



MILLTHORPE SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd March 2026

Present: Kavina Rothenburg (Principal) James Else
 Janet Edgar (Chair) Emily Dowkes
 Iain Farrell Jordan Wright
 Abigail Gaines

In attendance: Hannah Boyd (Vice Principal - Deep Experience)
 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 Danil Sawalhi-Leckenby, David O'Brien and Lauren Braid. Emily Dowkes joined the meeting virtually. James Else had informed the board that he would join the meeting late. <i>Items were taken out of order to allow the Vice Principal to present her items first.</i> <u>Year 9 Options</u> The Vice Principal provided an update on the Year 9 options process and explained that the previous three-pathway system had been changed to four blocks. This change was made to better support staffing levels and the delivery of languages. One subject had been removed from Block A to accommodate 16 students identified as requiring additional English and Maths support. Families were consulted through one-to-one conversations and had expressed appreciation for this targeted intervention. Of the 209 students in Year 9, the overwhelming majority had been allocated their first preferences. The Inclusion Team was working with smaller groups to ensure the right package was in place for every student. The Principal noted that there had been clear communication from the start of the process which had significantly supported family understanding of the process. The final subject allocations would be communicated to families during the summer term. The Vice Principal informed governors that the same number of language groups as the current Year 11 cohort had been retained. Subject Leaders were reviewing all lists to ensure student choices were appropriate, with a specific focus on SEND and Disadvantaged students. Three students currently do not meet the EBacc bucket requirements and leadership was reviewing this to ensure the best outcome for those individuals. Challenge: A governor asked what the maximum number of subjects a student could take was. The Vice Principal confirmed that most students took eight subjects, while the intervention group would take seven.	



Challenge: A governor asked if there was enough challenge for high performers. The Vice Principal confirmed that the school offers GCSE Statistics and Further Maths to ensure high-attaining students were sufficiently stretched.

Challenge: A governor asked if the block system forced a student to take a language or a creative subject. The Vice Principal confirmed not.

Challenge: A governor asked how the RE provision was made for those who did not choose it as an option. The Vice Principal confirmed that RE coverage was taught through Personal Development lessons in Year 10 and Year 11.

Challenge: A governor asked if the recent decision on RE in Northern Ireland would impact the approach in England. The Principal confirmed that it could, this had been considered and informed the current approach within Personal Development lessons.

Challenge: A governor asked what extra support was provided to ensure students choose the right options while still respecting their autonomy. The Principal confirmed that leaders hold individual conversations to ensure the package is right for the student. The Science Leader will also review students selecting Triple Science to ensure suitability.

The Vice Principal noted that a larger than expected number of students would receive their first preference, and very few students or families had expressed uncertainty.

Challenge: A governor asked if a student started Year 10 and struggled whether there was an option to change or drop a subject. The Vice Principal explained that the school would review these instances on a case by case individual basis.

Challenge: A governor asked if there would be changes for the current Year 8 when they reach their Year 9 options. The Vice Principal explained that the intent was to maintain the buckets that provide a broad curriculum with grouped skills, moving toward the new requirements for the following academic year.

Challenge: A governor asked if there was an alternative to Child Development, such as Health and Social Care. The Principal noted that Child Development had been removed from the block with no pushback from families. Leadership was currently exploring the introduction of Health and Social Care under that department's curriculum umbrella.

Recognition Strategy (previously circulated)

The Vice Principal presented an update on the school's revised approach to student recognition, emphasising a shift toward celebrating achievement over rewards.

Since the launch of Class Charts the school had maintained a 97–98% green school status and students were highly aware of the green tray and the impact of positive points. Subject recognition was focused on recognising students who had gone above and beyond over a term or had demonstrated a journey of growth. The approach was consistent across all year groups and engagement with families had increased through Recognition Phone Calls and a well attended Christmas celebration event. The system includes an end of the week positive top-up for students who had maintained a full week of exclusively positive entries. Assembly shout-outs were also used for subject specific recognition.

The Vice Principal explained that she conducted regular data reviews to ensure all student groups were represented and current data shows that gaps were minimal, and in many instances, vulnerable subgroups were outperforming their peers in recognition metrics.



	Challenge: A governor checked if the recognition phone calls that were mentioned in the document were to parents and families, because it did not state this. The Vice Principal confirmed that phone calls to families were a standard part of the recognition process and the document would be updated to reflect this. Challenge: A governor asked if good attendance was rewarded / recognised. The Vice Principal confirmed that attendance was rewarded but noted that the school was currently reviewing the wording around attendance recognition. This was to ensure students who legitimately cannot achieve 100% attendance (due to medical or other valid reasons) were not unfairly excluded from recognition. Challenge: A governor asked if for students unable to attend there was an award / recognition for engagement with learning from home. The Vice Principal confirmed not. Challenge: A governor asked how the school addressed the potential sense of unfairness for those quiet students who consistently did the right thing but may be overlooked. The Vice Principal noted that this was a core focus of the leadership pitch for an Associate Leader post and the end of the week top-up was specifically designed to ensure those who consistently received positive marks received some recognition. Challenge: A governor asked if Class Charts successfully captured those who were able and engaging positively without being prominent. The Vice Principal was confident that it did, the system allowed for the recognition of consistent, quiet engagement that might have been missed in previous systems. Challenge: A governor suggested that striving for excellent attendance would be a better way to frame attendance as a child who missed one day early in the term would otherwise feel they can never achieve the 100% goal. The Vice Principal acknowledged that positive framing was essential to keep students motivated throughout the term regardless of individual absences. The Governing Board recorded its thanks to the Vice Principal for her significant work on both recognition and options, and also asked for thanks to be passed on to the Associate Leader for her contributions The Vice Principal left the meeting at 5.09pm.	
2.	Governance <u>Link Governor Roles</u> (previously circulated) Carried over to the next meeting. <u>Panels</u> (previously circulated) Governors noted that the number of suspensions had reduced. <u>LGB Drop In</u> (previously circulated) A governor provided a report on their attendance at the Governor Drop In and meetings with the Director of Estates and Director of School Improvement. The governor noted that the relationship between the Trust and LGB was discussed. The Chair explained that there was a paper due from the Trust Board which would provide clarity on the role of governors. The Chair informed governors that on the 16th March 2026 she and the Principal would be attending a round table meeting with the CEO, COO and Director of School Improvement.	



3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 9th December 2025 <i>(previously circulated)</i> Resolution: Governors agreed the 9th December 2025 minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting and they were approved subject to the reference to IAT being updated to 'entry level English qualification' <u>Matters Arising and Action Plan</u> Action 1: It was confirmed that the action was picked up as part of the governor drop in discussion with the Director of Estates.	
4.	Principal Feedback The Principal reported that the maternity cover for the Attendance Officer post had started on the 2nd March 2026. An English teacher had submitted their resignation and interviews would be held on Monday 9th March 2026. A Teaching Assistant 2 had been upgraded to a TA3 post and would lead the Learning Support Classroom which would release some SEND Lead capacity to focus on Phonics. The Principal reported that attendance was reporting at 89.3%, 1.24% less than the same period last year. Year 7 was reporting low attendance. The data was in line with national average and put the school fifth out of the nine schools in the city. The Principal reported that suspensions were tracking positively compared to the previous year (45 fewer for the same period last year) and was the third lowest in the city The Principal reported that 198 places had been allocated for Year 7 September 2026 against a Published Admission Number of 210. This year group was a low birth year and whilst there had been an increase in first place choices (182) the current Year 7 at 190 and the incoming Year 7 at 198 presented staffing challenges and would need to review what model would be financially viable while meeting student need. The Principal reported that there had been a significant amount of work on Pupil Premium and would provide a report at the next meeting on the gaps of greatest concern. The Principal met with the Vice Principal to identify young people for mentoring for a range of needs such as homework and enrichment. Governors were invited to attend the Night at the Musicals performance on 24th and 25th March 2026. A governor noted that boys were currently maintaining higher attendance rates than girls which was a reversal of historical norms. The Principal explained that the cohort of significantly low attenders had a majority of girls and where appropriate external agencies were engaged; however, even if a student was receiving tutoring through the Local Authority at home they could not be marked as attending. <u>Pulse Update</u> <i>(previously circulated)</i> There were no questions on the Pulse Report. <u>Year 9 Options</u> Update provided earlier in the meeting. <u>Recognition Strategy</u> <i>(previously circulated)</i> Update provided earlier in the meeting.	



Year 11 Checkpoint 2 Data

The Principal informed governors that the school had transitioned data systems to Arbor and provided an update of the current Year 11 data.

English was targeted at 75% (Grade 4+) with a current prediction of 73%.

Maths was targeted at 75% (Grade 4+) with a current prediction of 53%.

The Principal noted that predicted Grade 4+ and 5+ outcomes across the board were expected to be higher than National Averages. The BRAG (Blue, Red, Amber, Green) rating system was proving effective and there was a strong match-up between subjects which suggested consistent assessment across departments.

The Pupil Premium (PP) gap had improved compared to the previous year and was currently better than the National Average. While the Grade 5+ PP figure was down the Grade 4+ PP data was currently 12% above the national average.

The Vice Principal, Deep Learning, was utilising data to lead targeted family meetings and identify students for bespoke revision sessions. Every subject had mapped out required revision topics with direct links to resources for students.

Students achieving higher grades in Maths than in their open bucket subjects would sit a Statistics GCSE, this would improve the Attainment 8 (A8) score and provide students with an additional high grade.

The Principal highlighted attendance as a challenge for Year 11 who had the lowest attendance across the school. While many students had improved their attendance recently, a significant number remained at 0% attendance, impacting the overall average. The Principal noted that the year group was made up of amazing young people but noted they were a complex cohort that appeared to have been significantly impacted by the long-term effects of the pandemic.

Challenge: A governor asked if the school supported students who speak other languages to take home language qualifications. The Principal confirmed this was supported and the EAL Champion was currently assisting students in navigating these qualifications.

Challenge: A governor asked if the challenge seen in this Year 11 cohort was reflected at other local schools. The Principal confirmed that there was a city-wide trend; Year 11 and Year 9 cohorts across York were currently presenting similar challenges, though contexts vary by school.

Challenge: A governor asked if there were high achievers in the cohort. The Principal confirmed there were many very high achieving students within the year group despite the broader attendance and engagement challenges.

Challenge: A governor asked how the school was marking the end of their journey at Millthorpe. The Principal confirmed that information regarding the Year 11 Prom and Celebration events had been distributed to families to encourage positive engagement in the final term.



	A governor formally recognised the extensive work being undertaken by staff to drive attendance improvements under difficult circumstances. Action: Year 11 data report to be sent out to all governors.	KR
5.	SBM Report There was no update to report. A governor noted that questions raised at the previous meeting on Health and Safety actions had been discussed at the governor drop in and the Director of Estates had confirmed the school could action the Health and Safety actions.	
6.	Governor Feedback: Deep Leadership <u>Visit Reports 8th December 2025 & 23rd February 2026 (previously circulated)</u> The link governor reported that the visit included a focus on enrichment uptake and noted that every pupil who did not attend would be spoken to to understand the reasons. SEND uptake was 50% and the governor suggested reviewing activities that may attract more SEND pupils. The migration to Arbor was discussed and had gone well. The governor noted that achievements for some pupils who do not want images in the newsletter were recognised privately. Challenge: A governor asked what the cost of the Duke of Edinburgh went towards. The Principal confirmed that an outside company was used to facilitate the Duke of Edinburgh and there were insurance costs. The link governor reported that visit discussion focused on student leadership roles, student personal development files, school ten things to do target, girls attendance, introduction of staff appraisal for support staff, questions on Trust encouragement for teachers to follow formal qualifications, there was 96% parent approval from Year 9 Progress Evening parent surveys and strong attendance at parents evenings. Challenge: A governor asked if staff were trained as formal examiners. The Principal confirmed there were trained staff.	
7.	Governor Feedback: Deep Learning <u>EAL Strategy (previously circulated)</u> The Principal presented the EAL strategy and confirmed there was an EAL Champion in school to integrate young people into the life of the school. It was suggested that Mr Baybutt be invited to attend a future meeting to update governors on the impact of the EAL strategy. James Else joined the meeting at 5.45pm.	



8.	Governor Feedback: Deep Experience <u>Visit Report</u> <i>(previously circulated)</i> The Link governor provided an update on the link report and discussed the use and refinement of language used with students i.e. punitive language against supportive language. The Principal confirmed that the Behaviour Policy was developed collaboratively by the secondary Principals and the CEO. A governor noted that the policy did not reference guidance and support which would reflect the actual practice in school. The link governor enjoyed their walk around school but reflected that it was an intensive experience and suggested that at their next visit they would like to see the opportunities and strategies for reflection / time for students to collect themselves. The Principal confirmed that part of the teaching strategy was to give thinking time, there were sharing opportunities which gives space for processing and each lesson has independent practice. There were also five minute official movement times to move between lessons. The Principal confirmed that they would reflect on the feedback in the report and discuss with the Vice Principal opportunities to refine language. <u>Pupil Premium & Disadvantaged</u> The link governor noted that they would like to look at Pupil Premium oversight with the Principal and spend time talking to pupil leaders. The Principal confirmed pupil leaders were aligned to the Deep areas. <u>Personal Development</u> <u>Careers & Aspirations</u> There was no update to report.	
9.	Governor Feedback: Deep Support <u>Child Protection & Safeguarding</u> There was no update to report. <u>SEND</u> <u>White Paper Summary</u> <i>(previously circulated)</i> The SEND link governor provided an update from attending the SEND NGA Network Event for information. <u>Behaviour and Attitudes</u> <u>Attendance</u> <u>Visit Report</u> <i>(previously circulated)</i> The link governor reported that the visit focused on attendance monitoring and looked at case studies of how students were tracked through the system. There was a real depth of energy committed to the attendance strategy and every student matters. The link governor noted that it was positive that an Attendance Officer had been appointed. The link governor had been provided, from the Trust, with a list of suggested questions to ask about attendance and that would inform the next visit.	
10.	School Policies There were no policies for review.	



11.	MAT Update The Chair noted the round table meeting on 16th March 2026.	
12.	Any Other Business <u>Mobile Phones - DfE non statutory guidance</u> Challenge: A governor had shared the guidance and asked for the school approach to mobile phones. The Principal explained that another local school had invested in lock bags for phones and were reporting a positive impact but this was a costly initiative. The Principal was confident that the school had a strong policy and it would be rare for a young person to have their phone out in school. If the phone was seen or heard it would be taken to be picked up at the end of the day but this was not a significant concern as the expectations were clear. <u>Year 7</u> Challenge: A governor noted the range of intervention for some difficult circumstances for the Year 7 cohort and asked if there were any other options of support that did not require parent permissions. The Principal confirmed not and added that Year 7 were a lovely year group and that the high number of suspensions were from a small number of children. <u>Governor Thanks</u> The Principal recorded thanks to governors for their time and commitment to the meeting preparation and school visits. <u>Chair</u> The Chair explained that in September 2025 they took on the interim role as Chair with the plan to run a chair appointment process as part of the May 2026 meeting. Governors reflected that the Chair had done an excellent job and would support them continuing for the remainder of the academic year. It was agreed to review the chair role as part of the usual cycle for next academic year.	
13.	Future Meeting Dates: Tuesday 5th May 4.30pm Tuesday 16 th June 4.30pm Governor Drop In Sessions: Wednesday 17th June 2026 9.30am - 11am Governance Network: Tuesday 9th June 2026 5.30pm - 7.30pm	

The meeting closed at 6.10pm

Approved by Committee Members on Tuesday 5th May 2026

Approval



**MILLTHORPE SCHOOL LGB – 3rd MARCH 2026
ACTION PLAN**

	Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.	4	Year 11 data report to be sent out to all governors.	Principal	Complete

May 2026

Pupil Premium - gaps and actions to address

June 2026

EAL strategy impact - Mr Baybutt

APPROVED