

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
20th October 2025
4.30pm in School Library**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, Sarah Bakhtiari (Chair), Rob Bradshaw, Matt Hillier, Alice Killip, Matt Nott, Catherine Packham, Eugenie Teasley, Jessica Verdugo
Officers Present:	Clare Doran (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Sara Bailey, Richard Baker, Bonnie Crocker, Cassie Dale, Loretta Lloyd, Giles Ward

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
	Note – items 5 (b) and (c) were taken before item 3. The minutes are recorded in original agenda order.	
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Eleanor Fagan and Emma Hill. Emma Morey was absent from the meeting. Sarah Bakhtiari confirmed she had to leave the meeting at 5.45 for the Local Authority Chair’s Update and that Matt Hillier would take over as Chair at that point.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest The Declarations Register was included within the meeting pack. No declarations made relating to agenda items. Clerk requested any outstanding forms.</p>	
2	<p>Last Meeting Dated 29th September 2025</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved 11 pages of minutes from the meeting held on 29th September 2025. The Chair signed the minutes as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p>Richard Baker arrived prior to matters arising.</p> <p>b) Actions and Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda The Chair thanked everyone for putting themselves forward for the roles and responsibilities. The Chair confirmed that there was a vacancy for the SEND responsibility and asked for a volunteer representative. The Chair thanked Mick Baker for agreeing to step into the role temporarily in the meantime.</p>	

	<p>The Chair also advised that the Clerk had submitted to the local authority the board's intention to increase the board from 12 to 13 members, and they were currently awaiting the sealed copy but did not anticipate any concerns. The Chair advised they could not do anything further until this was completed but would keep the board updated.</p> <p>Jessica Verdugo arrived after matters arising.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>The Chair thanked the board for their support as she stepped into the Chair role. The Chair said that she would value the opportunity to meet with each member of the board individually, either before a FGB meeting or online, just for 20 minutes to get to know each other a little better and understand their specialisms and backgrounds, with a view to making the board meetings even more productive. The Chair confirmed that the Clerk would be in contact to start arranging those meetings.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed she attended the induction for Chairs at the BEEM last week which had been very interesting. The Chair explained that one of the things the BEEM were really keen to stress was how the governing body's role was very strategic; it was about setting the vision, monitoring outcomes and about holding the school to account for impact, by looking at how the school measured impact and how they saw that impact changing over time.</p> <p>The Chair explained that the Head and the leadership team were responsible for the operational running of the school, for example the detailed policies, the procedures and the day-to-day decisions. The Chair said that the training reminded her that it was perfectly right that governors asked for assurance, but that assurance should be about whether systems worked and what the evidence showed, rather than about how they were being carried out on a day-to-day basis. The Chair said that keeping that distinction clear helped the board to stay focused on improving outcomes for the students. The Chair said it was about supporting the school through good challenge but also making sure that they steered away from operational matters because that was not where their expertise and time was best used.</p> <p>Eugenie Teasley agreed that it was a very good point and that she felt there were moments where they could go into operational grounds, so asked what they could do collectively as a group to flag that this was happening. The Chair suggested a strategic champion in the meetings and perhaps the members could take it in turns to be that champion and listen to the meeting with an eye as to whether the conversation was operational or strategic and if it became operational, then that person could flag that to the board. Rob Bradshaw was recommended as the first volunteer for the next meeting and Rob confirmed that he would be happy to take on that role at the next meeting if he was available.</p> <p>The Chair said, referring back to the training with the BEEM, that it was also interesting to hear about the NGA materials that all governors had access to and to ensure that</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

	<p>those were seen as a supplement but not a replacement for the BEEM materials. The Chair said that the BEEM was really important as it was so local to Brighton and Hove.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the NGA were really useful as a resource but it was more a theoretical look at governance and it was really important that they were accessing the BEEM training and asked if governors had not done the induction yet, to please do that, as it would give clarity to the role and the purpose of the board. The Chair said she would ask the Clerk to look at the training records and to email anyone who had not yet completed the course with the BEEM to get those booked in. The Clerk confirmed she would check when that course had last been updated.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that she wanted to get individual views about how the meetings were going. The Chair confirmed that the Clerk would send out an anonymous survey to the board members to help understand the things that they thought were working well and whether there were any changes they could implement to help them be even more effective. The Chair said the purpose was to understand how it felt to be sitting in their seats in the meeting. The Chair confirmed the survey would only take about five minutes.</p> <p>The Chair left the meeting after the update and the Head took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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4	<p>Head's Report /Update</p> <p>The Head said he was going to start with something that wasn't in the Head's Report and confirmed that he had heard that morning, that the adjudicator had come through about the admissions and the PAN and confirmed that it had not gone through with regards the PAN, but the catchment areas had.</p> <p>The Head explained that there was a 150- page report and in essence it had been agreed with the local authority to shift the catchment areas, which would hit more the east side of Brighton and impact on attendance. However, they had made the decision to not reduce the PAN for Dorothy Stringer or Blatchington Mill. The Head confirmed that the admissions deadline for Year 6 into 7 was 31st October and they would be sticking at 330 which was good news and bad news.</p> <p>The Head said it was good news in that they would potentially have a higher income next year, but the bad news was it would have a knock-on impact on other schools in the city. The Head advised that he was preparing a press release to highlight the school's strong performance within Brighton and Hove, noting that this would support efforts to attract local applicants and achieve PAN</p> <p>The governors asked if the decision could be appealed and the Head confirmed that the decision was final. The governors also asked what the reason was for the decision. The Head advised that it came down to parent preference and people in the catchment area potentially would not get into their local school. The Head added that the impact would have potentially been that 160 people would not get into Dorothy Stringer or Varndean.</p> <p>The Head advised that the paper went into great detail about where all the priorities were and how many people would potentially apply and had gone into more detail than the Local Authority originally submitted; they even included information about class divide and how much impact that was having.</p> <p>The Head said that this was not included in his report, but he wanted the governors to know, before it was in the public domain.</p> <p>The Head then referred to the report included within the meeting pack. The Head advised that their open mornings had all been full and they had run these from May all the way through until the end of the summer term. In addition, they had the open evening and an additional two weeks of open mornings and people were still clambering to try and come in. The Head confirmed that they had put on more open mornings than any other school and they were very successful in showcasing how calm the school was and the quality of teaching and learning taking place. The Head said that was why he wanted to get out there and get the extra 30 people that they were now going to need.</p> <p>The Head said that they had to consider that between offer day in April and starting in September, 50 people either moved area or went to independent school. The Head added that potentially less would go to independent school now with the VAT on fees, but they needed to be aware of that taking place. The Head said that the other thing to</p>	
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	<p>consider was that the PAN at Kings had been increased permanently, so that would also have an impact, and Cardinal Newman, as its own admissions authority, admitted 370 pupils last year against a published number of 360. The Head noted that a small number of pupils transferred to Cardinal Newman around the time of the census, which had an impact on the school's income.</p> <p>The Head referred to the safeguarding data in the Head's report but advised that this had already been covered by Giles Ward and Bonnie Crocker in their presentation.</p> <p>The Head said in terms of the data in the report, the pupil numbers had not changed and they were still at 1641, so still 9 under PAN and 1 under PAN in Year 7, so they could still be allocated pupils from anywhere, for example they could leave a school on the outskirts and join if they apply.</p> <p>The Head said that in terms of building works, there was nothing further to report, other than the fact that their boilers were coming to the end of their lifespan and the biggest costs that they had at the moment, were roofs and boilers. Sara Bailey added that with two and half years left, the focus was very much going to be on PFI sorting out boilers, plant, bigger issues and then the school would deal with carpets and painting and everything else.</p> <p>The Head reported that there were no staff leavers this term and confirmed the appointment of Emily Whitby, who will join the school in March as Head of Drama. Ms Whitby brings extensive experience in teaching and pastoral leadership, having previously held senior roles in both UK and international schools.</p> <p>The Head said that in terms of attendance he did not plan to repeat what had already been covered by Loretta Lloyd in her report and Sara Bailey would present the budget report.</p>	
5	<p>Other Reports</p> <p>a) Budget Report</p> <p>Sara Bailey explained that we were halfway through the financial year, and so far were on track, with some variances; some areas they had spent slightly more than anticipated and some areas slightly less, but generally speaking the finances were where they anticipated.</p> <p>Sara said that in terms of staffing that was always the biggest cost and the figures included within the report included all the increases. Sara explained that the increases were higher than what they had budgeted for because they had calculated everything on 2.8% uplift and it ended up being 3.2% and 4% but all those figures had now been factored in.</p> <p>Sara said that there had been a council change in terms of when teachers got to the upper pay scale; previously they had been advised to budget on the basis of moving from upper one to upper two being a two year process and then from upper two to</p>	

upper three also being a two year process, but this had now moved to an annual basis. Sara explained that this meant they had to work on the assumption that everybody would automatically increase each year. Sara added that this year it had not had a very big impact because of it only being 2 pay scales and it being 6 months of the year, but next year it would have a much bigger impact in terms of expenditure.

Sara said the key expenditure this year had been premises and a lot of work had been done by PFI, but they had also done a lot of work themselves and that continued to be a priority to make sure the school continued to look as good as it was already now looking.

Sara said that the council were now requiring them to submit an outturn every month. Sara explained that she had always done this from September to April anyway and shared it with the governors but now it was a requirement.

Sara said that over the half term she would get the first draft of the next three-year budgets drafted so she could provide that to the business governors, but the biggest challenge in terms of income was that there were still unknowns.

Sara explained that there was a grant that the government were supposed to be giving this year to help support with the uplift in teachers' pay, but they were not telling schools how much money that was going to be until January/February for this financial year. Sara explained that they had released the methodology, but they did not know what the core figure was that they were working with yet.

Sara said that the canteen was doing well and that was all tracking on budget and so was all the income they were getting in from settings, which was great considering both the ATP and the sports hall were closed for many weeks whilst the refurbishments were going on.

Eugenie Teasley asked about the Yondr pouches and what had been factored in, in terms of the percentage of parents who might not pay. Sara confirmed that they would get the money from those parents. Cassie Dale explained that in terms of the pouches the highest use was in Year 7, and they expected that to be the same next year, the main problem was Year 11 as they have had 4 years in school of using their phone.

The Head noted that the in-year budget position remained stable and that planned expenditures had been effectively managed. Financial benchmarking data provided useful context on how the school compared with others in the local area, and this information would be reviewed in more detail by the Business Committee. The Head confirmed that overall financial metrics indicated a positive position relative to comparable schools

The Business Manager reported that the budget remained ahead of target at this stage. Staff Governor Matt Nott queried the increase in high-needs expenditure. The Head explained that this reflected the expansion of the school's alternative curriculum

provision, now supported by additional qualified staff within the Foster Centre and related areas. He emphasised the need to balance financial sustainability with the school's commitment to inclusive education.

b) Attendance Report

The Head of Attendance, Loretta Lloyd, presented an overview of the school's attendance data for the previous academic year, showing comparisons with national and local benchmarks. Attendance was highest in Year 7 and typically improved again in Key Stage 4. Governors noted that Year 11 attendance was affected by study leave and agreed that coding for this period would be reviewed to ensure data accuracy.

Governors discussed the overall position, which currently remains below national averages, and noted the school's target to reach the top 50 percent of schools nationally by July 2029. This target applies across all key groups, including pupils with SEND and those eligible for free school meals.

Loretta shared benchmarking information against both local schools and schools with similar profiles nationally. The data will support ongoing strategic planning and inform Ofsted readiness work. The Business Committee will continue to monitor progress through regular reporting.

The presentation outlined the key strands of the school's attendance strategy: improved accuracy and consistency in recording; whole-school monitoring and early intervention; a strengthened form tutor programme focused on wellbeing, belonging and resilience; targeted mentoring and individualised support for persistently or severely absent pupils.

Governors discussed the importance of engaging parents in attendance improvement and noted that as the strategy develops, communication with families will become an increasing focus.

Loretta confirmed that the new form tutor programme was now embedded and designed to encourage positive daily habits and early conversations with pupils. Over 400 pupils currently have an assigned mentor, and early feedback indicates the programme is improving engagement. Staff across departments are also being encouraged to take an active role in attendance promotion to ensure a shared approach.

The Foster Centre continues to play a central role in supporting pupils who are severely absent, with tailored academic and wellbeing provision aimed at helping them re-establish consistent routines. Governors acknowledged the balance required between sustaining this level of support and managing associated costs.

Initial data from the current academic year shows signs of improvement, though it remains early in the cycle. Governors welcomed this progress and the comprehensive systems now in place to support attendance improvement.

The Chair thanked Loretta for her detailed presentation and the clarity provided on data, strategy and next steps.

Richard Baker left part way through the Attendance Presentation.

Loretta Lloyd left after the Attendance Presentation was finished.

c) Safeguarding Report

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Giles Ward, presented a report focusing on trends in child-on-child incidents over time and the actions being taken to address them.

Giles outlined the structure of the safeguarding team and confirmed that all members were trained to the required level, with refresher training completed every two years. Governors were shown examples of how safeguarding information is shared across the school community, including posters displayed for pupils and staff.

A summary of data for 2024–25 was reviewed. The majority of incidents were recorded in the lower year groups (Years 7–9) and were most commonly categorised as physical or verbal in nature. Giles explained that recording practices had been refined to ensure greater consistency, with all incidents now logged individually on CPOMS. The adjusted method allows for clearer comparison with previous years.

Analysis showed that reported incidents tend to reduce as pupils progress through the school, reflecting the positive impact of pastoral interventions. The data also indicated that incidents are more frequent during the summer term, which may relate to the longer length of that term.

Governors discussed reporting routes and were assured that pupils can raise concerns with any member of staff, through parents or carers, or via the online reporting system. All concerns are logged by staff and reviewed by the safeguarding team.

Data on prejudiced incidents was also reviewed. Race-related incidents remained the most common, followed by those linked to sexual orientation. Governors were informed that this pattern is reflected nationally and that awareness and education on these issues form part of the school's PSHE and assembly programme.

Giles described the range of interventions available, including pastoral mentoring, restorative work, counselling, the Foster Centre, and engagement with external agencies such as the police, who recently supported activities during National Hate Crime Week. A structured pathway is now in place to guide responses, with appropriate escalation where behaviour is repeated or serious.

Weekly safeguarding briefings ensure staff are clear on expectations and recording standards. The school also promotes diversity and inclusion through events and curriculum work, such as Culture Day and lessons exploring identity and respect.

	<p>Governors discussed how safeguarding capacity is deployed across year groups and noted the higher concentration of incidents in the lower school. Giles explained that additional staffing in these areas would be desirable but would depend on resource availability.</p> <p>The DSL confirmed that repeat incidents are reviewed on a case-by-case basis through the school's anti-bullying pathway, and that early indications show this system is strengthening consistency and follow-up. Further analysis of repeat behaviours will be shared with governors once sufficient data is available.</p> <p>Governors also discussed communication with parents, particularly around Year 6 transition and awareness of expectations regarding respectful behaviour. The DSL agreed this was an area for further development.</p> <p>The school continues to work closely with the local authority on reporting requirements relating to the six protected characteristics (Gender Identity, Race/Ethnicity, Religious Beliefs, SEND/Disability, Sexual Orientation, Sex). Comparative data between schools remains limited, as categorisation practices vary.</p> <p>The DSL and Head both highlighted improvements in the accuracy and timeliness of safeguarding reporting since the introduction of CPOMS and the appointment of a full-time Safeguarding Officer. These measures have significantly strengthened oversight and response.</p> <p>Governors thanked Giles for a comprehensive and transparent presentation. It was agreed that future reports would include an evaluation of the impact of interventions and pathways once sufficient longitudinal data becomes available.</p> <p>Rob Bradshaw arrived part way through the safeguarding presentation.</p> <p>Giles and Bonnie left the meeting after the presentation had finished.</p>	
6	<p>School Policies</p> <p>a) Policy Schedule – Agree Approval Delegations Level and Frequency</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that there were only minor amendments to the policy schedule in that some elements had been amalgamated, for example as the first aid policy was now included in the health and safety policy, this had been taken out as a separate policy needing approval. The Clerk confirmed that the delegation level and frequency for all the policies had remained the same and had all previously been approved by the board.</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Full Governing Board approved the Policy Schedule as presented.</p> <p>b) Careers Policy</p>	

	<p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the Careers Policy as presented.</p> <p>c) Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy Matt Nott raised that the policy only referred to 'Parents' and not 'Parents and Carers' and asked whether that could be changed. The Head confirmed that he would check and get it updated. Matt Nott also said that the policy referred to the Head being able to exclude on disciplinary grounds and asked whether 'disciplinary grounds' was required. The Head confirmed that as this policy was a local authority policy they did not have the authority to change it.</p> <p>AGREEMENT – The Full Governing Board approved the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy subject to the updated wording around Parents and Carers.</p>	<p>Head</p>
7	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Election of Vice Chair of Governors The Clerk confirmed that in the absence of Emma Morey, they could not proceed with the election. The Clerk confirmed that the Chair had a meeting with the local authority scheduled and would seek advice at that meeting and then update on how we proceed.</p> <p>b) Training Log The Clerk confirmed that the training log had been received from the local authority and showed what courses had been booked on and completed. The Clerk reiterated what the Chair had said in that the governors were all encouraged to complete the new governor induction training with the BEEM and asked Mick Baker, as the Health and Safety governor, whether he could also complete the BEEM's Health and Safety training.</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Governors</p>
8	<p>Any Other Business Cassie Dale said she would be attending a schools collaboration meeting with the local authority the next day. Cassie confirmed that all the teachers had been invited and she was going on the schools' behalf, and she felt that there might be some changes coming, so she would report back. Cassie explained that there was a federation called the TTSA, which about 6-7 schools were now a part of, and the local authority had recently appointed someone to coordinate it.</p> <p>The Head confirmed that they had a carol concert on the 18th of December which governors were welcome to attend but he would also like to ask for a volunteer from the board to do a reading at the concert and asked them to let the Head or the Clerk know.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the dates for the FGB and BUS meetings would be reviewed next year so that they were more evenly spread, with the plan to hold one FGB every half term; 6 across the year. The Clerk advised that as they had, had two meetings in quick succession, it had been agreed with the Chair that the next FGB in December</p>	<p>Cassie Dale</p> <p>Governors</p>

	<p>would not go ahead. The Clerk confirmed that as a result the BUS meeting would return to its original date of 24th November 2025. The Clerk advised she would confirm the dates in an email to all the governors after the meeting.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.10pm Date of next meeting - 2nd February 2026</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
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Minutes Approved

Signature.....Date.....