



SUMMER TERM (1) 2025 MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

MINUTES

Date Wednesday 30th April 2025
 Time 18.30
 Place Holmer Green Senior School

PRESENT:

Tony Green (TG) – Chair	Roy Kamp (RK)
Paul Davies (PD) – Vice Chair	Sue Latham-Lewis (SLL)
Ed Hillyard (EH) – Headteacher	Steve Pilgrim (SP)
Claire Asare-Archer (CAA)	Beccy Roberts (BR)
Kirsty de Groot (KDG)	Victoria Strutt (VS)
Jeremy Hunt (JH)	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sian Beswick (SB)	Director of Finance & Resources
Lynda Jackson (LJ)	Director of Compliance & HR
Jenny Knight (JK)	Governance Professional
Sarah Lary (SL)	Senior Deputy Headteacher
Sarah Towers (ST)	Deputy Headteacher
Alan Wooller (AW)	Deputy Headteacher
Laura Foster(LF)	Deputy Headteacher
Mia Barnes (MB)	Student Associate Governor

APOLOGIES Michelle Edwards, Paula Myburgh

NOT PRESENT: Melissa Miller

Action Support Challenge

Governors' questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TG welcomed everyone to the meeting. EH introduced the new Deputy Headteacher, Laura Foster. Apologies were accepted from Michelle Edwards and Paula Myburgh 	
2	<p>Notification of Any Other Business</p> <p>FPH&S Committee update to be included as item 8.2</p>	
3	<p>Declarations of Interest against this agenda</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest, either new or against items on this agenda.</p>	

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
4	<p>Minutes of the FGB Meeting held 5 February 2025 and Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors approved the Minutes as an accurate record. <p>Actions and Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Allegations training link had been distributed and seems to work. Anyone struggling with the link to get in touch with SB. Governors who complete the training to record it in their training profile on GovernorHub. Governor training plan for 2025-26 to use modules from GovernorHub Knowledge as more easily accessible. EH contributed to the accountability reform consultation. Mobile phone policy changes complete but policy was not in papers for this meeting with further changes as a result of the new smartphone pouch system. See policies section below. All other policy changes and actions complete. 	Govs
5	<p>Governor Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing Body is not currently in need of further members and no terms are due to expire. No current membership issues. 	
6	<p>Governor Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGA 'Being Strategic' document had been circulated, as context for the forthcoming strategy development working groups that are due to take place on 7 and 21 May. JK circulated the training logs for NGA Learning Link and GovernorHub. Governors are reminded that any training undertaken, including webinars, Managing Allegations training, reading of the above NGA document, any Learning Link modules etc should be manually logged by Governors in their own training profile on GovernorHub. Any training done on GovernorHub Knowledge will auto-populate into this area. Inspections may ask to see this evidence of Governor training and development. 	Govs
7	STRATEGIC PLANNING	
7.1	<p>Report of Student Management Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report had been circulated and MB invited questions. <p>Q – Regarding BSL, a GCSE is available for this. Do you think this would be worth offering at HGSS?</p> <p>A – It would be a nice addition for applied students as it is necessary and a little bit unique.</p> <p>Q – How has the new mobile phone policy been received by students?</p> <p>A – There has been a mixed reaction. Phones are a distraction but there are some cases in which they are useful at school, e.g. to play music while</p>	

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	<p>independently studying. This make the study room quieter. I can see it will be a good thing from the teachers' point of view.</p> <p>Q – Congratulations on the debating competition!</p> <p>A – This was much enjoyed and very fulfilling for students. For the inter-schools debating competition 25 schools (including grammars) were whittled down to 8 and HGSS has been the only non-grammar school to get into the final both times.</p> <p>There being no further questions, MB thanked Governors for having her as Student Associate Governor, commenting that Governors had been welcoming and it had been an honour.</p> <p>TG thanked the Student Associate Governors for their time and wished them luck with the final stage of their time at school and an enjoyable prom.</p> <p>MB left at 18.54</p>	
7.2	<p>Report of Headteacher and SEF</p> <p>EH had circulated his report and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Safeguarding visit will be taking place on 12th June. AW will be attending as the school representative. • 219 pupils will be joining Year 7 in September 2025 against a PAN of 210, so the school is full. Appeal panels will be taking place for some of those that did not get in. • The problem of lower numbers of students in primary schools is likely to start to affect HGSS in 2028. School and Governors will need to be mindful of this in terms of budgets. • There has been a decrease in the number of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions. It is hoped this will continue and the additional resource now LF has taken up her post should help. • The Independent Review Panel held recommended reconsideration for a permanently excluded student and the reconsideration panel subsequently reinstated. • Attendance is above national but dropped just before Easter, so this is being carefully monitored. • There have been lots of trips and enrichment opportunities, notably Robot Wars yesterday, when the HGSS team won. There have also been lots of opportunities for students to give back to the community. • Sixth Form students have been fantastic role models for the rest of the school with their mentoring being a real strength. • A new Assistant Headteacher, Emily Reid, has been appointed with responsibility for Safeguarding. 	

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	<p>Y11 results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the first of two years where progress will not be reported as KS2 SATS data is not available for these students due to Covid. HGSS is basing its data on CATS scores but this produces a higher target. • Attainment 8 data shows slightly lower projections this year. To tackle this, interventions have been held all through this year with students receiving one hour of learning tailored specifically to the subjects in which they need the most help. • Hardworking students have been rewarded with an independent study period; others with tailored intervention. Students are being kept at school for longer before study leave starts, with structured revision sessions organized. • The Heads of Maths and English are running booster sessions especially for those lower prior attaining students. • This year group has had an unusual number of students who have not attended. A lot of work has been put into this and alternative provision made, including exam provision – small rooms, points of contact etc. • Rank order has now been done twice and demonstrates that ATL (attitude to learning) is absolutely key. The message is: If you turn up and try hard you will do well. • Those taking early practical exams such as construction, will receive additional support in English & Maths as their time is freed up. <p>Q – Why is the English and Maths 9-5 projection so different to the target?</p> <p>A – Last year the projection at this stage was 22% but 55% was achieved. The data is skewed in some ways, such as the fact that students only sit one English mock in each period, rather than two, and not all six Science papers are possible for mocks. Much progress is made between Christmas and exams. The final results tend to be higher as the higher English grade of the two is used.</p> <p>Q – Is this projection therefore unhelpful?</p> <p>A – The predicted grades help School understand who most needs support. Data comes from mock exams, which is only part of the picture. Mocks also determine which papers students are entered for (e.g. foundation or higher) and this decision can also help maximise final results.</p> <p>Q – The English & Maths 9-5 target for 2024 was 59% but in 2025 it is 89.3%. Why is there such a big jump here?</p> <p>A – Fischer Family Trust data is used and target-setting software. This is the target that it has thrown out, based on the use of CATS rather than SATS. CATS measure very different skills to SATS. For this reason, schools will not be asked to report P8 for the next 2 years. The SATS data for current year 10 and 11 is based off teacher award as there were no actual external SATS for</p>	

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	<p>students to sit due to Covid. This has therefore skewed their prior attainment data and resulting predictions.</p> <p>Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to attendance was done in Autumn 1. Since then, the rate at which attendance has dropped has slowed. In the spring term we were proud to ‘hold the line’ for ten weeks at 93.2% but then the last week things changed for the worse, with Eid, illness and early holidays taking their toll. • Currently absence is still above national average but only by 1.1%. • Year 11 has been a concern but work is being done to maintain their attendance for the last term, including delaying Y11 study leave. This year group has been disproportionately affected by ERSA (emotionally related school avoidance) and these pupils’ A8 scores are very low because of their absence. • There is more careful targeting now, e.g. at transition, looking at attendance profiles from primary school and also sibling attendance rates to know what to expect. • 6% was lost in the first two weeks of the year due to students coming back late from holidays. <p>Q – Was the lateness of Easter a factor in families taking holidays early? What is done about it?</p> <p>A – Possibly. Letters are sent home and parents are at risk of being fined.</p> <p>Q – Please could we have a breakdown of authorised/unauthorised absence?</p> <p>A – AW to produce this for the next report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Hood, school improvement partner, came into School in the Autumn term and undertook learning walks. There were some clear emergent themes so the work was paused to deal with these and David is returning this term to review and to see the remaining subject areas. His feedback was very useful. <p>Q – Are there currently any staff on maternity leave? A 10-day paternity leave is shown but not listed as absence from work. Why is this?</p> <p>A – No teaching staff are on maternity leave. The paternity leave is just for governor information; this is not categorised as absent from work.</p> <p>Q – Is the gender mix of incoming Year 7 students known? Last year there were 20% more boys.</p> <p>A – We have no say in this either way.</p> <p>Q – Is there evidence to show the impact of the rank order system?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AW</p>

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	<p>A – We are tracking this using 7/8 baseline points from KS2. Rank order is worked out at Assessment Point 1 (AP1). Interventions then take place for those who are far from their baseline. Those who are more than 80 places away are given the ‘gold’ standard of intervention (which may be pastoral, SEN or academic). We will look at the impact of interventions vs the slip in rank order, then we will look at Assessment Point 2 (AP2) to see what worked.</p> <p>Q – Can you give us highlights, e.g. numbers that improved in the rankings? Is there any pupil feedback?</p> <p>A – After rank order has been completed for Years 7 and 10, we will gather pupil and parent feedback. Anecdotally, parent feedback so far has been good.</p> <p>Q – Do parents know about the interventions?</p> <p>A – Yes. Heads of Department communicate this to them. It’s about isolating the things that work to make a difference. It is a powerful system especially for those who are quietly underperforming.</p> <p>Q – Regarding 3.2 in the HT Report (Equality & Diversity) should school be aiming for ‘equity’ rather than ‘equality’ with more vulnerable students? It isn’t about treating everyone the same, but about positive discrimination.</p> <p>Q – Could training be provided to Governors on the new Ofsted framework, as major changes are expected?</p> <p>A – Ofsted inspections will be paused July to November while the new framework is brought in. Training will be found for Governors in Autumn Term 1.</p> <p>Q - Will other students hear about the success of the team at Robot Wars?</p> <p>A – This will be communicated in Friday notices with pictures, which goes out to all students.</p> <p>Q – What is the latest on the mobile phone policy change?</p> <p>A – We have a working party looking at the whole implementation process, including messaging to parents. We are working towards a half term start.</p> <p>Q – What is the status of the SIMS software update? Pupils and parents have not benefited from this hiatus.</p> <p>A – NextGen SIMS is being road tested alongside an alternative solution. The teacher-facing part will be installed this term but we are not jumping in feet first with the rest until it has been fully completed and tested.</p> <p>MFL</p> <p>EH highlighted the paper circulated alongside the Headteacher’s Report outlining MFL Curriculum Rationale and asked Governors to consider whether the position should be maintained or changed.</p>	<p>JK</p>

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	<p>EBacc target is 95% by 2026. This requires everyone to study Maths, 2x English, 2x Sciences, 1x Humanities and 1x MFL. Currently only 26% of students are studying this combination. If any choice is given about studying MFL to GCSE, School will never meet the target figure for EBacc. If a language is mandated for GCSE there will be implications on staffing and it may not be possible to find enough language teachers in the current market.</p> <p>School's preference is not to force students to study a language as they already have very few options, but to increase the % taking a language (and qualifying for the EBacc) by making MFL as interesting as possible in KS3.</p> <p>Q – What is the impact on School of not meeting the EBacc target?</p> <p>A – It could affect our ratings but so many schools have not met the target that it's relatively less important. There are not enough MFL teachers in the country and culturally we are not strong in languages.</p> <p>Q – What choices do students have?</p> <p>A – They can study French, German or Spanish.</p> <p>Q – What about SEND students, who often find learning another language very difficult?</p> <p>A – In these cases we may have to slim down what else they are studying to allow them to do well, which is an approach taken by some high performing schools such as the Michaela Academy.</p> <p>Governors agreed to support School's preferred approach. However, there is a broader discussion to be had about parents understanding how the MFL curriculum works and what choices are available etc.</p> <p>Some students may not continue to study MFL at GCSE if they are not offered their choice of languages earlier on.</p>	
7.3	<p>Annual Governors Report</p> <p>Last year's annual report was circulated for new governors' information. This year's version is underway with contributions being written by various people. The final version will come to the next FGB meeting for approval.</p>	
7.4	<p>Estates Update</p> <p>SB had circulated a report.</p> <p>Q – Regarding the coffee lounge works, wasn't this recently refurbished?</p> <p>A – Furniture was changed but the flooring wasn't done and this has become a health & safety issue.</p> <p>Q – Are the CCTV upgrades reflected in the DPIA assessment?</p> <p>A – New cameras produce sharper imagery but have no sound so it does not affect the DPIA. CCTV is used retrospectively, it is not monitored in real time.</p>	

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	<p>Q – What is the maximum financial outlay for the CIF bids, if successful? A – The result is expected in May. The Wolfson grant is for three science labs and the likely school contribution would be £180-£220k from reserves and the school fund. There would also be a £65k contribution to CIF bids if school is successful in both. Work would be done next summer at the earliest.</p> <p>Q – Can the solar power generated be exported? This was part of the original justification for the scheme. A – The piece of equipment to allow export has not been fitted. There is a six month deadline for fitting this but this may miss the summer gain.</p> <p>Q – Why wasn't it fitted on day 1 as per the agreement? A – The team has been challenging on site, there has been lots of chasing and little communication since delivery. It has been disappointing.</p> <p>Q – Can school be recompensed for loss of six months' revenue? A – LJ to ask this question.</p> <p>Q – What has happened about the expansion plan snagging? A – A meeting has been held with Bucks and the Wilmott Dixon team and this is now being thrashed out with fortnightly meetings in the diary. LJ to update Governors on this.</p>	<p>LJ</p> <p>LJ</p>
7.5	<p>Management Accounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The accounts for March had been circulated. <p>Q – On page 1 there is a reference to a £25k capital donation. What is the situation with a donation that is part of a contract renewal? A – This is the extension of the catering contract not a renewal. Catering has no actual value as the money goes straight to the catering company, not through the school's accounts. School is happy with the caterers' service and has extended their contract for a further three years. The sum of £25k is treated as a capital grant in the accounts.</p> <p>Q – How is this documented as this did not go to tender? What is the policy on donations and what is the value of the contract extension? This needs to be transparent. Contracts should be covered by Government Procurement Regulations. A – We did not go to tender at this stage as the impact of NI is not yet known, so this was an extension rather than a new contract. The caterers have been in place for 5+2 years and this is a 3-year extension. A value has not been placed on the contract as it does not go through the school accounts. It was agreed that SB will work out the value of the catering contract and take legal advice on this issue. The matter will be put on the agenda for the FPH&S meeting and the policy point considered.</p>	<p>SB</p>

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7.6	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>The document was reviewed at FPH&S and had been circulated to FGB for information.</p> <p>Q – Why is the reputational risk score only 3 despite background issues?</p> <p>A – Section to be reviewed at the next FPH&S meeting.</p> <p>Q – Communications risk score is incorrectly calculated.</p> <p>A – LJ to amend.</p>	<p>LJ</p> <p>LJ</p>
8	COMMITTEE REPORTS	
8.1	<p>HR Panels, Complaints Panels, Student Discipline Committees</p> <p>Recent panels list and outcome of each had been circulated along with a post-complaint actions log. This will be reviewed again at the July FGB meeting to ensure actions have been followed through.</p> <p>RK reviewed the GDPR and CCTV policies in the light of the complaint panel and will pass comments to LJ.</p>	<p>EH</p> <p>RK</p>
8.2	<p>FPH&S Committee</p> <p>Minutes were added to the papers file on GovernorHub and SP highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional budget is projecting at £384k deficit; however it is expected that this position will be improved upon. Reasons for the deficit are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased Alternative Provision costs, particularly for Y9 and Y11; but as Y11 will leave shortly this should improve for next year. Y7 incoming student positions are not yet known. ○ Fair Access Protocol forces a certain number of students back into mainstream education and this results in significant expenditure. ○ EHCP assessments are now taking 50 weeks instead of 20 weeks. School has to fund the student in the interim. ○ Government is not fully funding the NI increase. • Consequently, School is having to look hard at budgets to reduce costs and increase the size of the Sixth Form to bring in more funding (though this is lagged). • School has more students with SEMH issues now. The Base is the new provision dealing with this, however for next year School is looking to use and The Bridge this to set students up for the day and then get them into mainstream lessons, rather than allowing them to stay in The Bridge for longer periods. This will reduce cost of staffing in this area. <p>Q – Having seen how effective the SEN provision is, and what a positive experience it is for students using it, is it concerning for this to be reduced? If The Bridge was not there, where would these students go? Since we pay</p>	

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	<p>high alternative provision costs, would it be worth setting one up at HGSS ourselves?</p> <p>A – Creating our own AP has been considered but would bring along a whole host of safeguarding issues and change the nature of the school. We need to consider what is best for the majority of students here.</p>	
9	GOVERNOR REPORTS	
9.1	<p>Chair</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>	
9.2	<p>Development</p> <p>JK – training via GovernorHub and Learning Link already discussed in item 6.</p>	
9.3	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>MM was not present but EH thanked her for coming in and providing a visit report, which had been circulated.</p>	
9.4	<p>SEND</p> <p>PD had circulated his report and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 week EHCP assessments now taking 50 weeks. 1400 now waiting for EHCP assessments across Bucks. Students are missing out on early interventions as a result of this. However, where a need is recognized, School is picking up the cost of support before diagnosis. 	
9.5	<p>Disadvantage</p> <p>BR reported that a meeting is scheduled with AW for 14th May.</p>	
9.6	<p>Careers</p> <p>BR had circulated her visit report and associated documents and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting was on Monday with Jo Selleck. Previous actions were considered and these are on track. Much has been done, including UniFrog rollout. There has been an update to the Gatsby expectations, including more 1:1 meetings. School is worried about being able to meet the target here. Progress is pleasing but there are constraints, e.g. balancing time off curriculum for careers work. Governors are encouraged to pass on any useful contacts for work experience/careers links etc including those who may be able to help with conducting mock interviews for students. The email address for passing on contacts is included in the Careers visit report. 	Govs
10	POLICY REVIEWS AND APPROVALS	
10.1	<p>Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated with changes regarding harassment of staff and inclusion of this information in staff inductions. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no further comments and the policy was approved. 	
10.2	Internal Appeals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. Last page: dates need changing. Policy approved subject to this. 	LJ
10.3	Leave of Absence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated and was approved with no changes. 	
10.4	Whistleblowing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. Last page: dates need changing. Policy approved subject to this. 	LJ
10.5	Attendance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. Page 9 – Expectation for Headteacher to respond within 48 hours to be added. Spelling Holmer/Homer to be checked. Policy approved subject to these amendments. 	LJ
10.6	ECT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. Minor amends: Page 3 grammatical error; role rather than name on last page. Policy approved subject to these amendments. 	LJ
10.7	Examinations Contingency Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated and was approved. 	
10.8	Artificial Intelligence (AI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy had been circulated. JH to submit suggested extensive changes by email. Policy to be brought back to July FGB. 	JH/LJ
10.9	Mobile Phone policy Amendments requested at the last meeting had been made but the policy had not been recirculated. Q – What sanctions are given for breaching the new mobile phone policy, including deliberate damage or loss of pouches? A – Phones will be confiscated. Pouches are given to students in the first place, but if they are lost or damaged they will have to pay for a replacement themselves. Q – If a student has no pouch, what will School do? A – We will have an additional stock available. At the morning line-up students will be checked putting their phones in pouches. If students are	

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	<p>resistant we will deal with this. Random checks will take place in tutor groups. Sanctions will be reviewed once the policy has been implemented and the reaction experienced.</p> <p>Q – The policy says phones in pouches must be in bags not pockets. Why? A – The pouches are too big to be kept in a pocket. LJ to tighten the language around exceptional circumstances for when students are allowed phones (i.e. only medical reasons). Policy was approved subject to this amendment.</p>	LJ
11	OTHER MATTERS	
12	<p>Dates and Times of Meetings Next FGB meeting: Weds 9 July 2025, 6.30pm Governor Day: Friday 13 June 2025, 9am – 12.30pm School Development Plan meetings: 7 and 21 May 2025</p>	
13	<p>Any Other Business None. TG thanked everyone for their time.</p>	
14	<p>Evaluation of Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors agreed that the meeting had been conducted appropriately and effectively in terms of SIP priorities and student outcomes. 	

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Minutes approved by the Governing Board:

Signed

Date

Mr T Green – Chairman of the Board