



MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD

Monday 23rd March 2026, 7 pm

Oathall Community College

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

In attendance: Faye Hatchard (FHD) Deputy Headteacher & Jo Grimwood-Read (JGR) Assistant Headteacher.

Minutes: Donna Murdoch (DM) Clerk to Governors.

No	Item
1.	<p>Apologies and absence.</p> <p>Brenda Brown, Carol MacTaggart gave their apologies. Richard Carter was absent.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of interest.</p> <p>None</p>
3.	<p>Senior Leadership Presentation</p> <p>Staff Development & Wellbeing.</p> <p>FHD provided an overview of the staff well-being initiatives and employee benefits offered by the school. These include a comprehensive range of healthcare and well-being services such as 24/7 GP access, physiotherapy, counselling, and mental health support.</p> <p>The school conducts an external formal staff survey every two years, gathering feedback to guide improvements. In the years between these formal surveys, the school focuses on a specific group of staff; this year, it is middle and senior leaders. This approach provides an opportunity for these staff members to share their concerns regarding workload and well-being. The school utilizes a survey based on the Department for Education (DfE) toolkit, which includes a standard set of questions for comparison across other schools.</p>

	<p>FHD shared the results of the recent survey, highlighting key areas including communication demands (such as parental communication), staff meetings, data management and reporting, behaviour management, recording incidents, marking, feedback, homework, and the increasing workload associated with safeguarding and SEND. These findings have highlighted specific areas for further exploration and action, with next steps focused on improving staff well-being and workload management.</p> <p>Staff Development and CPL Focus: Every Lesson Every Day</p> <p>JGR presented on the school's staff development program, which centers on the "Every Lesson Every Day" initiative, relaunched last year. The Continuing Professional Learning (CPL) program is structured to focus on one key area per term, allowing staff to deeply explore specific teaching strategies.</p> <p>The focus area started with questioning and moved on to vocabulary, with each teacher receiving a supporting booklet. JGR delivers the pedagogy for each focus area in a CPL session, followed by staff choosing a particular aspect to explore further. The goal is to give staff the autonomy to experiment with these strategies and to collaborate across subjects. Staff are encouraged to pair up with a "buddy," sometimes from a different subject, to observe each other's lessons, engage in collaborative work, and share their experiences in the second CPL session.</p> <p>This collaborative approach fosters leadership development, with staff encouraged to present examples of how they've implemented the focus areas, such as questioning or vocabulary, in their respective subjects. The program is designed to be a continuous cycle of improvement, closely linked to the school's quality assurance processes.</p> <p>Appraisal targets for teaching staff are aligned with "Every Lesson Every Day," and SLT conducts regular learning walks, using a pro forma to record observations on the focus area (currently vocabulary). This allows for the identification of good practices and areas for further development. Faculty reviews, faculty meetings, and leadership meetings all provide opportunities for ongoing dialogue and improvement. Staff also present micro-presentations as part of their professional development, further fostering leadership.</p> <p>Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive, with 95% of participants rating the CPL sessions as good or excellent. Teachers have appreciated the slower pace of the program, allowing them to fully embed the focus areas across all their classes, rather than concentrating on a single group or year.</p>
4.	<p>Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24th February 2026.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2026 were approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>

<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>Outstanding Actions.</p> <p>Governors key focus areas (strands) to be re-aligned with Ofsted evaluation areas and a school visits schedule established defining each governor's responsibility. To be completed in the summer term.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the Accessibility Plan and all agreed that the Governors' Expenses Policy should be updated to reflect any provisions relating to access needs or reasonable adjustments. This policy has now been updated.</p> <p>Governors have reviewed the hire agreement in conjunction with the community use policy and there are no further actions relating to this.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Business and finance reports.</p> <p>The Finance Committee meeting was held prior to the FGB. RC, JP, JH and TDH were in attendance.</p> <p>School minibus.</p> <p>Following the decision made at the last GB meeting we are now retaining the leased minibus and arranging D1 training for staff who need it. The cost will be allocated in next year's budget.</p> <p>Astro refurbishment.</p> <p>A progress meeting was held in February half term. The contractor is on track for completion just after Easter. A full report of all the original construction defects is being compiled which we will send to WSCC. We are getting lots of enquiries to hire the pitch when it is completed which looks promising for future letting income in the next financial year.</p> <p>Farm.</p> <p>The old pond in the farm field which was completely overgrown and choked with vegetation was refurbished in February. A new fence, pond dipping platform and new native planting was added. It is now a usable teaching resource for the school and visiting schools.</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p> <p>7.9</p>	<p>Policies to be approved.</p> <p>Equality & Diversity Policy</p> <p>Charging & Remissions Policy</p> <p>SEND Information Report</p> <p>Statement of Internal Controls</p> <p>Best Value Statement</p> <p>Procurement procedures</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation Policy</p> <p>Prevention & Management of Unacceptable Customer Behaviour for Schools</p> <p>Finance Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>All policies were reviewed and formally approved by the Governing Body at the meeting.</p>

<p>8.</p>	<p>Chair’s Report</p> <p>RC informed the governors that a “Governor’s Day” will be held on Tuesday 9th June; the agenda is yet to be confirmed. The Chair has requested that governors confirm their availability by the next FGB meeting. There will also be a separate governors’ day on Thursday 9th July, which Ron Searle will attend.</p> <p>RC reported that she had met with Tracy Bennett from the West Sussex County Council Governance Team. They discussed how the board is functioning and its strategic intent.</p> <p>RC attended the Oracy competition. Oathall Community College, Imberhorne School, Sackville School and Downlands Community School took part in an inter-school Oracy competition on Friday of last week. Each school selected students to prepare and deliver a short persuasive speech based on the theme “<i>The Future of Our Planet.</i>”</p> <p>Three students represented Oathall Community College, supported by Miss Sanders’ careful coaching. All students performed extremely well, and the speeches covered a wide range of thoughtful and engaging topics. One of our students won first prize for their speech on the development of megacities. Congratulations to all who took part.</p> <p>JH’s term of office as governor expired on 12th March. He expressed his wish to continue in his role as a co-opted governor and was subsequently re-elected by a unanimous vote.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Headteacher’s Report</p> <p>TDH reported on the school’s consultation regarding uniform changes in light of the forthcoming <i>Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill</i>, which will require secondary schools to limit uniforms to three compulsory branded items. A secondary driver for the review is cost reduction for families. Benchmarking against other schools shows the current uniform sits mid-to-upper range in cost—not the most expensive, but not the cheapest.</p> <p>Feedback was gathered from multiple stakeholders in the consultation process: students (via School Council), parents, support staff and teaching staff.</p> <p>The Survey Findings were very mixed and proposed changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replace blazer with branded jumper ○ Remove tie and replace shirt with polo ○ Change skirt to non-branded ○ Introduce tailored shorts option ○ Remove skirt entirely: Low support <p>It was noted that survey results alone should not determine the outcome, and that minority voices are also important, particularly where students may be affected by sensory needs or neurodiversity. Even where only a small number of students are impacted, changes may still be justified.</p>

	<p>Discussion also reflected on previous consultations, which indicated parental support for retaining blazers due to their practicality, including pockets, weather protection and contribution to school identity.</p> <p>In conclusion, the consultation highlights a broad spectrum of opinions, including strongly opposing views. Any decision on uniform changes will need to carefully balance cost, practicality, inclusivity and stakeholder feedback, as no single option has a clear mandate.</p> <p>TDH reported that meetings have taken place with uniform suppliers to explore potential options for future changes. It was noted that this is not a quick process due to the range of possibilities and the practical considerations around what is feasible.</p> <p>TDH requested that governors provide approval in principle to proceed with making changes, emphasising a preference for a gradual, longer-term approach rather than focusing on specific details at this stage. This would involve a general departure from the current uniform, without governors needing to determine exact items (such as whether a polo shirt is introduced).</p> <p>It was proposed that governors support the continuation of discussions around uniforms as part of a longer-term development plan. This may include the potential removal of the tie and the possible introduction of a polo shirt. Students would be involved in the next phase of the process.</p> <p>TDH confirmed that communication with parents would follow, and that the process will remain under consultation until any changes are formally agreed and implemented. Feedback will continue to be reviewed as part of this process.</p> <p>It was further noted that the more significant work lies in the longer-term development, which would involve forming working groups of students, parents and governors to explore proposals in more detail and contribute to decision-making.</p> <p>This proposal was formally approved by the governing body.</p>
10.	<p>Governor Areas of Responsibility & Monitoring Visits.</p> <p>RC, BB & CM had a meeting on 13.03.26 with Joe Radmore, assistant headteacher about the challenges facing SEND provision in the school and the way forward. A report was provided to the governing board.</p>
11.	<p>Any other business.</p> <p>None.</p>
12.	<p>Date of next meeting –</p> <p>Monday 27th April 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	All	Summer	

	with Ofsted evaluation areas and a school visits schedule established defining each governors responsibility.		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	23.03.26
24.02.26	Governors to review hire agreement in conjunction with the community use policy.	All	23.03.26	23.03.26