



MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD

Tuesday 24th February 2026, 7 pm

Oathall Community College

Present: Toby Houghton (TDH) Head Teacher; Rowena Chalk (RC) Chair; Brenda Brown (BB) Vice Chair; Nicky Wastie (NW); Sarah Wild (SW); James Horsman (JH); John Parry (JP); Emily Lomax (EM); Steve Hall (SH).

Minutes: Donna Murdoch (DM) Clerk to Governors.

No	Item
1.	<p>Apologies and absence.</p> <p>Vicky Cobb & Richard Carter gave their apologies.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of interest.</p> <p>None</p>
3.	<p>Senior Leadership Presentation</p> <p>Ofsted Inset Presentation</p> <p>TDH gave an outline of the changes to the Ofsted framework. Schools used to operate under what was referred to as an inspection handbook, which has now been replaced with what Ofsted refer to as an inspection toolkit. It was published in September and was enacted for the first inspection in November. Ofsted have tried to streamline the framework and there are now three types of inspection -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full inspections (S.5 Education Act) 2. Monitoring Inspections (S.8 Education Act) 3. Focused Monitoring Inspections (S.8 Education Act). <p>Ofsted sometimes carry out a bit of evidence gathering research, which they will do through monitoring visits. They might want to look at something in particular like how a school is developing in literacy for example.</p> <p>Oathall was inspected in September 2023 and they usually inspect on a four-year cycle, so we should be inspected again between September 2027 and July 2028. However, there is a caveat in</p>

the inspection guidance which allows Ofsted up to one extra academic year to get the inspection done because they have to prioritise some schools over others.

Q: Is it possible not to be inspected within that four or five-year period?

A: No, it is set in legislation and they have to fulfil that requirement.

The new framework requires some adjustments as to how Oathall collects evidence and how we self-evaluate.

Oathall have been working on the improvement item from the last inspection around small groups of students that don't make as good progress as others and our results from last summer would suggest that gap is closed.

The focus of full inspections is leadership as a driver of sustained improvement and inclusion.

The evaluation areas are now -

- Safeguarding
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and behaviour
- Personal development and well-being
- (Early years/post16 provision)
- Leadership and governance.

TDH spoke about the area of leadership and governance and what inspectors consider the extent to which governors:

- Are knowledgeable about their statutory duties and carry them out effectively
- Support and challenge the school's leaders effectively, using the best methods to assure themselves of the quality and impact of different aspects of the school's work
- Understand their role as the responsible body, where applicable, in considering and addressing leaders' workload and well-being
- Assure themselves that leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context and are prioritising the actions for improvement that will have the greatest impact on pupils
- Ensure that systems for monitoring and quality assurance are fair, valid and constructive, and provide leaders and staff with high-quality feedback to inform continuous improvement
- Hold leaders to account appropriately and effectively for the impact of the school's professional learning programme for staff
- Hold leaders to account appropriately and effectively for the school's support and provision for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

	<p>TDH concluded the presentation by going through the new Ofsted grading.</p> <p>Action: TDH proposed that the governors re-align the strands to the Ofsted evaluation areas. The governors agreed that this would be beneficial.</p>
4.	<p>Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th January 2025.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2025 were approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Business and finance reports.</p> <p>The schools financial value standard (SFVS) helps to provide schools with assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management. This was signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Astro refurbishment.</p> <p>The project is underway and the contractor reports they are making good progress.</p> <p>Farm.</p> <p>All the ewes are pregnant and the lambs are due late March/early April. It is still too early to say if our pig is in sow. We have purchased 8 more guinea pigs to increase the numbers to ensure there are enough guinea pigs available to be handled for learning activities.</p> <p>The farm technicians have converted the store which previously housed all the old milking machinery into a workshop which in turn has allowed the garage on the drive to be used to store the tractor.</p> <p>Farm barn roof.</p> <p>The barn roof is increasingly leaky and will need to be replaced. This is likely to cost around £50k. We need to establish if WSCC will fund this from capital maintenance or if we will need to cover this cost ourselves.</p> <p>Cricket practice nets.</p> <p>The ECB approved our bid for the 4 lane cricket practice nets on the top section of the field by the food tech classrooms. These will be funded with £58.8k from the ECB Transforming Facilities grant and £32k from the Goodman Family foundation (a Sussex based organisation). A planning application has been submitted by the school. The cost of this application (£2.9k) is not covered by the grant and has therefore been paid by the school. The application goes through a validation process before being made public – probably in mid-February. Once approved, we can place an order to commence the project with the aim of it being completed in time for the summer term.</p> <p>Minibus</p> <p>The minibus proposal was discussed by the governing body. It was confirmed that the newly leased minibus does not meet the originally intended specification, as it requires a D1 licence to operate. Currently, only a limited number of staff hold a D1 licence and are therefore authorised to drive the vehicle.</p> <p>The following options were considered:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terminate the existing lease agreement and enter into a new lease for a vehicle that can be driven without a D1 licence. 2. Provide D1 licence training to all relevant staff members. 3. Retain the current minibus and provide D1 training to one or two staff members over the coming years. <p>The governors requested further information regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The specifications of the current minibus compared to a suitable alternative vehicle. ● The level of staff interest in undertaking D1 licence training. ● Detailed cost implications for each option. <p>The governors requested further information regarding the specifications of the current minibus compared to a potential replacement vehicle, the level of staff interest in undertaking D1 licence training, and the associated cost implications.</p> <p>This information was provided to the governors the following day, along with a request for each governor to confirm which option they believed would be in the best interests of the school.</p> <p>Responses were received individually, and the outcome was a majority decision to retain the current minibus and proceed with training selected staff members to obtain a D1 licence.</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p>Policies to be approved.</p> <p>Early Career Teachers Policy – no changes to the policy. Approved</p> <p>Governors Expense Policy – approved in principle. See below.</p> <p>Q: If a governor undertakes work on behalf of another school or in another local authority area, are any associated expenses refunded to the school?</p> <p>A: Where a governor undertakes duties on behalf of another school or within another local authority area, any expenses incurred should be submitted directly to the relevant council or commissioning body. The school will only reimburse expenses that relate specifically to duties carried out on behalf of this governing body and in line with the school's approved Governors' Expenses Policy.</p> <p>Q: Can we add to the policy access needs or reasonable adjustments for governors which may be relevant in the future?</p> <p>A: There is an accessibility plan covering the whole school community (including governors).</p> <p>Action: Governors to review accessibility plan to determine whether the Governors' Expenses Policy should be updated to reflect any provisions relating to access needs or reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Community Use Policy - approved in principle. See below.</p> <p>TDH explained that the planners have asked for a community use policy for the new cricket nets application. This is not a new policy, it is the lettings policy but has now been renamed and revised.</p> <p>Q: Will it go through the WSCC legal team?</p>

	<p>A: No, it is not a policy that would go through the WSCC legal team.</p> <p>The governing body stated that they would like this to be viewed by the WSCC legal team and they would also like to see the hire agreement to understand the insurance requirements.</p> <p>Action: Governors to review hire agreement.</p>
7.	<p>Chair's Report</p> <p>RC, TDH & BB completed Independent Review Panel (IRP) training for exclusions.</p> <p>RC has also completed Admissions Appeals training for both primary & secondary schools.</p> <p>RC & BB will be attending termly federation meetings for chair & vice chair governors who will be looking at what the strategic focus on schools should be.</p> <p>RC will be speaking with Tracey Bennett, governor advisor on 29th March.</p>
8.	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>TDH reported on the student engagement activities that have taken place -</p> <p>Federation Orchestra Day which involved approximately 180 students and received positive feedback. The governors would like to thank everyone that was involved in this.</p> <p>A group of year 11 students went to 10 Downing Street on 9th February for an apprenticeship event.</p> <p>80 students went on a skiing trip during half term. Governors thanked staff for giving up their holiday to take the students on this trip.</p> <p>On Thursday 26th February an options evening will be held for parents & students.</p> <p>Year 11 mock exams start on 6th March.</p> <p>There was a visit from the new school improvement partner. TDH will share the report once it has been approved.</p>
9.	<p>Governor Areas of Responsibility & Monitoring Visits.</p> <p>BB & JH attended interviews for a science teacher.</p> <p>RC, BB & JH held a complaint panel.</p> <p>EL & SH were given a tour of Oathall.</p> <p>EL attended the extended learning day for careers networking.</p> <p>BB, RC & CM will be meeting with Mr Radmore on 13th March regarding SEND and will report back to the governors.</p> <p>BB will be meeting with Miss Gyngell on 19th March for the termly safeguarding meeting.</p>
10.	<p>Outstanding Actions: There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.</p>
11.	<p>Any other business.</p> <p>Finance Meeting Monday 23rd March - RC & JP will be attending</p>
12.	<p>Date of next meeting –</p> <p>Monday 23rd March 2026 at 1900 hours.</p>

FGB meeting action log

Meeting at which action raised	Details	Who	Timescale	Completed
24.02.26	Governors key focus areas (strands) to be re-aligned with Ofsted evaluation areas and a school visits schedule established defining each governors responsibility.	All	Summer term	
24.02.26	Governors will review the Accessibility Plan to determine whether the Governors' Expenses Policy should be updated to reflect any provisions relating to access needs or reasonable adjustments.	All	23.03.26	
24.02.26	Governors to review hire agreement in conjunction with the community use policy.	All	23.03.26	