

MINUTES

PENKETH SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Second Meeting of the local governing challenge board – autumn 2025

Tuesday 2 December 2025, 5.00pm

Venue: In School

PRESENT:

Mrs Carla Bonner
Mrs Kathryn Bullivant
Mr Simon Carroll
Mrs Emma Chu

Mrs Claire Lawton (Headteacher)
Mrs Claire Roper
Mr Jake Smith (Co-Chair)
Mrs Carolyn Williams (Co-Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Miss L Hill (LA Clerk)

Miss Lorraine Browne (Observer)

Part One: Non-Confidential Business

The meeting began at 5.00pm

1) Welcome

Mrs C Williams was the chair for the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The chair welcomed the new parent governor, Ms E Chu and asked the governors present to introduce themselves.

The chair thanked the headteacher and clerk for the work that they have done in preparation for the meeting.

2) Any Items for Any Other Business / Part Two: Confidential

There were no items raised to be discussed under any other business.

3) Absence / Apologies / Non-Attendance

Apologies were received from Mrs L Atherton, Mr S Hennessey and Mrs P Lucido.

The headteacher advised that Mrs C Bonner is expected to attend.

AGREED: The local governing challenge board consented to the absence of those listed above

4) Register of Interests

All governors have completed the annual pecuniary interest on Governor Hub.

5) Declarations of personal interests for any item on the agenda

No personal interests were declared for any items on the agenda.

6) Membership Matters

There is one co-opted governor vacancies on the governing body at this time.

The headteacher confirmed that Mr J Smith was co-opted onto the governing body at the last meeting and that a parent election was completed, where Mrs E Chu was elected.

The headteacher advised that she has received an expression of interest from Amy Newby for the co-opted governor vacancy, who is the transition lead at Penketh High School. The headteacher shared Amy's expression of interest information in the meeting. The governors present supported Amy's expression of interest and **agreed** to appoint her as a co-opted governor.

ACTION: Clerk to update the school's membership.

Mr J Smith stepped out of the meeting at 5.07pm

Mrs C Roper's term of office as staff governor comes to an end on 2 February 2026. **ACTION: Headteacher to arrange a staff governor election to take place in the new year.**

Mr J Smith re-joined and Mrs C Bonner joined the meeting at 5.08pm

Mrs K Bullivant's term of office as co-opted governor comes to an end on 16 March 2026.

7) Minutes of the previous meeting on 13 October 2025

To confirm the minutes from the meeting held on 13 October 2025.

AGREED: The minutes from the previous meeting held on 13 October 2025 were confirmed as a correct record

Action Log

- 6.1 The headteacher arranged for a parent election to take place. **Action Complete.**
- 6.2 The headteacher advised that she contacted Mrs M St Clair regarding governor attendance and that she confirmed that it is the clerk that is to provide the governors attendance. In the clerk's absence, the headteacher put together the governor attendance for the last

academic year and this has been uploaded onto the school website. **Action Complete.**

6.3 The Governors Code of Conduct was circulated prior to the meeting and this needs to be signed by one of the co-chairs. **ACTION: Mr J Smith to electronically sign the Governors Code of Conduct.** Mr J Smith confirmed later in the meeting that he had electronically signed the Governors Code of Conduct.

7b The headteacher advised that she did send an email to Mrs M St Clair regarding the pay committee terms of reference and that she has not had a response. The headteacher confirmed that the pay committee meeting has taken place. **ACTION: The headteacher to check if the trust requires academy schools to have a Pay Committee Terms of Reference. Action Carried Forward.**

8b Mr J Smith advised that he cannot find the emails that he sent to the headteacher regarding his health and safety link governor visit and that he wanted to transfer this information onto the governor visit report. **ACTION: Headteacher and Mr J Smith to discuss the emails and complete the health and safety visit report.**

8. Mrs K Bullivant advised that she has put together a report that needs checking by the school lead before this is uploaded onto Governor Hub. **A governor asked** whether there are any vacancies for link governors. It was noted not at this time but roles are reviewed at the beginning of the academic year. **A governor asked** whether the school have a PSHE governor. This is not a current role. A governor stated that there is a requirement for governors to ensure that school meals are now meeting requirements. The headteacher advised that this area also links in with My Happy Mind. Mrs E Chu was appointed as the PSHE link governor, and this was **approved** by the governors present.

11. The headteacher advised that the safeguarding meeting has been arranged for next week and that there is a need to arrange for EYFS and health and safety visits to take place. **ACTION: Mr J Smith and Mr S Carrol to arrange an EYFS and Health and Safety link governor visits.**

The headteacher advised that there is some trauma training available on the National College and that there is a need to ascertain whether all governors are required to complete this training. **ACTION: Headteacher to clarify whether all governors need to complete Trauma Training or whether it is only for governors with specific roles.**

19. The Behaviour Policy is on the agenda for discussion at this meeting. **Action Complete.**

21. Mrs C Williams contacted Mrs St Clair regarding the headteacher's performance management, and this will be discussed in part two: confidential. **Action Complete.**

8) Headteacher's Report

Review progress against Scorecard and PAP (Business Aspect)

The Scorecard and PAP were circulated prior to the meeting.

The business support score card was shared on the screen in the meeting.

The headteacher advised that a business support meeting took place between the school and the trust on 4 November and Jake Smith also attended. It is a collaborative approach.

The headteacher advised that the scorecard is an excel spreadsheet and people can add to this over the year. There are two meetings per year (November and February) to look at this and is a snapshot of where the school is up to at the time of the meeting.

The action tracker lists all actions, and these were discussed at the meeting.

The headteacher advised that the dials are for various areas and stated that if the school has not met something fully, then this would remain amber until it is complete. The headteacher confirmed that the school do not have any reds.

The headteacher advised that the dial also has two arrows, the pale blue arrow is where the school were last year, and the darker blue arrow is where the school are now.

The headteacher advised that the demographic part of the business scorecard gives information on how many children are in each class. The headteacher confirmed that the school is nearly full in all classes, however, there has been a dip in year 3. The headteacher confirmed that year 5 is now full as a new child has started.

The headteacher advised that from year 6 onwards, there are no places in Warrington. The headteacher confirmed that the school received 29 pupils for the new reception cohort, noting that the school did well considering the low birth rate.

The headteacher advised that everything is green in the financial overview apart from there being a few red, which is because the school have a lot of teachers at the top end of their pay scale and that there is not a lot that can be done about this with being such a small school. The leadership numbers look large, but this again is due to the school being small and four members of staff make the leadership team look large.

A governor asked what would take it out of the red. The percentage being reduced would take the school out of the red.

The headteacher then went through each area and highlighted the following points:

- HR is green. Sickness and absence have reduced.
- Health and safety is green. **A governor asked** whether the school has had the audit now. Yes.
- Estates shows a list of things that the trust have paid for since 2019. The headteacher advised that the school have identified some issues with the castle play equipment that has been installed and that there is a broken drain hole cover. The headteacher reflected that it would probably be January before the children will be able to start using the castle play equipment.

The headteacher advised that a company has been out on 2 December to look at the floor markings. There are some remedial works that need completing and the trust have said that they can probably pay for this as well as the floor markings.

The headteacher advised that the Site Manager opened the school up on a Saturday for works to be completed, however, the contractor broke down and did not manage to get to the school, so the works started on the Monday. The rest of the works will be completed in February half term.

- Catering was red. The headteacher confirmed that the school have a new cook and that this area has been green since then. The new cook is making better use of suppliers, has started to use Asda to purchase goods as they are cheaper and the kitchen is working a lot better.

A governor noted that there is reference to the increase in food and drink and **asked** whether this is to do with the catering. It was confirmed that this is the case, and the quality of the food has increased too. The uptake from the children and staff has increased.

The headteacher advised that the brook is still causing issues, as well as issues with the drains as they are on the farmer's land. Paul Sinnott is working through this, and this will take time.

- Estates management- there is planned maintenance. The timescale on the report is incorrect and should be 29 June 2025. Most areas are green and where anything is not green is due to the holidays. The Site Manager and Caretaker between them are very proactive in identifying issues and logging on iAM Compliant.
- The school can raise any issues with IT via Halo. The headteacher advised that staff were frustrated that things were not getting resolved and that the school has since found out from Abtec, that they were not receiving the Halo tickets. Everything is back on track with this now. **A governor asked** whether the headteacher was confident that it was nothing to do with the school. The headteacher advised that it was an issue with their system and that she has asked staff to add any Halo requests to a list so that they can be monitored as being completed.
- Single Central Record- Lisa Gannon from the Trust met with the headteacher and Office Administrator last week. The Single Central Record was missing information last year and everything was

confirmed to now be up to date. This should be green, but the report does not include their comments from this.

- Governors date of birth is already on Governor Hub, GIAS and the school website. The headteacher advised that there was a misunderstanding as to whose responsibility it was to update this information during a cross over period, however everything is now up to date, and this is now green.
- Complaints- there was one complaint last year, which was closed quite quickly. There may be a complaint coming through this week, which is currently at stage 1, however, the headteacher is confident that this can be resolved at stage 1.

A governor noted that the governors have received this document as a PDF and **asked** whether there is a live version that the school has. The headteacher confirmed that there is a live version that people can update and that governors will receive a pdf version for each meeting.

9) SEND

Mrs C Roper advised that there is not much to update governors on in terms of SEND since the last meeting.

Mrs C Roper confirmed that there has been one more EHCP that has come through today. **A governor asked** whether this is for an existing pupil. Mrs C Roper confirmed that it is and that there are now seven children with an EHCP at the school.

Mrs C Roper advised that the school will possibly be calling for an early annual review for one child. Mrs C Roper advised that the school are unable to meet the needs of this child and that the only way that this can be discussed with the local authority is to call for an early annual review.

Mrs C Roper advised that the school have mediation for a child on Friday for a potential EHCP.

10) Policies

a. Behaviour Policy

The Behaviour Policy was circulated prior to the meeting.

The headteacher confirmed that this is a TCAT policy and that the school have added an appendix at the back, which is school specific.

The headteacher advised that she attends the behaviour hub for the trust and confirmed that the policy has been verified by the trust board.

The Behaviour Policy was **approved** by the governors present.

b. Communications Charter

The following documents were circulated prior to the meeting for governors to consider:

- School Communications Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Parent Charter
- Governors Code of Conduct

A discussion took place on the communications charter, and this discussion was moved to part two: confidential.

11) Finance

a. End of Year Accounts

Finance Report

The finance report was circulated prior to the meeting.

The headteacher advised that the school ended the financial year with a healthy surplus of £89,000, which is an increase on the projected surplus of £65,000. This was due to the increase of nursery funding and SEN High Needs funding and the savings made on utilities.

The headteacher advised that the school are looking for solar panels to be installed and this is expected to make a saving on utilities moving forward.

The headteacher advised that the nursery intake is good and that this will be reflected in the budget.

The headteacher advised that there has been an overspend on staffing due to absence and supply arrangements. There was a member of the office team that resigned, which was not fully replaced, so there was a saving in this area.

The headteacher advised that there was an overspend on the curriculum line on expenditure, which was due to the purchase of furniture and SEN purchases. This has been offset with the High Needs Funding and donations to the school.

The headteacher advised that indirect staffing was much higher than was originally budgeted for. Insurance costs were greater, however, as there were some claims made, this has offset the insurance premium.

The headteacher advised that the school have spent some money on IT, to purchase a set of iPads for year 6 (DFC Funding, PTA donation and school reserves). The headteacher advised that as part of the TCAT digital strategy, the trust are paying for an iPad for every teacher in the trust. Laptops will then be deployed to Teaching Assistants.

The headteacher advised that year to date is broadly in line with the plan. Support is being received from Sarah Messenger whilst the Finance Officer is not in school.

The headteacher advised that the school will look at grants in the spring term to be able to buy things like furniture.

A governor noted that the way that the schools accounts are presented is much better and thanked the finance team for the papers. The headteacher advised that the finance team have an office, which they work from for three days a week and are then out at schools for two days a week.

Management Accounts

The management accounts were circulated prior to the meeting.

The headteacher advised that there are some variances higher than 8% and this is due to when those are required to be paid.

12) Health and Safety

a. Fire Assessment Report

The fire risk assessment was circulated prior to the meeting and is for governors information.

A governor asked whether recommendations will be added to the business scorecard. Yes. The headteacher advised that the report was only received last week.

The headteacher advised that the staircase needs to have an annual audit in terms of fire risk assessment. The Maintenance Officer is getting a few quotes for this and it is anticipated to cost £1000. **A governor asked** whether it is needed because of the gaps in the banister/stairs. The headteacher reflected that she assumes that this could be why and because of the wooden elements. **A governor asked** whether the audit needs to be completed every year and this was confirmed. **A governor asked** whether this covers the stairs outside too. The headteacher stated that she believes that it does.

A governor asked where this requirement has come from. The headteacher confirmed that it was a recommendation from the fire risk assessment.

13) Buildings and Premises

a. Future Work

The headteacher spoke about how the trust is looking to change from having a 5-year plan. The headteacher advised that she met with Adrienne Lang to look at areas in school that need attention including, heat, light and ventilation upstairs. The flooding is also an ongoing issue. The

headteacher stated that everything is being put in a report, so that the trust can look at what works are needed in all the schools within the trust and ensuring that funding is spread out more evenly.

There is a bigger plan with a number of elements.

The headteacher advised that she has asked a couple of companies to quote for new blinds and that she has not received any quotes back as yet. The headteacher stated that she will get the Maintenance Officer to measure up all classrooms and look at a plan to replace blinds throughout the school over the coming years.

b. Car Park – St Vincent's

The proposed site plan was circulated prior to the meeting.

The headteacher advised that St Vincent's Primary School are looking to change their car park and spoke of her concerns with the changes. The space is not wide enough for staff from both schools to get in and out of their car parking spaces. A solution would be for the roadway between the two schools to be widened and the proposed new car park at St Vincent's be moved further left. This could cause a problem for both schools if not considered. The trust will be putting their view forward to planning.

A governor asked whether this is on the portal with the local authority and this was confirmed. **A governor asked** whether St Vincent's have spoken to the headteacher about their plans and this has not happened yet. The consultation is open until 24 December 2025. A governor stated that the proposed change would impact on both schools.

The headteacher advised that the school's car park was adapted to allow double car parking spaces and this isn't shown on the plan used for the consultation.

A governor stated that if the consultation is on the planning portal, individuals would need to put their concerns on this with reasoning. The planning proposal does not truly reflect the school site.

c. Field Update

The headteacher advised that there has been a meeting between the trust and the local authority. There is a potential resolution but there is a need to have another meeting.

A governor asked whether St Vincent's Primary School have support for their designated provision. It was noted that the designated provision could impact on the use of the car park. The headteacher advised that St Vincent's Primary School are looking at having a KS1 designated provision from September 2026.

14) Behaviour and Attendance

a. Behaviour Update

Miss L Browne reflected that generally, behaviour at the school is fairly good. There are three children on behaviour plans currently and have been sent to the headteacher. Staff deal with any situations that arise and behaviour plans are uploaded to CPOMS and updated every Friday for Miss Browne to monitor.

b. Attendance Update

The headteacher reflected that she is really pleased with attendance. Half termly letters were sent out, and it was noted that some parents were shocked as their child's attendance had gone below 90% despite only being off school a couple of days, which has made some parents think about sending their child in school when they only have minor illness.

The headteacher advised that there has been a sickness bug that has had some impact on attendance, but this has not had as much impact as last year.

The headteacher advised that the government have produced an AI attendance document, which looks at the school's attendance from the last couple of years and schools have been given a target for this year for the school to aim for. This is linked to other similar schools.

The headteacher confirmed that the school's attendance at the end of the Autumn 1 was 95.7% and the school have been set a target of 96.4%, which has already been reached during Autumn 2. If the school can attain this for the rest of the year, this will be positive.

A governor asked whether children that have long-term illness are counted in the attendance figures. This was confirmed and the headteacher advised she discusses individual children and their circumstances with the Attendance Officer. They also look for patterns with children's absence, and this will be addressed with parents as and when required.

15) Governor Visits

Governor visits were discussed earlier in the meeting.

16) Any Other Business

Mr J Smith confirmed that he has signed the governors code of conduct in the folder on Governor Hub.

17) Future Meeting Dates

Spring (1): Tuesday 3 February 2026, 5.00pm
Spring (2): Tuesday 24 March 2026, 5.00pm



Summer (1): Tuesday 19 May 2026, 5.00pm
Summer (2): Tuesday 14 July 2026, 5.00pm

Part one of the meeting closed at 6.23pm



Chair

DATE: