correlation with regular late pupils and the buy in to the whole school offer. Form time had been developed to support students being ready to learn and developing a culture of excellence and it was important students attend on time to access that curriculum.

Challenge: A governor asked what element of absence was post 9.15am lateness. The Vice Principal confirmed that he could access that information and noted that if that cohort of students attended on time it would have a significant impact on attendance data.

Action: Vice Principal to confirm what percentage of absence was due to post 9.15am lateness.

VP

Post meeting note: *The Vice Principal confirmed that the 24/25 YTD attendance marks were AM = 89.3% and PM = 89.4% compared to the same period 23/24 AM = 88.9% and PM = 88.6%. Therefore 0.1% missed the AM mark but got the PM mark. That data did not account for any students going home ill with an I or M coded. The AM mark was for those arriving before 9.15am. If there was a big difference between AM & PM it would show students arriving after 9.15 and picking up only the PM mark.*

Challenge: A governor asked what the key factors were to lateness. The Vice Principal explained that often the young person does not see the value in education but there was also an element of traffic impact and buses being unreliable but there were also a number who live very local. The Principal added that some students had medical needs that could impact punctuality, and the reasons could be very individual.

The Vice Principal informed governors that an attendance strategy was developed by the Attendance Partner and Director of SEND and Safeguarding which included checklists and timelines to use with students and parents to help identify barriers to punctuality and attendance and often they have different views on what those barriers were. The process provides structures to unpick individual barriers. The Principal added that there was no judgement in the process and was focused on how school could help.

Challenge: A governor asked if there was discretion built into the system i.e. for young carers. The Principal confirmed there was and noted that the official young carers had good punctuality. The Vice Principal noted that there were clear rules to follow in terms of recording but there was some discretion in the tracking and process of issuing of fines.

Challenge: A governor asked if there was a comparison against national. The Vice Principal explained that national data was published every six weeks, and the Attendance Partner communicates with schools how they were tracking against that.

The Vice Principal informed governors that there was praise for the students at 100% and those at or above 95%. There had been a focus on events to build a sense of belonging to encourage positive attendance patterns.

The Vice Principal noted that there was a small cohort of students to do work with around repeated suspensions and repeated internal exclusions and developing the attendance process into this area could be powerful to identify barriers and support.

Challenge: A governor noted that the student voice on attendance in the report was clear and asked if there was further scope to utilise student voice. The Vice Principal agreed and suggested that it would be useful to ask students what they want to see and what messaging they found most powerful. The Vice Principal added that to succeed in attendance there was a need for all elements of school to be optimal and felt that the enrichment offer would support that.

Challenge: A governor questioned the amount of time and energy from staff put into getting the young people to tuck their shirts in and asked if there was the opportunity to give some choice with uniform away from the blazer, shirt and tie to make it less of an enforcement requirement. The Principal explained that there was a move to three branded items from September 2025 in line with government guidelines on uniform and there had been a discussion on uniform options and would continue to review.

A governor noted congratulations on the positive comments on the lunchtime queues.

Challenge: A governor suggested that it would be helpful to have authors and context of the report on the document.

Challenge: a governor asked if the process included peer reviews. The Principal confirmed not but noted that it had been discussed about how that could be incorporated in the next review.

The Vice Principal left the meeting at 5.04pm.

Pulse Report

The Principal provided an update on staffing:

- The SENCO, who goes on maternity leave in the autumn had decided to step away from the SENCO role on her return so would move to lead Geography. A Geography teacher would step up as interim leader for the duration of the maternity leave.
- A SENCO had been appointed from an internal candidate and they would have less teaching responsibility (10 hours per fortnight) than the previous SENCO.
- Craig Figures, staff governor, was leaving to relocate.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead was successful in securing a role at City of York Council which was a great opportunity, so a non-teaching DSL advert was currently out.
- The SENCO role would not be part of the leadership team and not appointing to leadership vacancies enabled internal promotions for an Assistant Principal and Vice Principal so every deep area would have a Vice Principal at no additional cost. Three applications were received for Assistant Principal, and a successful candidate was appointed on a one year contract. The Vice Principal interviews were scheduled for 20th June 2025.

Challenge: A governor asked if having no Assistant SENCO would present a business continuity risk. The Principal informed governors that the SEND lead would be training for the qualification from September 2025 and one of the Vice Principals was SENCO trained but agreed future proofing for that role was vital.

Challenge: A governor asked for an update on teaching staff leaving. The Principal informed governors that in addition to Mr Figures relocating there was an English maternity leave being covered internally. Staff turn over was low and the staff survey recognised that it was tough but staff are happy. Two Early Career Teachers would be starting in September for English and Geography.

The Principal reported that the enrichment programme was launched to families and lots of positive e mails were received about the offer. Students would be signing up in form time and sign-up information shared with Year 6 on Monday 23rd June 2025.

Enrichment events included Year 9 Carlton Lodge residential, Year 7 history walking tour, Year 9 graduations, Arts Fest and Prom. Flamingo Land and Yorkshire Wildlife park trips were planned for September.

The Principal noted pride that Millthorpe was the first school in the city to achieve the Young Carers Award.

The Principal noted that deliberate practice had been hugely positive.

4. Educational Performance

There was no update to report.

5. Strategic Plan Reporting

There was no update to report.

6. Safeguarding

There was no update to report.

7. Finance Monitoring

The SBM reported that the DfE had adjusted the funding award in relation to the teacher pay rise which would benefit the budget. The budget plan submitted achieves the 1% surplus for three years. The significant areas for monitoring were pupil numbers and staffing.

The Principal reported that 191 students had been placed for September 2025 start against a PAN (Pupil Admission Number) of 210. Numbers had been impacted by successful appeals to be placed elsewhere and some choosing private school. The Development Plan would include a focus on promotion with the current Year 5 cohort. The Principal explained that she did not want to adjust the PAN but the staffing structure was based on a 210 intake so there was a need to consider how to build a strong reputation and fill all spaces.

A governor suggested sharing the well-regarded enrichment and holistic offer as the school's unique selling point.

8. **iAMCompliant Risk Record**

There was no update to report.

9. **Governor Business**

Deep Learning Link Governor Report (previously distributed)

The link governor summarised the visit report with Mr Baybutt noting that Mr Baybutt had talked about changes that had been made and the link governor had witnessed what was discussed through the classroom visits and saw a calm, orderly corridor environment and Mr Baybutt had an excellent rapport with students.

Update from Trust SEN and Safeguarding Sessions

The SEN and Safeguarding Link Governor attended Trust update sessions delivered by the Director of SEND and Safeguarding. The Inspire Leader also joined the SEN session to provide an update and informed governors that Inspire had applied for registration with Ofsted to be an independent school and they were offering paid for places to CYC.

Challenge: A governor asked if the funding generated from out of Trust places would support the expansion of the provision capacity. The link governor confirmed that question was asked, and they had confirmed they were considering how the provision could support more pupils.

Challenge: A governor noted that through panels it had become clear that it was difficult to secure places at Inspire for young people in the Trust. The Principal confirmed it was and they had to consider carefully which young people to refer and consideration of whether that placement would be better for the young person was a key factor.

The link governor noted that the update highlighted that SEN numbers at Millthorpe were high and emotional issues and bereavement were identified as notable issues at Millthorpe.

The link governor reported that the expertise of the Director of SEND and Safeguarding came through strongly. The Principal added that the Director of SEND and Safeguarding was a significant source of support and advice, and they had built good links with CYC.

Recruitment

Governors discussed how to recruit governors from the local community and agreed to provide wording to be included in the Friends of Rowntree's Park newsletter.

Action: Advertise for governors in the Friends of Rowntree's Park.

AGaines

10. **Policies for Review**

Behaviour Policy (previously distributed)

Challenge: A governor asked if it was a trust wide policy or had school specific elements. The Principal explained that the policy was agreed across the leaders in the Trust and included appendices at the back which allows for areas of individuality.

Challenge: A governor questioned the reasonableness of a child being sent home for a minor uniform infringement particularly given the priority of attendance and punctuality. The Principal explained that was part of the discussion when developing the policy and was included so there was the option if needed / appropriate. The Principal assured governors a young person would not be sent home unless families knew they were going home.

The Principal explained that the policy was trying to cover all eventualities and options.

Challenge. Governors made the following suggestions:

- In reference to 8.1 to 8.3 a governor questioned having specific areas and specific consequence for non-compliance as opposed to that being covered in section 9 consequences. The governor suggested alternative wording of 'compliance dealt with under section 9'.
- Combining 9.11 / 12 / 13 together.
- Reframe use of words like sanctions and detentions as student support mechanisms in section 9.
- 'not simply punitive' wording be changed to 'not punitive'.
- Include intervention points and what interventions might be.

- Stipulate aims of reflection such as deregulation and students to be scaffolded back into classroom including mechanisms of the structure to support students.
- Include procedure for ways students could raise concerns.

The Principal presented the vision, values and Millthorpe way included in appendices.

Challenge: A governor questioned how controllable and measurable it would be to include 'students wear uniform with pride'.

Challenge: A governor suggested that reflecting 'when in the best interest of the child' in the attend everyday aim.

Challenge: A governor questioned if all the children were resilient. The Principal confirmed not, but the intent was that they want them to be resilient and build that into the curriculum to help them. A governor suggested the wording could be 'we build resilience'.

Resolution: Governors agreed the vision, values and Millthorpe way appendices with the understanding that the Principal would recirculate the document with clarified wording.

11. MAT Business

Governance Evening

It was noted that the Trust Governance Evening was scheduled for Monday 7th July 2025.

Scheme of Delegation (previously distributed)

Circulated for information.

School Events

The Principal noted that governors were welcome at school events and invites had been circulated for:

- Year 9 Graduation.
- Trust Staff Awards.
- Arts Fest.

12. Any Other Business

Governors recorded thanks to Mr Charlton at his last meeting as a governor and for his time, commitment and contribution to the school.

13. Future Meetings

Tuesday 21st October 4.30pm
 Tuesday 9th December 4.30pm
 Tuesday 3rd March 4.30pm
 Tuesday 5th May 4.30pm
 Tuesday 16th June 4.30pm

Meeting end time 6.18pm.

Approved by governors at the LGB meeting on 16th October 2025

Approval

Action Plan following the Meeting of the Local Governing Body on Tuesday 19th June 2025

	Action	Agenda	Person	Date
1.	Vice Principal to confirm what percentage of absence was due to post 9.15am lateness.	3	Mr Beever	July 2025
2.	Advertise for governors in the Friends of Rowntree's Park.	9	A Gaines	July 2025

Future Agenda Items

June Meeting	September Meeting