

Full Governing Board Meeting 2025/26

Meeting Minutes			
Date	Wednesday 4 March 2026	Time and Location	3.30 p.m. PPA Room
Attendees		Attendees	Initials
Di Hunt (Chair)		Sam Kashmiri	SK
Viv Aloy		Nicci Lorusso	NL
Linda Anderson		Kimberley Nelson	KN
Matt Ashdown		Paul Parker	PP
Jennifer Barker		Jake Terrill	JT
Colin Brace		Laura Bryant (Clerk)	LB

Apologies	Initials
Eva Field	EF
John Godley	JG
Sue Hatton	SH
Mark Longley	ML

	Agenda	Led by
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	Chair
2.	Declaration of Interest	Chair
3.	Minutes of Last Meetings – Wednesday 3 December 2025	Chair
4.	Matters Arising	Chair
5.	Urgent Matters	Chair
6.	Federation Update	Chair/MA
7.	Financial Update	MA
8.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update	Chair
9.	Headteacher's Report	MA
10.	Chair's Report	Chair
11.	Co-opted Governor elections	Chair
12.	Policy Reviews: - Digital Systems Policy - GDPR Policy - Governor Visits Policy - Pay Policy (Ratification only) - Privacy Notice – Staff, Governors and Volunteers - Privacy Notice – Pupils and Parents	Chair
13.	Chairs of Committees reports – items arising from Committee minutes	Chair
14.	School Website Information Review	Chair
15.	Reports: - Lead Governor visits - Link Governor visits - Governor training	Chair
16.	AOB	Chair
17.	Date of next meeting: Strategy meeting - Wednesday 13 May 2026 at 3.30 p.m.	-

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Item no.	Discussion	Action	Due Date
	The meeting started at 3.30 p.m.		
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from and accepted for EF, JG, SH, ML.		
2.	Declaration of Interest None		
3.	Minutes of Last Meetings – 17 September 2025 The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 3 December 2025 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.		
4.	Matters arising There was a concern raised at the last meeting around students cooking and transporting home hot food at the end of the school day. MA has investigated this with Debbie Moller, Head of Technology who does carry out risk assessments for these scenarios. For KS4, the students start cooking earlier, at lunchtime to allow food to cool before transporting and students are advised to transport in metal containers. For KS3 lessons they try to avoid cooking hot food in these lessons.		
5.	Urgent Matters - DH reminded the committee that this was her last Full Governing Board meeting, as the next meeting was the strategy meeting and at the last one of the year, the new Chair would need to be voted in. As there was a high level of absence, it was agreed that this would be discussed further at the strategy meeting. Q – What happens if a new Chair cannot be appointed at the last meeting of the year? - WSCC will support to help the committee decide how they can proceed.		
6.	Federation Update - MA/DH met their Federation counterparts in January, and the Chairs and Vice Chairs met in February. MA will give more details in his report. - There is a newly released white paper which indicated that all schools should become part of a MAT, there is a Federation meeting next week where this will be discussed, unfortunately MA and DH cannot attend. It is important to note that this has been advised before, the new paper contains no timescale, or compulsion. Q – What difference does it make to be in a MAT? - It's a significant difference, from the way the school is funded and the management structure. A lot of MAT schools don't have their own Governing Board. Q – What is the rationale behind this suggestion?		

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	- The idea is to consolidate SEN support, and within a MAT there would be one school that would become a 'centre of excellence' for SEN students. - We are in a strong position in our Federation at the moment. Q – Is there an update on the proposal for Lead Governors to meet across Federation schools? - It was discussed at the recent meeting, and although it was felt that it would be a useful exercise it was important to note that Governors are very busy and it's not always going to be possible. There is still work ongoing. - Federation benchmarking at staff level continues to work well, events such as the Federation orchestra day are very beneficial.		
7.	Financial Update - MA talked through the budget report highlighting any areas which are showing an overspend. The highest over budget is exams budget which has been discussed before. - The cost centres will be reviewed at the end of the year to help determine next year budget figures. Q – Is there likely to be any impact from the current situation in the Middle East? - Hopefully not - Sophie Fairbank locked in our energy prices for two years just before half term. - MA will be reviewing some administrative budgets to ensure they are realistic going forward. IT budget is overspent due to upgrades (Windows 11 update, and some server upgrades). If we do not upgrade regularly, in the longer term, more equipment will need to be fully replaced. - CPD budget shows over as we have needed training for new Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and first aid training.		
8.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update - Kate Stodart (KS), DSL gave a full update at the recent POW committee meeting. - DH is continuing to meet KS monthly, and there is nothing relevant to report from her last meeting.		
9.	Headteacher's Report MA spoke to his Headteacher's report filed with these minutes. - Work is still ongoing as we prepare for potential Ofsted inspection, recently Chailey School were inspected almost exactly four years after their last inspection, so we are expecting that to be this year. - The Drama department supported by many others recently put on an amazing school show, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe involving over 170 students. - Work is still continuing on the new School Vision for inclusive practice, enabling every student and member of our community to feel safe, supported, and successful. - The overall current focus is to reduce 'lost learning', this can occur because of a number of reasons, absence, internal truancy, suspensions and lack of engagement during lessons. A key measure of how successful we are in reducing this will be to reduce the gap in attainment for our disadvantaged student groups.		

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• Suspension rates continue to be high, these can range from 0.5 to 5 days. There have been 195 individual suspensions so far this year - the highest rate in Mid Sussex - but created by only 45 students. This is a considerable amount of lost learning. • Recently MA has visited Hastings Academy and has been understanding how they have reduced their suspension rates dramatically. Their school demographic is very different to ours, with 55% disadvantaged students, but they have created internal suspension spaces which has reduced their rates. We are implementing the same ideas here. A full update on this was given by Jamie Chandler and Claire Davies at the latest POW committee meeting. A brief overview was given: • Reflection Room This will have a soft launch on Thursday 5th March with a couple of students with a view to opening for two days in the following week. Rather than suspending students this will be a place for 'internal suspension'. This enables us to keep students in school, for them to reflect and for us to support them. Some students currently don't feel like they belong, don't have good relationships with teachers and by keeping them within the school community we can build that. This space is designed to be restorative. There will be an online learning package used, focusing on key subjects, and it will adapt to the ability of the student user. This package may also be used within other areas such as Learning Support or the Hub. The day will be carefully structured with three hours of online learning followed by a period of reflection but also some mindfulness activities, perhaps art related. • Reset Space This will be staffed by the PSO team on a rotational basis and is for students that feel unable to access lessons during the day. It will be a space for them to go to regulate with the aim of getting them back to lesson when appropriate. • The Hub The Hub will continue to be an intervention space with students referred by Head of Year and Pastoral teams, and they will follow structured programmes with the aim of reintegrating them fully into school. • Q – Will this set up help non attendees, eg those ESBA students? • Through some staffing restructures we are looking to create a new Attendance Officer role who will work with families creating attendance plans and raising the attendance rates of these disadvantaged students. • Q – What percentage of suspensions are for disadvantaged students? • Approx 40% • Q – When do you expect to see results of these changes coming through? • It will be easy to see the suspension rates go down, as we start to use the internal suspension room, but the key measure will be closing the attainment gap which we will see in a couple of years. Step one has to be getting students into lessons, and when in the lesson, the teaching has to be inclusive so that the learning is accessible. • In a staffing update, MA outlined that there are plans to appoint two new Assistant Heads of Year to support our larger year groups, Year 9 and Year 10. Discussions are being held with the current Heads of these year groups to work out what form that support could take. • The Senior Leadership Teams from across the Federation schools had a joint session on Ofsted preparations which was beneficial.		
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	- MA and Sophie Fairbank had a recent meeting with HKD Transition, our sustainability partner who made a generous £3k donation to the school. - A successful character day was held recently and MA acknowledged the hard work of Liz Hollingdale, our Careers Lead for the organisation of the Year 9 careers day as part of this. - The new prefect team from Year 10 have now been appointed as Year 11 step down to focus on GCSE preparations. - The staff dress code has been reviewed by the Wellbeing party and will be circulated to all staff. It will mirror the student dress code and have a summer term variation which will allow tailored shorts to be worn, and ties will not be required in this term.		
10.	Chair's Report - DH recommended that all Governors read through the white paper that has recently been published to help understand the changes. There was still the expectation that there would be significant changes to the KCSIE guidance, the draft of this is usually published in May. - There are two permanent exclusion panels taking place over the next two weeks. Thanks were given to all Governors that have volunteered to sit on these. - DH reminded all Governors to undertake training wherever possible. The Governing boards of the Federation schools are looking at holding another joint event. - DH asked that if Governors have not yet visited their linked department this term to please do so before Easter.		
11.	Co-opted Governor elections - There are currently two vacancies for Co-opted Governors after the resignation of Clare Brittain and Diana Marsland. - DH proposed that John Godley is elected as a co-opted Governor, as his term as Parent Governor is at an end. - The committee voted unanimously for John Godley to be elected as a Co-opted Governor. - DH received an application from Alison Burholt for Co-opted Governor which has been circulated to the Full Governing Board. DH, JG and PP recently met with her to discuss the role. She has a wealth of experience and would be a valuable addition to the Board. - The committee voted unanimously for Alison Burholt to elected as a Co-opted Governor. - There is now a vacancy for a Parent Governor, and the appropriate papers will be sent out by school to fill this vacancy. - DH noted that she is the LA Governor, and she has advised WSCC of her intention to stand down at the end of this academic year. It is not known yet who the replacement will be. - We still need to appoint a Governor as link to Curriculum and Diversity.		
12.	Policy Reviews Digital Systems Policy - This policy is still under review and it was agreed that when it was completed, LB would circulate for it to be agreed by email.	LB	asap

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	- LB to add a note to the face sheet to show it is being updated. GDPR Policy - This policy is still under review and it was initially agreed that when it was completed, LB would circulate for it to be agreed by email. - JT noted a situation that may need reviewing in more detail around the use of photographs of students that have left Downlands around school and on the school website. LB to ask CD to include this in her review of the policy. It was noted that our GDPR Officer would be able to provide assistance with this. - It was further agreed that this policy should be brought back to the next meeting as it was a potentially more in depth review. LB to put a note on the face sheet to reflect this. Governors' Visit Policy - One small typographical error was noted in the flow chart in the second box, 'conversation' to be amended. - The policy was approved unanimously subject to this amendment. Teachers and School Leaders Pay Policy (Ratification only) - On page 2, under the heading 'Model policy for determining teachers' pay' it was recognised that this was a duplication of the information on the face sheet and should be deleted. - The policy was approved unanimously subject to this amendment. School Privacy Notice for Staff, Governors and volunteers - There were no changes, and the policy was approved unanimously. School Privacy Notice for Secondary School Pupils and their Parents - There were no changes, and the policy was approved unanimously.	LB	28.03.26
13.	Chairs of Committees reports – items arising from Committee minutes Finance & Buildings - CB reported that the committee are now reviewing 4 and 5 year budget forecasts. Staffing, Learning & Leadership - LA asked all Governors to read the minutes of the latest meeting. Pupil Outcomes & Wellbeing - All Governors were encouraged to read the latest minutes.		
14.	School Website Information Review Diana Marsland has resigned from the Governing Board, and this responsibility will be taken over by AH who will report once a review has been done.		
15.	Reports: Lead & Link Governor visits, Governor Training Lead Governor visits LA met with Jamie Chandler and went through the new initiatives in detail. It was a very positive meeting, the report will be circulated shortly.		

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	- DH is continuing to meet with Kate Stodart monthly. - JB is meeting Vicky Cornish, SENDCo on 13th March. Link Governor visits - Nothing to report. Governor Training - There will be some useful training available soon for the revised KCSIE guidance.		
16.	AOB JT asked MA about his wellbeing, who reported being well and feeling very well supported by both the Governing Board and School team.		
17.	Date of Next Meeting FGB strategy meeting on Wednesday 13 May 2026 at 3.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 5.13 p.m.		