

Full Governing Board Meeting 2025/26

Meeting Minutes			
Date	Wednesday 3 December 2025	Time and Location	3.30 p.m. PPA Room
Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials
Di Hunt (Chair)	DH	Sue Hatton	SH
Viv Aloy	VA	Sam Kashmiri	SK
Linda Anderson	LA	Nicci Lorusso	NL
Matt Ashdown	MA	Diana Marsland	DM
Jennifer Barker	JB	Kimberley Nelson	KN
Colin Brace	CB	Paul Parker	PP
Eva Field	EF	Jake Terrill	JT
John Godley	JG	Laura Bryant (Clerk)	LB

Apologies	Initials
Clare Brittain	CB
Andrew Hunter	AH
Mark Longley	ML

	Agenda	Led by
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	Chair
2.	Declaration of Interest	Chair
3.	Minutes of Last Meetings – Wednesday 17 September 2025	Chair
4.	Matters Arising	Chair
5.	Urgent Matters	Chair
6.	Budget Monitoring/Financial Update	MA
7.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update	Chair
8.	Federation Update	Chair
9.	Headteacher's Report – School Vision/SDP	MA
10.	Chair's Report	Chair
11.	GDPR update	Chair
12.	Policy Reviews: - ECF (Ratification only) - SEND Policy (Ratification only)	Chair
13.	Chairs of Committees reports – items arising from Committee minutes	Chair
14.	Reports: - Lead Governor visits - Link Governor visits - School website information - Governor training	Chair
15.	AOB	Chair
16.	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 4 March 2026 at 3.30 p.m.	-

Dianna Hunt

Full Governing Board Meeting 2025/26

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 CB, AH & ML. - DH extended a warm welcome to PP attending his first FGB meeting and introductions were made from all present.		
2.	Declaration of Interest None		
3.	Minutes of Last Meetings – 17 September 2025 The minutes of the FGB meetings held on 17 September 2025 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.		
4.	Matters arising 17 September 2025 None		
5.	Urgent Matters None		
6.	Budget Monitoring/Financial Update - MA explained that we have moved to the WSCC framework for financial accounting whereas previously it has been done in house. WSCC have been very supportive in offering advice. - Some discrepancies as some staff have been moved between categories as part of the transition to the WSCC model. Overall staffing costs are almost in line with where they should be, 59% for teaching staff and 61% for support. - Premises costs are mostly in line with expected, small overspend on premises costs due to additional rubbish disposal during renovations. - Although transport costs are slightly high for this point in the year, all vehicles have had annual services and MOT tests, so this will level out. - Rationalised the midday meals for duty staff reducing pressure here. Previously spending around £8k on free meals for duty staff, this has been reduced by now offering a discount to staff on duty. - 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 paid out for the Federation joint INSET day and we are still waiting for one reimbursement from this. - Q – are capital costs reported in these budget figures? - Yes, all costs are included here. - MA took the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of Sophie Fairbank, the new Business Manager for her hard work and acknowledged that it had been a steep learning curve for both of them and that the support received from WSCC had been very valuable.		

Full Governing Board Meeting 2025/26

7.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Update - Governors have now completed their safeguarding training at a session run by Kate Stodard (KS), DSL. - DH is due to meet KS again on 17th December, and there is nothing relevant to report from her last meeting.		
8.	Federation Update - Chairs and Vice Chairs from Federation schools had a joint meeting recently where the idea of Lead Governors meeting their counterparts from Federation schools was discussed. DH clarified that it was only lead governors – Safeguarding, Inclusion, Attendance & Finance. DH asked Lead Governors whether they would be interested in doing this, whilst being conscious of the extra time commitment. - Q – what would the purpose of the meetings be? And would they be in person? - Meetings would be to discuss best practice, and it had been suggested that they take place in one of the schools. - A brief discussion took place about the meetings, and whilst it was agreed that most thought they would be valuable, it may be more practical to be able to hold these meetings online. All agreed for DH to pass on contact details, and that Lead Governors could discuss between themselves how the meetings could be structured. - The Vice Chair of Governors at Imberhorne has offered to run a finance training session for Governors in the summer term. - NL noted how useful it was to attend the Chair and Vice Chair Federation meeting.		
9.	Headteacher's Report – School Vision/SDP Headteacher's Report MA spoke to his Headteacher's report filed with these minutes. - Work is still ongoing on the new School Vision, which has been reviewed by support staff, teaching staff, the SparC committee and at last night's Parent Forum. The aim is to make sure that the school vision is relevant for all stakeholders. - The recent Christmas Market was a success, raising almost £3000. MA thanked KN for her involvement and acknowledged the importance of the work of the DSA team. There have been other fundraising events, for Children in Need, Hello Yellow and also a DSA quiz night. - Recently released national performance data has confirmed that Downlands were the highest attaining school in West Sussex, and the second highest in the whole of Sussex following a successful set of GCSE results. - SLT are reviewing School Vision & Values to ensure exceptional provision and outcomes for all students. - The School Vision has been shaped by a number of stakeholders. If we are a truly inclusive school then every member of our community should truly belong, this does not just mean students, but also staff, parents and governors.		

Full Governing Board Meeting 2025/26

	• The recently published National Curriculum Review has a focus on inclusion. We need to continue to work to close our progress gap for disadvantaged students. • MA updated on staffing with some leavers this term, and also introduced the two new Associate Headteacher posts, in which Emma Tizard (Head of Languages) and Matt Urwin (Head of Science) have been appointed. ○ Q – whilst it is easy to track the attainment gap, how will the progress being made in inclusion be tracked? ○ There are a number of ways - wellbeing surveys, attendance & behaviour data as well as progress data. ○ Q – Are there any particular areas of the curriculum that are not inclusive? ○ The biggest challenge is reading, students with a low reading age cannot access the curriculum. This is being addressed with interventions based in The Hub. ○ Q – What training has there been for staff that are not English teachers to help them support low readers? ○ Training has been ongoing for around three years now, SK ran a very successful INSET training to all staff presenting the science behind reading. Staff can feel wary of helping with reading, there is an expectation that students in secondary school will be able to read. However, in Years 7, 8 & 9 there are 12 or 13 students with a reading age of under 9 years, plus there are a considerable amount who haven't reached their expected level. Simple strategies have been developed and shared which are not department specific at the moment, but every department has an inclusion focus and are working on vocabulary instruction - how to introduce speciality vocabulary for specific subjects. ○ Q – what steps are being taken to make the vision accessible for all students? There are a lot of words, and may not be understandable for all. ○ We are using the 3 S's – safe, supported, successful. This simplifies our vision for all students. ○ Q – will these 3 S's be visible in school? ○ Maybe in time, but we have lots of ROCKS signage which is still relevant. ○ Q – the vision mentions 'Global Citizens' how do you define this? ○ We have a pupil group who are working with our partner school in Chennai to evaluate and understand what it means to be a global citizen. School Development Plan • School Development Plan is a three year plan and is summarised as <i>"Our aim is to provide transformative opportunities and outcomes to take all pupils beyond their lived experience."</i> • The lead measure will be narrowing the achievement gap for disadvantaged and SEND students to less than the national average. If students belong, they will attend more and consequently achieve more. • DH read an email from CBr in her absence supporting the SDP and noting a couple of possible amendments: ○ In section 1 – Governor monitoring visits are included under monitoring impact for PP strategy ○ Similarly for SEND strategy ○ In section 4 could staff wellbeing also include Governor visits/contact alongside well being surveys.		
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Full Governing Board Meeting 2025/26

	○ Q – there is a mention of ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’. How are those two defined and how will you know that you are moving towards inclusion? ○ We are listening to the pupil voice. Jamie Chandler (JC) has done work on students receiving behaviour sanctions to better understand the reason for their behaviour. Also trying to understand the barriers to learning and why some students do not want to attend lessons. Other measures are participation in community events, extra curricular clubs, intercommunity events. Tutors play an important role here. We are trying to minimise lost learning time. To measure inclusion we have to make sure that the metrics are correct. ○ Q – will there be different metrics for KS3/KS4? ○ At the moment, focus is mostly on KS4 as they are closest to outcomes. We are trying to ensure that at the right time the right student gets the right intervention. There has been a suggestion of national benchmarking in Year 8 which we would support. The DfE have produced lots of statistics comparing to similar schools which has been useful. ● Lots of work going on in The Hub, not just for KS4, the onsite Alternative Provision is a big focus. ○ Q – we have talked about the whole community, but are there any strategies to engage the hard to reach parents? ○ It’s a big challenge and we are working on it. We have employed a Family Support Worker to help engage these families. Over the last six months or so she has been reaching out using WhatsApp which seems to be an effective method of communication. There are also charities such as Parentkind which offer support. KS also works a lot with our LAC/PLAC students. ○ Q – will there be feedback on monitoring the impact of this SDP? ○ Yes, this will be presented at POW committee meetings. ○ Q – Is it realistic? There is a lot in the SDP, how reachable is it? ○ We have three Challenge & Development committee meetings per year and the SLT will present at these to monitor progress. These are our priorities, but we need to be willing to adapt as necessary. ● The Governors voted unanimously in support of this updated SDP.		
10.	Chair’s Report ● DH had recently attended the annual county meeting and will be forwarding some useful links to all Governors. ● MA & DH attended a webinar about new Ofsted approach. Overall it seems to be a better, more collaborative approach but unsure how it will work in practice. ● DH has met with MA and spoken about his wellbeing. ● DH reminded all Governors that they are members of GovernorHub, and this is a useful way to receive information. To set up alerts for this: ○ Log in to GovernorHub account ○ Top right, click on your name and then tap ‘profile’ ○ Go to Settings and turn on ‘Notifications’ and ‘Your Updates’ ○ You will then receive emails from GovernorHub giving you all the latest news.		

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Full Governing Board Meeting 2025/26

	Staffing, Learning & Leadership - LA noted that the latest minutes had a good explanation of the 'rehearsal culture' that has been mentioned in the SDP, this may be useful for Governors to read. Also an explanation of EEF. Pupil Outcomes & Wellbeing - EF encouraged Governors to read the latest minutes.		
14.	Reports: Lead & Link Governor visits, Governor Training GCSE Exam meetings - All exam meetings have now been carried out and all had a Governor present. They were very positive and informative. Visits – Lead Governors - EF is going to arrange a visit to CR for disadvantaged students. - LA had met with JC regarding Attendance and noted the work that he was doing in this area and that it was currently a huge issue. Visits – Link Governors - CBr recently sent a report following her visit to The Hub, it was noted that it would be useful for FGB to have an update on The Hub as it was an important focus in school presently. LB to invite Claire Davies to the next FGB meeting Governor Training - All Governors should now have completed their safeguarding training, JG to check and report to DH.	LB	19.12.25
15.	AOB - ML had raised a concern that student in Food Technology lessons on a Friday afternoon were having to transport hot food items straight from the oven home, sometimes by bus and this was unsafe. MA to investigate. - Guidance from WSCC says that the Governing Board (GB) must consider all apologies for absence at each meeting. Apologies can be considered for approval provided they are received on, or before, the meeting date. If apologies are received after the meeting has finished but on the same date, the GB can consider them for approval at the next meeting as a matter arising. Apologies received after the meeting date cannot be considered as official apologies. Any Governor that misses six months of FGB meetings without the approval of the Governing Board is automatically disqualified.	MA	4.3.26
16.	Date of Next Meeting FGB meeting on Wednesday 4 March 2026 at 3.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 5.10 p.m.		

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