



Fountaindale School Academy Council Meeting
Thursday 10 July 2025 at 09:30am
Fountaindale School, Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 5BA

Those Present:	Role	Initials
Gayle Bowmer	Deputy Safeguarding Lead Staff Governor (Support)	GB
Michelle Carr	Governor	MC
Chris Evans	Headteacher	CE
Rachel Mendham	Parent Governor	RM
Sacha Schofield	Executive Regional Director - Chair	Chair
Jacky Tattershall	Governor	JT
Paula Williams	Executive Regional Director	PW
Also Present:		
Rebecca Horne	Governance Clerk	RH
Apologies:		
Julie Bullock	Staff Governor - Teaching	JB
No Apologies		
Nick Parr	Parent Governor	NP

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
1.1. To receive apologies for absence Apologies were received from JB. Apologies were not received from NP.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence Apologies were accepted from JB.	
2. BEST WE CAN BE AWARDS	
2.1 Best We Can Be Awards To be removed of future meeting agendas. Action: Clerk to remove from future agendas.	ACTION: Clerking Services 11/07/25
3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
3.1 Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered	
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
4.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda. None.	
5. FOUNTAINDALE ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNANCE MINUTES	
5.1 To approve the minutes of the following meeting: The minutes of the Academy council meeting held on 28 March 2025 were approved as a true record.	
5.2 Review of Action Tracker The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.	
5.3 Matters arising from the Minutes. 3.1 Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered. Following the Spring Academy Council meeting, NP and MC were contacted to confirm whether they still wished to continue in their role as governor, due to ongoing non-attendance. NP did not attend the summer meeting, marking three consecutive meetings without attendance. As a result, the Clerk will escalate the matter to the Governance Team for further discussion. Action: Clerk to liaise with the Governance Team regarding the	Action: Clerk 10/07/25

<p>potential recruitment of a new Parent Governor, due to continued non-attendance.</p> <p>6.4 School Calendar</p> <p>SSc suggested that CE consider keeping the Governors in mind for any special events, as they may want to attend. Action – CE to email SSc and PW of any special events that may take place at the school well in advance.</p>	<p>Action: CE 04/12/25</p>
<p>6. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED</p>	
<p>6.1 Headteacher Report</p> <p>CE provided an overview for the Headteacher Report.</p> <p>The school’s Deputy Headteacher has recently left their post. Following a recruitment process, a new Deputy Headteacher has now been appointed.</p> <p>A new Assistant Headteacher has been appointed at the school and will take up the post on 1 September 2025.</p> <p>CE reported that work to develop and extend the old residential rooms began in April. The original completion date was proposed as 22 August; however, it is now reported that the project is 2–3 weeks behind schedule.</p> <p>SSc asked, will this have an impact on the children in September? CE responded; it won’t have an impact because the overall numbers aren’t going up.</p> <p>SSc raised a query regarding the persistently high staff sickness levels and asked CE whether there is a strategy in place to address this? CE responded that the school follows all relevant guidance and policies related to sickness absence, including conducting stage meetings as appropriate. CE also noted that they have recently received data from HR to compare the school's sickness rates with those of other schools.</p> <p>PW suggested that it may be helpful to invite CE to a meeting with HR in September to explore the types of demands placed on staff in school, including service care needs and medical needs, and how these factors impact staff. PW noted that several other schools are experiencing similar levels of staff absence and HR is currently looking into this more broadly. PW will send an invitation to CE for the meeting. Action – PW to invite CE to the meeting with HR in September in relation to sickness absence.</p> <p>CE highlighted the new Level 5 Teaching Apprenticeship being delivered by Nexus. Three members of staff expressed an interest in the programme; however, due to the impact on staffing and time out of class, the school is only able to support one candidate. Claire Garbutt from Nexus MAT visited the school to carry out a formal interview process with the three applicants. One member of staff was successful and will begin the apprenticeship in September. This is a two-year course and is equivalent to a foundation degree.</p>	<p>Action: PW 04/12/25</p>

SSc asked, is there an opportunity for those other people to join at a later date?

CE responded, yes possibly.

CE highlighted the training days for 2024/25 and 2025/26 which were included in the Headteacher Report.

Quality of Education

CE added a summary of the quality of teaching to the report, as previously requested. This summary was included as an appendix. The support, guidance, and lesson observations that had been arranged have clearly had a positive impact on the specific areas of concern.

CE reported that a significant amount of work has gone into curriculum development over the past year. The updated curriculum will be rolled out in September.

SSc asked when the school is planning to align the next steps and whether this will be used as the assessment model from September?

CE responded that the next steps have already been used to align pupils according to where they would be within the framework.

CE reported that the Sports Premium is being done differently this year with JB working on this.

SSc asked whether there were any ideas in mind for larger projects related to pupil premium funding?

CE, noted that during the recent inspection, lunchtime clubs were in place, but it remains challenging to offer extracurricular clubs outside of school hours due to transport issues. A key shortfall identified was the lack of targeted provision specifically for pupil premium students. While clubs are available, the school had not been keeping a register to track which pupils were attending, including whether they were pupil premium. This is now being addressed, with steps being taken to monitor attendance and ensure pupil premium students are being included.

CE explained he has recently found a sensory OT service, sensory footsteps. This has been booked for 6 sessions this half term running up to the summer. This will be evaluated afterwards to see if this is worth continuing in the autumn. **Action - CE to evaluate the sensory OT sessions and update this in the autumn Headteacher Report.**

**Action:
CE
04/12/25**

CE reported that the contract for the music therapist in school will not be renewed, this is very expensive with only a very small number of children attending.

SSc asked, will you replace the music side?

CE responded, we do already have someone who comes into school who works alongside the children and not just individually.

JT queried the positive relationships mandate, could you explain who they are and what they do?

GB responded that they co-lead this work with CA. A mandate group was formed to support the school's shift away from a behaviour-focused approach toward one centered on positive relationships, trauma-informed practice and attachment awareness. The

group explored strategies to build and sustain positive relationships grounded in these principles. Whole school training on trauma informed and attachment-based approaches has already been delivered.

Attendance Data

CE reported attendance is currently at 85%.

CE explained that the school is in the process of issuing its first fixed penalty notices to families taking unauthorised holidays during term time. This decision has not been taken lightly; however, a small number of families continue to take multiple holidays each year despite prior warnings.

Personal Development

CE explained that the school is exploring the possibility of purchasing an additional minibus. PW noted that Endeavour AC currently has a leased minibus and suggested that CE liaise with ND regarding the leasing arrangement, and then follow up with LS at Nexus MAT for further discussion. **Action – CE to liaise with ND and LS regarding the leasing arrangement of a mini bus.**

**Action:
 CE
 04/12/25**

CE highlighted that the school is currently focusing on addressing gaps in the Gatsby Benchmarks, particularly around employer encounters. This work is being further supported through the school's involvement in the *Start Small; Dream Big* project.

SSc raised concerns regarding the use of 'X' as a tool, particularly around its unregulated nature. CE responded that, to date, no negative issues had been brought to his attention. He added that the app is used sparingly, with Seesaw remaining the primary platform for communication and engagement.

GB reported that the recent summer fair raised approximately £1,300, although a final count has yet to be completed.

Overall Effectiveness

CE reported there are currently 96 pupils on roll at the school.

CE expressed pride in the recent Ofsted report, noting that it truly reflects the significant hard work and progress made over the past 2.5 years since the school joined Nexus MAT.

6.1.1 Appendix 1 – Updated SIP

This was circulated for information

6.1.2 Appendix 2 - School SEF

This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.

CE explained the SEF will be completely rewritten over the summer holiday in order to reflect the current position of the school following its recent inspection.

<p>PW explained there will be a meeting in the autumn term in relation to the SIP/SEF. Members arranged this for Friday 10 October 2025 at 09:30 – 11:30 to be held at Fountaindale. Action – Clerk to send out diary date for members</p>	<p>Action: Clerking Services 11/07/25</p>
<p>6.2 Draft School Dashboard Summary</p> <p>This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.</p>	
<p>6.3 Budget Report</p> <p>This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.</p>	
<p>6.4 Next Year’s Budget and Staffing Structure</p> <p>This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.</p> <p>6.5 Cabinet Member & MPs’ Feedback from Pupil Parliament</p> <p>In relation to Pupil Parliament, it was suggested that having pupils create a video could be a valuable idea. It was noted that this is something that could be explored further in the next academic year. Action – GB will look into pupil parliament doing a video for the Academy Council Meetings in the next academic year.</p> <p>6.6 Skills Audit Feedback</p> <p>This was circulated for information. SS added that anyone interested in additional training should contact Adam Cloney, Corporate Governance Manager at Nexus.</p>	<p>Action: GB 04/12/25</p>
7. TRUST MATTERS	
<p>7.1 Trust verbal update on key issues</p> <p>PW informed the meeting that a Trust-wide letter was sent out regarding a consultation on a potential merger with Ebor Trust, proposed to take effect from September 2026. PW emphasised that there will be no changes to how the Trust currently operates. The merger is intended to enable greater collaboration and the ability to utilise expertise across both Trusts to benefit all schools involved.</p> <p>RM raised several parent concerns, along with her own, with the Chair regarding the proposed merger. She referenced past experiences that had not been positive and highlighted the particular needs of the cohort of children within Nexus MAT. These concerns were discussed in depth. PW reassured RM of the positive intentions behind the merger while acknowledging and appreciating the concerns raised. PW confirmed that all feedback will be taken back to the CEO and the Directors for consideration. Action – PW to feedback concerns of the merger to the CEO and the Directors.</p>	<p>Action: PW 04/12/25</p>
<p>7.2 Register of Interests – Annual Review</p> <p>Instructions on how to complete the Register of Interests on Governor Hub was circulated to members prior to the meeting. This should be completed as soon as possible. Action – All members to complete Register of Interests on Governor Hub.</p>	<p>Action: All Members 18/07/25</p>

8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
8.1 To consider any other urgent business	
Since the appointment of the new Deputy Head Teacher, CA, feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive. Her passion for the children and care she demonstrates has been particularly appreciated.	
9. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK	
9.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting.	
None.	

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 4 December 2025	10:00 – 12:00	Fountainsdale Academy
Friday 19 March 2026	10:00 – 12:00	Fountainsdale Academy
Friday 9 July 2026	10:00 – 12:00	Fountainsdale Academy

Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE
Sacha Schofield		