

PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the physical meeting held on 9 June 2025 at 6pm

Present physically at Exning Primary School:	A Friend	D Murphy, parent member
	A Goodfellow, Vice Chair	H Arnold (part)
	B Needham	J Wyn-Beer
	D Bicker, Chair	O Lambert

Present virtually:

In Attendance:	E Hardy, Co-Headteacher
	J Clark, Regional Director – Primaries
	N Warren, Deputy Headteacher
	R Clifford, Deputy Headteacher
	S Gales, Governance Professional
	E Bonnelykke, Headteacher at Stanton Community Primary School (observing)

Apologies: M Ley

Absent: J Malone

Action

1. Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence

Members recognised their declared interests and no other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies for absence were received from M Ley. The absence of J Malone was noted.

The Chair welcomed E Bonnelykke from Stanton Community Primary School as an observer.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 3 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting on 3 March 2025 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

The Governance Professional **noted** that A Goodfellow has been appointed Vice Chair by the Trust Board at their meeting on 27 March 2025.

3. Matters arising from the meeting on 3 March 2025

All of the six matters arising from the previous meeting were complete.

J Clark informed that Exning plans to migrate to a new assessment system for 2025/26 and confirmed that the new system has improve reporting so will improve communication to families.

4. Governance Deep Dives and First-Hand Feedback

Members discussed the feedback from the deep dives in the spring term and so far in the summer term.

Members received and considered the deep dive reports for writing.

H Arnold summarised the findings of the Writing deep dive completed in April 2025. H Arnold noted that Writing links to the Quality of Education sections of Exning Primary School's 2024/25 School Development Plan and commended the strength of the school's approach and noted there was evidence that teaching of writing is having a positive impact both in student engagement and their behaviour in class.

H Arnold explained that staff regularly undertake 'book looks' and complete moderation and standardization, to review the consistency of standards across the school. H Arnold explained that this supports staff to develop a common understanding of what age-expected work looks like, which helps staff to develop confidence in their assessment skills.

H Arnold explained how immersive writing techniques are used by teachers to effectively engage students and leads to noticeable improvements in the quality of their writing.

Members queried how Miss Bartlett (the new Writing subject lead) is settling in. H Arnold confirmed that Miss Bartlett spoke positively about her role and the support she receives from the school.

J Clark informed that the recent Local Authority moderator visit on 4 June 2025 provided external validation in relation to Writing and fed back that the moderator was impressed by Miss Bartlett's deep knowledge of her students and their abilities, as this gives assurance about her assessment judgements.

Members queried if there were any concerns arising from the Writing deep dive and whether the 'actions needed' have been accepted. H Arnold confirmed there were no concerns, and the actions identified were already in progress. J Clark confirmed that the actions have been accepted and integrated into the school's improvement plans.

The Chair thanked H Arnold for her report and, reflecting that D Murphy attended the deep dive to observe as part of his induction, queried how D Murphy found the deep dive process. D Murphy fed back that he was impressed by the thoroughness of the process and the expertise and experience of Miss Bartlett.

E Hardy informed that the Design Technology deep dive did not take place as planned and will be rescheduled in 2025/26.

Members received a verbal update on the deep dive report for Attendance which had been uploaded to GovernorHub after the paper circulation date.

A Goodfellow summarised the findings of the Attendance deep dive which took place in June 2025. A Goodfellow reflected that Exning Primary School has recently transitioned from SIMS to Arbor and that training is still being carried out in readiness for 2025/26.

A Goodfellow informed that attendance remains high and above the national average.

A Goodfellow explained how the school monitors and tracks attendance and commended the robust processes of school leaders to analyse attendance data.

A Goodfellow explained that while it is positive that the number of penalty notices has reduced, the criteria for issuing penalty notices has recently been relaxed, hence we cannot necessarily infer that the school's interventions are the sole cause of the improvement.

A Goodfellow explained how the school proactively communicates with families about attendance and gave examples of the impact these communications have in relation to improving attendance. A Goodfellow commended the school's consistent, supportive and fair approach.

A Goodfellow reflected that, as children below school-age do not receive penalty notices, there has been a significant increase of below school-age absences this academic year which we need to monitor to ensure these absence patterns do not continue as the children progress through the school.

Members discussed that below school-age absences are an emerging trend nationally as families are seeking to maximise their opportunity for non-penalised term-time holidays and reflected that we need to continue to communicate to families the importance of attendance and the longitudinal adverse impact of gaps in primary-aged learning.

Members queried whether attendance has returned to pre-pandemic levels. J Clark informed that nationally attendance is increasing, however the sector feel it is unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels.

The Chair informed that a deep dive for Maths is scheduled for 11 June 2025 and a deep dive for SEND is scheduled for 25 June 2025. The Chair invited Stanton Primary School governance members to attend these deep dives as part of their induction.

Members queried whether there are deep dive of each subject every year. J Clark informed that all core subjects and SEND are reviewed annually and that other subjects are reviewed on a rolling basis. E Hardy explained that, irrespective of whether a governance member is participating in the deep dive, all subjects complete a deep dive review annually to reflect on impact/student outcomes, any student/staff/moderator feedback, and the subject's strengths and areas for further development.

Members discussed that, with new governance members joining, it would be helpful to have guidance/a summary sheet to guide governance members on how to conduct a deep dive effectively. J Clark/E Hardy to provide.

J Clark
E Hardy

Members discussed their subject link areas and queried if it would be possible to discuss the subject link allocation, so governance members can change subject areas to broaden their knowledge/experience/understanding over time. J Clark/E Hardy to provide suggested deep dive schedule for 2025/26 at the next meeting in readiness for members to discuss and agree subject link allocation.

J Clark
E Hardy

5. **PE and Sports Premium impact report**

Members received and considered the report provided which summarised the PE and Sports Premium spend at Exning Primary School in 2024/25.

J Clark explained how the spend is used at Exning Primary School and what the spend can/cannot be used for.

Members queried if the school's Year 6 swimming outcomes aligned to national outcomes. J Clark confirmed that they do.

Members discussed the bulleted list on page 1 and queried what was meant by 'support and engage the least active children in physical activities'. R Clifford-Turner explained that this links to supporting children with SEN to engage in sporting activities and ensuring inclusivity.

Members discussed objectives 7 and 10 and queried what was included in 'travel expenditure', given minibs costs are listed separately. E Hardy explained this covers travel costs for staff to attend sports related training.

Members queried whether the 'compete' section on page 2 includes the sporting successes of students at out-of-school activities. J Clark confirmed that it doesn't and explained that the school does not currently record this data.

6. **Wraparound Childcare Provision impact report**

Members received, considered and **noted** the report provided.

Members commended the strength of the report and provision.

Update on 2024/25 academic year **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

7. **Headteacher's Report**

Members received and considered the report provided which summarised highlights so far in the spring term, provided an update on school staffing and staff CPD, an update on the school development plan, safeguarding arrangements and attendance analysis, as well as an update on integration into the Trust.

Members queried whether, when Stanton Primary School joins the Trust, the School Development Plans will be a combined or separate for each school. J Clark confirmed that each school will have its own School Development Plan, however informed they will likely have some shared objectives (e.g. embedding sustainability) and use the same format.

Members queried whether Exning Primary School has sought stakeholder feedback on their experience of the school integrating into the Trust. N Warren confirmed that questions on this are included in the parent and staff survey which are currently live.

Members discussed how the School Development Plan objectives are identified and agreed, and what targets/benchmarks are used to measure improvement. J Clark, E Hardy and N Warren talked through examples of how these are identified in collaboration with staff and progress is monitored, and how these link to deep dive areas.

Members discussed the format of the Headteacher's Report with the embedded School Development Plan.

Members reflected that this format makes it difficult to see progress over time and impact; and discussed other ways of presenting the data, such as using RAG rating and a tabular format showing progress over each half-term. Members asked school leaders to work with the Trust's quality team to review the format of the 'primary' School Development Plan template for 2025/26, to help the Committee focus discussions on critical areas.

J Clark
E Hardy
R Bamford

Members asked that future reports explain any acronyms used.

E Hardy

H Arnold left the meeting at 7.20pm

SAFEGUARDING

8. Termly report (Spring 2025)

Members received and considered the paper provided, and D Bicker (as Trustee lead for Safeguarding – Primaries) discussed the key points.

Members discussed the concerns by month graph on page 9 and queried why there is such variation over the year, represented by the peaks and troughs. N Warren explained that the data is impacted by the school holidays e.g. lower numbers of concerns in the months where there are half terms, Christmas, Easter and summer break.

Members queried the severity of the two instances of bullying and what actions had been taken in response. N Warren explained that these were low-level isolated incidents and summarised the support provided to the victim and interventions taken with the perpetrator, and confirmed that there have been no further instances.

Members queried if the higher levels of reported concerns raised compared to previous years on page 2 indicate emerging trends or better reporting. N Warren explained that these relate to more proactive reporting of concerns by staff and noted that the number of MARFs, open CYPS cases and LADO referrals has reduced this year.

Members queried the differences between the 'parental concern' and 'parental conduct' concern categories on page 10. N Warren explained that 'parental concern' is for concerns raised by a parent and 'parental conduct' is for concerns about a parent's behaviours.

Members reflected that the graphs on pages 9 and 10 do not show proportionality of concerns e.g. number of concerns vs. school cohort, number of concerns vs. number of students causing concern, etc. so it is challenging to interpret trends from the data. N Warren agreed and informed of plans to change the reporting system to improve reporting. N Warren also informed of plans to further reduce the number of concern categories and to provide training to staff to ensure that staff's reporting approach is consistent. The Governance Professional informed that for 2025/26 the template for this report will be reviewed and updated to help show trends and the report will be reviewed by the Student Services Board which includes the highly experienced Group's safeguarding leaders, and the Trustee leads for Safeguarding, so this report can be scrutinised and recommended to this Committee.

Members reflected on the current practice at Exning Primary School and queried how the school's approach and actions are informed by emerging safeguarding trends. N Warren gave examples of how sessions are tailored because of emerging trend data e.g. topics such as online safety.

9. Risk Register Extract

Members received and considered the paper provided which included 0 red, 4 amber and 1 yellow risks.

Members discussed appendix 1 and **recommend** that the Audit and Risk Management Committee review the Impact/Likelihood matrix definitions, as these currently focus on finances, and should include qualitative consequences as well e.g. 5 – Severe Impact (Graded Inadequate/Ineffective), 3 or 4 – Moderate or Major Impact (risk to student outcomes/ experience/reputation).

Members discussed EEGT004 (relating to Ofsted) and the Governance Professional informed that this relates to 'primary' as post-academisation Exning Primary School is due for re-inspection by Ofsted.

Members discuss EEG019 (relating to capacity to meet needs) and noted that Exning Primary School has a fixed PAN and is at capacity. Moreover while there is a risk that The Hive is at/over-capacity and, due to limited SEN placements, this could result in the Local Authority admitting students with higher-needs which the school cannot meet, this is an environmental risk which we cannot mitigate. Members **recommend** that the Audit and Risk Management Committee remove this risk from 'primary' and review the mitigations, as these solely relate to the post-16 settings.

Members queried how these risks were identified, monitored and assigned to the Committees. The Governance Professional explained the process and informed that the Senior Executive Team regularly review the risks and mitigations.

10. Policies

- i. **Children with health needs who cannot attend school physically Policy**
- ii. **Supporting children with medical conditions Policy**

Members received and considered the policies provided.

Members reflected that these policies are still in the old format and **recommend** that these become 'Primary' policies, applying to both Exning Primary School and Stanton Primary School.

E Bonnelykke to review and confirm agreement to them applying at Stanton for 2025/26.

Members **approved** the policies and **delegated authority** to S Hope to convert the policies into the Trust's 'Primary' format and amend the wording to apply to both Exning and Stanton schools. Members **agreed to recommend** the policies to the Trust Board for approval.

11. Any other business

- **Learning and Attainment style meetings**

Members queried whether there were plans to hold an additional annual meeting to analyse the school performance data, akin to the Learning and Attainment Committee meetings when Exning Primary School was a maintained school. The Chair explained that this Committee's remit is akin to the Learning and Attainment Committee and so there is no need to convene an additional meeting for this purpose.

J Clark explained that once Exning Primary School transitions to the new assessment system, data reporting to this Committee will be clearer. J Clark noted this will remove the need for a standalone prior meeting to review/refine the data coming to this Committee.

J Clark explained that we will deliver training on understanding the assessment data reports, spotting trends and give examples of effective support/challenge. The Governance Professional noted that at the next meeting, we will review the outcomes and performance of each primary school, which will support governance members to understand the context of each school and their data.

A&RMC

A&RMC

E Bonnelykke

S Hope

- **2025/26 meeting dates on Tuesdays?**

Members discussed the proposed change of dates from Mondays to Tuesdays. The Chair, Governance Professional and J Clark to discuss and agree 2025/26 meeting dates.

Chair, J Clark
Gov. Prof.

- **Developing additional SEN units**

J Clark informed of plans to create new SEN units at Stanton Primary School to open in September 2025 for Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 aged students.

Members queried if there are plans to create new SEN units at Exning Primary School and whether these plans will be communicated to families and the local community. J Clark explained we are exploring options to develop a new SEN unit for Key Stage 2 aged students; however it is very early. J Clark confirmed that as/if the project develops the school will communicate with stakeholders. The Governance Professional reminded members that discussions at meetings are confidential and, pursuant to the code of conduct, members should not discuss items with parents or the wider public unless given authority by the Chair and school leadership team.

- **Maintenance of the school**

Members queried who to contact about concerns about the maintenance of Exning Primary School. The Governance Professional informed that concerns should be raised with the school leadership team and escalated to herself if the concerns raised were ongoing and unresolved by the school leadership team.

The meeting closed at 8.18pm