

Full Governing Board Meeting 2024/25

Meeting Minutes			
Date	Wednesday 5 March 2025	Time and Location	3.30 p.m. PPA Room
Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials
Di Hunt (Chair)	DH	Andrew Hunter	AH
Viv Aloy	VA	Sam Kashmiri	SK
Linda Anderson	LA	Diana Marsland	DM
Jennifer Barker	JB	Kimberley Nelson	KN
Colin Brace	CB	Lydia Paynter	LP
Clare Brittain	CBr	Jake Terrill	JT
Noel Buckley (items 1-3 only)	NB	Mark Wignall	MW
Eva Field	EF	Chris Karley (Clerk)	CK
John Godley	JG		

Apologies	Initials
Sue Hatton	SH
Mark Longley	ML
Nicci Lorusso	NL

	Agenda	Led by
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	Chair
2.	Declaration of Interest	Chair
3.	ROCKS update	NB
4.	Minutes of Last Meetings – 4 December 2024 & 3 February 2025	Chair
5.	Matters Arising	Chair
6.	Urgent Matters	Chair
7.	Federation Update	Chair
8.	Budget Monitoring	MW
9.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update	Chair
10.	Headteacher's Report	MW
11.	Chair's Report	Chair
12.	Link Governor Report Procedure	Chair
13.	Policy Reviews: - Complaints Procedure - Dealing with Abusive Parents Policy - Designated Teacher Policy (ratification) - Discipline & Student Behaviour Policy (ratification) - Governors Visits Policy	Chair
14.	Chairs of Committee Reports – items arising from Committee minutes	CB/EF/LA
15.	Reports: - School website information - Lead Governor visits - Link Governor visits - Governor training	Chair

Diana Marsland

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	• DSA	
16.	AOB	Chair
17.	Date of next meeting: • Wednesday 21 May 2025 at 3.30 p.m. (Strategy meeting)	-

Item no.	Discussion	Action	Due Date
	The meeting started at 3.30 p.m.		
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence • DH welcomed VA to her first full FGB meeting following her appointment as a Parent Governor. • Apologies for absence were received from and accepted for SH, ML and NL.		
2.	Declaration of Interest • None		
3.	ROCKS update (NB) NB spoke to the presentation filed with these minutes. • Community – In 2023/24 the main aim was to increase participation in clubs and community events. A survey with a 96% completion rate indicated that participation had risen to 77% from 57% in 2021. • However the target is 100% and the survey results might not be robust as some pupils might have engaged in just one activity in the school year. It is therefore now being repeated every half term to facilitate early intervention and to identify barriers. • In the current school year 89% of pupils had engaged by the end of the Autumn term, with PP engagement up 13% to 83%. The Community points awarded are also higher. • Q – Are interventions just highlighting what is available? • Pupils' backgrounds are discussed with PSOs and Heads of Year first, students are then talked to directly. • Character education – ROCKS points awarded rose from 70k in 2022/23 to 123k in 2023/24. Awards to girls are stronger than to boys, and to KS3 stronger than KS4. • 129k points have been awarded already in the current school year and students are responding very well. Points to boys and to KS4 are well up, although KS4 tend to prefer home awareness to in-school recognition. The ratio of positive to negative points is 7:1, exceeding the target of 5:1. Kindness points have risen to 11k against 7k last year • The goal for the remainder of this year is to focus on underachieving groups, and for next year is to achieve greater consistency in awarding points. • Q – Are there plans to discuss community ideas with the PTA? • Yes		

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	- MW emphasised that this had been a very successful project and was at the cutting edge nationally. NB had led it exceptionally well. Downlands will be hosting and leading a national PiXL training event on character education in June. - The Governors expressed their thanks to NB for his leadership of the ROCKS initiatives. NB left the meeting.		
4.	Minutes of Last Meetings – 4 December 2024 & 3 February 2025 The minutes of the FGB meetings held on 4 December 2024 and 3 February 2025 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.		
5.	Matters arising - 4 December 2024 Item 5 – Matters arising - CK advised that the alternative provision presentation had been deferred again due to staff absence. - CK confirmed that the summary of the Governors' skills audit results had been circulated. Item 8 – Lockdown procedure - SH had sent her apologies for this meeting so was not able to update on local government procedures. Item 14 – Link Governor report procedure - This would be covered under Item 13 at this meeting. Matters Arising 3 February 2025 - None		
6.	Urgent Matters None		
7.	Federation Update - DH advised that a Federation meeting had been held in January and another would take place next week. Collaboration continues to strengthen. - MW advised that all staff from the four schools would meet together at Plumpton College in late June. The focus would be on disadvantaged pupils. - School to school reviews by Deputy Heads continue. A forthcoming visit to Downlands will focus on PP. - Sackville is providing coaching for coaches and middle & senior leaders courses. This is a very cost effective way of accessing training. - The aim remains to increase student participation in the Federation. A Federation dance show will be held at a theatre in East Grinstead on 17 June and several other joint events are planned. - The results of the SWOT analysis have been discussed. It is currently a soft Federation and a move to a hard federation would involve shared Governing Boards and budgets. All schools agree that autonomy is important, so the aim will be to maintain that while hardening other aspects of the Federation. Discussions on how to achieve this will continue.		

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	• Q – Would the addition of a fifth school help decision making by avoiding a 50:50 split? • There have been no major disagreements to date, although they would be open to this if approached by a school with the right values and vision. • Q – Is there enough diversity of opinion? • There can be robust discussion. • Q – Do differences arise with those schools with sixth forms? • Not really. The bigger schools pay more into the Federation budget as it is based on pupil numbers.		
8.	Budget Monitoring • MW advised that the budget is looking good overall. • Total Salary costs are at 91.56% against a target for the financial year to date of 91.66%. This includes teaching staff at 90.86% and ancillary staff at 93.43% due to the additional cost of exam invigilators. Over 100 pupils now have access arrangements, a far higher figure than has been seen before. Direct invigilator costs are £35k plus a £20k extra cost involved in managing them. • Q – Is it hard to push back on the provision of an invigilator? • Almost impossible. • Departmental costs are under control, as are Structural Maintenance costs due to the outstanding work of the site team. • Electricity costs are OK this year but the budget will need to go up next year. • Q – What contracts does the school have? • They are fixed rate contracts arranged through a broker. • Water Services are high due to a leak, but the school hopes to claim on insurance to cover this. • Examinations includes prepayment for next year's exams. • Supervision costs are down as staff now need to claim for duties undertaken. • Free School Meals costs are up due to higher take up. • ICT costs have been supported by using DFCG funds. The Accumulating Fund still stands at £250k. • The Sinking Fund will be released as S106 funding can be used to resurface the 3G pitch. • The Science lab roof repairs carried out by WSCC will be reimbursed through insurance so the school will be able to fund refurbishment of these rooms. This will be done over the summer with the addition of £25k funding from the PTA. The PTA has also contributed £25k toward new AV and sound equipment in the main hall. • KN noted that the PTA has already raised £10k this year with the Comedy Night still to come. It was agreed that it would be helpful to highlight what planned events would fund. • DH acknowledged the hard work of Sue Jones, who would retire at the end of the term after 18 years as Business Manager. She had made a huge contribution to the sound finances of the school. The Governors expressed their thanks and asked that these be passed on. DH advised that an internal candidate had been appointed as her successor.		

Signature

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9.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update • DH had not yet been able to meet with Kate Stodart (KS) this term but hoped to do so next week. She recommended that Governors read the minutes of KS's presentation to the previous week's POW Committee together with the attached report. • The school was still following up on the incident that took place just before half term, and a Governors' Discipline Committee (GDC) would be meeting on 17 March to consider the pupil's permanent exclusion. MW commented that it had been a very difficult time. Any lessons learned about communication would be discussed with Governors after the GDC. As the situation unfolded overnight and into the morning it would have been difficult to issue any communication sooner. They could not do so until 10.00 a.m. The police had been very helpful and took prompt action. Jim Forrest, IT Systems Manager, was still investigating how an email was sent to the whole of Year 10. • DH noted that she and CB had been onsite at the time. There had been no panic, the school handled the situation well and all procedures were followed. MW noted that pupils had handled the receipt of the emails very well and calmly.	
10.	Headteacher's Report MW spoke to the report filed with these minutes. • There will be a learning walks session on 6 March when SLT will observe and discuss one lesson, and review procedures. This is a very important part of teachers' development. • Two PSO appointments have been made to cover one resignation and one maternity leave. • A new Inclusion Unit Manager has been appointed. This is an important role for students who are struggling. • A replacement Data Manager has been appointed, but filling TA vacancies remains a challenge. • Q – Are there further developments with the RLC? • Ellie Dickinson had moved to the RLC/Character Hub and could meet the Link Governor to provide an update. • Q – Why is the new name "Character Hub"? • This is appropriate as interventions are based on ROCKS characteristics. It will be generally known as The Hub. • MW is meeting local MPs and the press on 6 March to discuss the speed limit on the road to/from Ditchling. ESCC is not currently proposing to take any action. • MW hoped to meet with planners soon to discuss S106 funding for new sports facilities. • Year 7 is currently full for the 2025/26 intake with a waiting list within the catchment area. It is expected that all these will get in, but not those out of the catchment area. The large development in Sayers Common could lead to pressure in years to come. The plans include a school but this is not certain to materialise. • A new long-term contract has been signed with Freedom Leisure, and also a new Grounds contract.	

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	The link advisor from WSCC will visit tomorrow, which is also World Book Day. The school will be raising funds for a local children's hospital.		
11.	Chair's Report - DH proposed that the selection of a new Co-opted Governor be deferred until the summer term given the need to concentrate on the appointment of the new Headteacher. This was agreed unanimously. The vacancy had arisen as LP would resign effective from the end of this meeting, having just been elected as a councillor for a London borough. - DH thanked LP for all her hard work over the past two years and that it was good to have had an ex-pupil on the Governing Board. - DH advised that Rowena Chalk, Chair of Governors at Oathall, would chair the forthcoming GDC. In return DH was to be a member on a similar panel at Oathall. - Following the advertisement for the Headteacher post, 10 potential candidates are touring the school and one application had come in so far. The deadline for applications is 21 March. - DH had invited Governors to attend the lunch with applicants during the interviews, and she reminded the meeting that an Extraordinary FGB meeting would be held on the evening of 3 April to agree the appointment of the candidate recommended by the panel.		
12.	Link Governor Report Procedure This was covered under Item 13.		
13.	Policy reviews Complaints Procedure - Q – Is this a WSCC policy? - Yes - Q – Is the reference to MASH on p4 out of date? - Yes, it should refer to the IFD. - Q – Should the reference to MW now been changed? - Yes, it should just refer to the Headteacher. - The Procedure was approved subject to the above changes. Dealing with Abusive Parents Policy - Q – Does the policy cover Governors as well? - They would be covered under the term 'school community'. - Q – Should use of social media be given more prominence? - It was agreed that this was adequately covered by the existing wording. - Q- Should p2 read that 'Any behaviour that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened is unacceptable'? - Agreed - Q – Should 'harassment of any kind' be added to the list? - Agreed - Q – Is this a growing problem?		

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	○ The policy has not had to be used any more than in the past, although many more parental complaints are received. A ban has only ever been implemented once or twice. ○ The Policy was approved subject to the above changes. ● Designated Teacher Policy (ratification) ○ The Policy was ratified. ● Discipline & Student Behaviour Policy (ratification) ○ Q – Should references to the RLC be updated? ○ As the name has not yet been officially changed Jamie Chandler will do this at the appropriate time. ○ Q – Should para 4.8 refer to 'offences' rather than 'offenses'? ○ Agreed ○ Q – Should p32 refer to KCSIE 2024 rather than KCSIE 2023? ○ Agreed ○ The Policy was ratified subject to the above changes. ● Governors Visits Policy ○ DH advised that the flow chart was now consistent with the main body of the text and the agreement reached at FGB. ○ The Policy was approved.		
14.	Chairs of Committee reports – items arising from Committee minutes ● LA advised that Simon Adams had told the SLL Committee that the diversity survey would be repeated this year. ● There were no items arising from the POW and FAB Committees.		
15.	Reports: Lead & Link Governor visits, Governor Training & DSA School website information ● There was no update this term. Visits – Lead Governors ● CBr advised that she would be visiting SEND this week. ● LA noted that Attendance had recovered slightly since her visit, which had been during a particularly difficult week. The Breakfast Club was going very well and the Family Liaison Officer was having some impact. It was a huge effort by many people to get absent pupils back into school. Visits – Link Governors ● LA noted that Modern Languages now had a full team and that good progress was being made. Governor Training ● There were no updates. DSA		

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	This had been covered under Item 8 on the agenda.		
16.	Any Other Business DH asked that any Governors who could not now attend their allocated Consultation Evenings advise CK accordingly.		
17.	Date of Next Meetings Wednesday 21 May 2025 at 3.30 p.m. (Strategy meeting) The meeting closed at 5.10 p.m.		

DLH