Hove Learning Federation
Full Governing Body Meeting
Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 6.00pm
Holland Road

WEST HOVE INFANT SCHOOL
A family of friends

Name	Type of Governor	Present	Apologies
Madeleine Southern	Headteacher	Yes	
Lisa Marshall (Chair)	Co-Opted	Yes	
Louise Wilkinson (Vice Chair)	Co-Opted	Yes	
Marcel Amour	Co-Opted	Yes	
David Karp	Co-Opted	Yes	
Sarra Lee	Parent	Yes *(Item 3 onwards)*	
Lorna Cummings	Co-Opted	Yes	
Oyinkolade Akinleye	Co-Opted	Yes	
Katie Kershaw	Co-Opted	Yes	
Caroline Kemp-Harris	Staff	Yes	
Tom Edwards	LA	Yes	
Amir Khodavirdipour	Parent	No	Yes
Abby Hedger-Jones	Associate	Yes	
Sam Ledger	Head of School	No	Yes
Niamh O'Shea	Head of School	No	Yes
Rachel Jeffers	Head of School	No	Yes
Sarah Shaw	School Business Manager	Yes *(Items 1 - 4)*	
Maria Puertas	Prospective Governor	Yes	
Tom Way	Clerk	Yes	
Vacancy	Co-Opted		
Vacancy	Co-Opted		

Quorum: 11 out of 12 governors were present. The meeting was quorate (at least 50% attending).

Questions from the governors are highlighted in **bold**.

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1. Introduction

Welcome

LW welcomed all to the meeting, and welcomed MP to the governing body. Governors introduced themselves.

Apologies

Governors noted apologies from AK, SLd, NO'S, and RJ.

Notification of any urgent business

N/A

Declarations of Interest

N/A

2. Minutes of FGB meeting held on 27.01.26

Approval

All governors confirmed their approval of the minutes.

Matters arising

N/A

Progress on actions

The following actions have been met:

- MS has built in termly reminders to staff for allergen-friendly food consumed on-site e.g., no nuts or sesame

The following actions are ongoing:

N/A

3. Governance

Appointments

LW noted the appointment of AK as a parent governor and advised that governors would have opportunities to meet him over the coming weeks and highlighted the valuable experience he brings to the role.

LW advised that MP's application for appointment as a co-opted governor would be considered here. MP introduced herself further and provided an overview of her background and experience. She explained that she had previously worked as a headteacher in Buenos Aires and is currently employed in online education, where she leads the learning design team. MP noted that it has been six years since she left her school-based role and that she misses being part of a school community, which prompted her to make contact with HLF.

LW outlined the process for appointing co-opted governors.

MP left the room.

SrL arrived.

LW invited governors to share any questions or comments regarding MP's appointment, and governors confirmed that they had no questions.

Governors unanimously approved the appointment of MP as a co-opted governor.

MP returned to the meeting.

LW confirmed MP's appointment and said she was delighted that MP would be joining the board. She formally welcomed MP to the governing body. MP stated that she was very happy to join and looked forward to contributing and offering support wherever needed. LM advised that MP will possibly join the Curriculum and Inclusion Committee.

LW also advised that KK had agreed to take on the role of Chair of Governors. She expressed her appreciation that KK was willing and able to undertake the role and confirmed that this would be subject to a formal vote.

LM nominated KK for the role of Chair of Governors, and LW seconded this.

Governors confirmed that there were no other nominations for the role.

Governors unanimously approved of KK's appointment as the Chair of Governors.

LW thanked LM for her work as Chair, noting that her contribution over the past year had been exceptional. LM advised that she is likely to continue in the role for a further term, although the timeline has not yet been formally agreed.

LW also invited expressions of interest from governors in joining KK as a co-chair or taking on an additional vice-chair role, commenting that, from experience, this additional leadership support can be very helpful.

LM nominated LW for the role of Vice Chair of Governors, and DK seconded this.

Governors confirmed that there were no other nominations for the role.

Governors unanimously approved of LW's appointment as the Vice Chair of Governors.

Strategic Priorities

LW confirmed that Strategic Priorities remain a standing agenda item and noted that there were no specific updates at this meeting. LM confirmed this position and advised that a review of the Strategic Priorities will begin towards the end of next term.

4. Finance

Update/current outturn

SSh reported that she had held a timely finance meeting earlier that day with SrL and KK, and that the updated report was presented to governors. She advised that the budget plans remain a work in progress and will continue to be refined until May, reflecting several recent changes. The five-year financial plan was shared, showing both the in year position and the cumulative position. SSh explained that Year 1 is likely to be submitted with a small deficit; however, this is not a concern as the school is only one year into the agreed five-year licensed deficit process and remains on track. By Year 3, the projections show the school moving out of deficit and into surplus on both the in-year and cumulative figures. She noted that the school is operating favourably against both measures. Staffing costs are currently operating at approximately 84–85%. While 80% is often cited as a good benchmark, SSh explained that this is unusual for a federation operating across three sites, and that the current ratio is not considered problematic. She noted positively that staffing costs are levelling off and are not increasing over time. SSh also summarised the impact of staff turnover savings and explained that high needs funding income can be variable; for the purposes of the plan, this has been held at a steady level. Estimated pupil numbers are increasing, potentially because of the school's recent outstanding report and the planned closure of Middle Street Primary. Assumptions around agency spend have been revised slightly downward. SSh advised that the school is trialling the use of HLTAs at the School Road and Holland Road sites, with the aim of reducing agency costs further.

Overall, SSh reported that the financial position is looking positive. She highlighted that the recovery plan previously included several very challenging measures that are now no longer required. There are no plans to make changes to the senior leadership structure or to reduce teaching or support staff, which she described as a significant positive outcome. SSh also outlined some challenges in Year 1, including the long-term absence of the SENCO at Portland Road, with no confirmed return date. This has had an impact on the budget, as additional capacity has needed to be absorbed. The school has internally appointed a Deputy SENCO, with associated costs being met within the existing budget. MS added that consideration has been given to seconding a SENCO from Brunswick for one day per week, and that she will follow this up further after Easter.

SSh further reported that £56,000 appears on the first line of the budget, reflecting a request for HLF to repay £36,000 to the local authority. This relates to funding previously awarded to support redundancies anticipated as part of the office restructure. LM provided additional context, explaining that the £36,000 came from a local authority contingency fund. The school had applied to this fund on two occasions: initially to offset costs associated with the closure of Holland Road, and subsequently, in November of the previous year, to support additional pension costs arising from the office restructure. Following receipt of the significant donation, Schools Forum expressed concern about the school having accessed the contingency fund, and the council subsequently wrote to request repayment of £36,000 due to the school's changed financial position. LM advised that the school has written back to the local authority to challenge this decision, seeking clarification on the legal basis for the request and expressing concern about the timing, as the request was made in the final two weeks of the financial year, creating significant additional work in reforecasting the budget. She also noted that the school has highlighted the substantial amount of unfunded work being undertaken to support the Brunswick collaboration and has suggested that the funding could instead be used to support this work. No response has yet been received, and further updates will be provided as the situation develops. SSh provided further feedback arising since the circulation of the finance report.

SrL commented positively on the layout of the report, noting that it clearly sets out the key financial drivers and the relationships between them. She acknowledged that the position is highly complex and commended SSh on presenting the information in a clear and accessible way. DK agreed that the report layout was effective. LM added that the financial position is more complicated than usual this year due to the significant donation and noted that having clear benchmarks within the report is particularly helpful.

LW thanked SSh for her work on the finance report and for the clarity of the information provided.

SSh left the meeting.

5. Headteacher's update

Heads Verbal Update on Key Priorities – WHIS/HJS

[Advance Headteacher's Update and discussion on GVO]:

Key Priorities 2025-26 Headteacher Verbal Update and SPA Visit

1. Leadership and Management - The leadership embodies the vision of the federation driving high standards and expectations across the schools and collaborations

Summary of SPA Visit:

Provision Disadvantaged Pupils at HLF is a clear strength following the LA SPA Visit in January 2026, where school leaders 'demonstrated a precise understanding of the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils and use this insight to plan and implement targeted, evidence-informed strategies' that secure strong outcomes. Monitoring showed evidence of disadvantaged pupils access the full curriculum and achieve well across subjects, with gaps in attainment and participation diminishing over time.
Teaching is consistently adaptive rather than diluted, with staff using assessment effectively to scaffold learning and promote independence. Pastoral support is well-coordinated and responsive, ensuring pupils' social, emotional and attendance needs are addressed swiftly.
Leaders evaluate the impact of pupil premium spending rigorously and adjust provision, accordingly, ensuring resources are used effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are well supported, highly engaged in learning and increasingly confident learners who achieve in line with, or better than, their peers.

- Key teaching strategies observed (in line with school's agreed approach):

- PP children prioritised for verbal feedback ü Books of PP pupils marked first ü Use of cold calling and wait time
- Use of live feedback to provide children with 'in the moment' feedback enabling scaffolding, consolidation and challenge
- Expectation that pupils respond to feedback both verbally and written ü Cognitive load in classrooms minimal (within lesson slides and resources)
- Adaptive teaching with use of open-ended questioning
- Key vocabulary displayed from core text and maths/topic unit on working walls - use of dual coding for vocabulary e.g., Communicate in Print, Noun Project, Widgit (deepening language for QFT)
- Explicit modelling e.g. 'I do', 'we do, you do', 'Think, Pair, Share, Share'
- Carefully chosen learning partners to promote collaborative learning / 'Partner A and B' and seating position in class
- Reference to HLF Learning Model to develop children's metacognition skills
- Opportunities for PP children to plan/monitor/evaluate own learning Consistent Strengths across the school:
- Explicit modelling e.g. 'I do', 'we do, you do', 'Think, Pair, Share, Share' etc ü Carefully chosen learning partners to promote collaborative learning / 'Partner A and B' and seating position in class
- Adaptive teaching with use of open-ended questioning ü Consistency in the use of PP profiles to ensure first class experience for these pupils Other General Strengths:
- Staff in depth knowledge of their vulnerable pupils, coupled with strong relationships. ü Behaviour Management and consistency of routines.
- Team around the child approach (to support mental health and learning needs) to ensure no single points of failure ü Linked to the above, flexible and effective deployment of support staff to promote pupil independence
- Quality of IEPs; mid half term to mid half term structure, enabling smooth pupil transition.

Possible next steps and areas to explore:

1. Ensure members of the Governing Body have received training / CPD on OFSTED Inclusion priorities.
2. Ensuring consistency with in-class transitions and routines; for example, making sure all resources are ready / prepared prior to starting the lesson.
3. To ensure cognitive load in all classrooms / learning environments is minimal.
4. Linked to the above, continued consideration of the reduction of cognitive load in learning resources to ensure barriers to learning are removed and access to learning for pupils with SEND is optimal; for example, Year 2 writing scaffolds
5. Revisit systems / structures and processes in relation to Year 2 to Year 3 transition.
6.Oracy Key Priority for next year is currently in draft and will be finalised after the visit to Durrington Triad Visit to PR/SR.

2. Quality of Education - To maintain a consistent culture of expert teaching across the federation by embedding six core principles into everyday classroom practice – improving learning, reducing teacher workload and driving sustained school improvement.

A continued focus on 'Powerful Questioning as the engine of expert teaching.' has remained a focus for professional development in the first half of the spring half term.
Powerful Questioning is a means of engineering effective classroom discussions that both reveal and advance learning. CPD and professional development targets and coaching has been aimed at:

•Creating a culture where every child is expected to participate
•Using well-crafted, sequenced questions to check, challenge, and deepen understanding
•Balancing planned questions with adaptive follow-ups that respond to live thinking
'Good questions make students think; great questions make them rethink'

It is the intentional design and skilful delivery of questions to:

•Assess for understanding
•Probe
•Extend thinking

It moves beyond simple recall, using carefully sequenced questions to:

•Activate prior knowledge and connect new learning
•Expose misconceptions and clarify understanding
•Extend and scaffold thinking through carefully chosen prompts and follow-ups
•Promote dialogue where pupils listen, respond, and build on each other's ideas
•Encourage healthy struggle leading to exploration, deeper understanding and further explanation

After Spring half term, the POETS Principle 3 was introduced on 24.02.26 in 'Precise Explanation'
See Checklist compiled with teacher's below:

Before Explaining

1	**Plan the core idea**	-identify the 'must-know' (threshold concept) for the lesson -what must pupils understand by the end?
2	**Define success clearly**	-what should pupils know, understand, and be able to do after this?
3	**Sequence carefully**	Move from known to unknown; simple to complex; concrete to abstract
4	**Identify and pre-teach key vocabulary**	-Select tier 2 and tier 3 words and define them precisely
5	**Anticipate misconceptions**	-Predict where pupils may misunderstand

		-Plan and prepare corrective examples or analogies to address them
6	**Curate examples**	-Choose examples that illuminate key ideas and avoid ambiguity
7	**Use non-examples**	-Plan what something isn't to clarify conceptual boundaries
8	**Refine the language of explanation**	-Practice phrasing and analogies to ensure clarity and precision
9	**Plan visuals deliberately**	-Align diagrams, worked examples, or animations with verbal explanation (avoid split attention)
10	**Minimise cognitive load**	-Remove unnecessary complexity from slides or language
11	**Plan questions to check understanding**	-Include Powerful Questions at key moments to pre plan support and challenge
12	**Rehearse aloud**	-Practice explaining a new concept in advance to refine clarity

During Explanation

1	**Use the "I do' modelling**	-show the thinking process explicitly -narrate your though process clearly, revealing the invisible steps
2	**Make thinking visible**	-Use visualisers, whiteboards, flip paper, pr manipulatives to show working
3	**Chunk and pause**	-break the explanation into small parts and then pause for recap or questioning
4	**Use signalling**	-Draw attention to key points
5	**Connect ideas**	-build on prior knowledge and link between lessons
6	**Be explicit about why and how**	-Explain reasoning, not just procedure. -don't just demonstrate what to do, but explain why it works

7	**Check for understanding frequently**	-Cold call, mini-whiteboards etc. to gauge understanding
8	**Use economy of language**	-Short, sharp, precise and deliberate sentences over long, meandering ones
9	**Vary tone and pace**	-Use emphasis and pauses to focus attention
10	**Avoid overloading**	-Synchronise visuals, words, and gestures to reduce split attention
11	**Rephrase and reframe when needed**	-If confusion arises, explain again differently (new example or analogy)
12	**Ensure pupils are listening actively**	-Use note-taking tasks, partner talk for turn and teach, recap summaries
13	**Embed retrieval**	-Ask the children for connections they have made and for examples
14	**Layer modelling**	-Gradually increase complexity as understanding grows (I do – we do – you do)
15	**Explicitly label steps or rules**	-Helps pupils to codify and later retrieve
16	**Model metacognition**	-Verbalise decisions ("I'm checking this part because it's easy to miss…")
17	**Use dual coding**	-Combine carefully chosen visuals and concise narration

After Explanation

1	**Check for understanding through Powerful Questioning**	-probe for reasoning, not just recall
2	**Model again if needed**	-target gaps or misconceptions with fresh examples
3	**Ask pupils to re-explain**	-Partner A and B. Explain it to each other and then back to me
4	**Use "Say it again, better"**	-Help pupils refine accuracy and precision of responses
5	**Encourage pupils to summarise**	-Create concise explanations or notes to capture key ideas
6	**Transition to guided practice**	-scaffold early attempts, then gradually remove support

7	**Use visual reminders**	-Notes, worked examples, WAGOLL, success criteria visible during practice
8	**Circulate and listen**	-Use live feedback to correct misunderstandings early
9	**Revisit in future lessons**	-Use retrieval and spaces review to strengthen retention
10	**Reflect as a teacher**	-After the lesson, consider what worked and what explanations need refining for next time

Dave's next spring term visit is on March 18th to look at POET (Principles of Expert Teaching). NO'S and SL as curriculum leads will be meeting Dave to review HLF's focus on POET principles. Using Dave's expertise, they will consider the federation's next steps which can lead to 2026-7 Curriculum and Teaching Key Priority and think ahead about evolution of this and how we keep developing our culture of developing classroom practice.

3. Behaviour and Attitudes - School culture, systems and provision support excellent standards of learning and personal development

Overall attendance remains good at 95.2% at WHIS and 94.7% at HJS. Attendance for disadvantaged and SEND pupils remains below other groups at 91% in both schools. This will continue to be a focus this term and we the school will continue to monitor attendance robustly and to work closely with the school's Education Welfare Officer. CIC pupil attendance case studies are available.

LC has attended 'Emotionally School Based Avoidance' training. Key highlight was training to build confidence to be able to talk about attendance provision as a pro-active and positive approach to need rather than seeing non-attendance as a failure. SLT are reflecting on 'push/pull' factors and next steps include Inclusion Manager and LC meeting RJ to discuss and plan for individual pupils at PR site in KS2.
RJ attended recent IQM Cluster Day at Polegate Primary School. Key Action that stood out was regulation strategies – calm corners, station outside the classroom, resources and visuals. This was very well structured and used by the children. RJ carried out briefing around 3 stage approach to regulation at the PR site to support behaviour and regulation strategies as behavioural incident have increased in Year 3 in autumn term. which will be shared across the federation. Potential to involve the Mental Health Ambassadors and PTA funding to support this.
HLF to host IQM Cluster in Summer Term. Focus to reflect work for last IQM assessments

Priority 4: Standards: Attainment and progress in maths is increased for all children with a focus on challenge at all levels.

Joint Maths Inset on 05.01.26 with Brunswick focused on:

How do we ensure QFT for all educationally disadvantaged children so that attainment, progress and challenge in maths is increased for all?

- Workshop 1: Small Steps – access for all including SEND
- Workshop 2: Oracy and mathematical thinking
- Workshop 3: Live feedback, marking and AFL, (Including questioning

Workshop 1 addressed a **culture of oracy** should be intentionally developed, in which pupils learn to think, listen and reflect. This respectful culture rests on teachers' trust that learners will make mathematically worthwhile contributions and, alongside their peers, build and make sense of mathematics - while also **learning to disagree agreeably**.

•Ground rules for communication are established, with the intent that talk and authentic listening become a natural part of pupil behaviour.

I know that .... because ....

I think that .... because ....

I worked systematically by ....

"At its core, mathematical thinking is about identifying relationships and reasoning about them." - NCETM
The workshop reflected on providing a good stimulus for talk – simple questions that engage pupils in noticing and reasoning about the mathematics.
•Think, pair, share
•Choral repetition
•Stem sentences
•Generalisations – mathematical rules
•Sentence starters

Workshop on Live Feedback and AFL Strategies in Maths provided a practical workshop on the use of:

- Cold Calling
- Wait Time
- Live Marking

In the last two weeks each Reception class has had the opportunity to take part in a Family Maths Workshop. The purpose of these workshops is for parents and carers to gain an understanding of how we teach Maths in Reception with an emphasis on Number. We discuss the huge impact support from parents and families can have on a child's progress and the aim of these workshops is to build parents confidence in maths and feeling able to help their children. There is a strong focus on language, and we model the sentences we can teach our children to encourage them to explain their understanding. The children join their parents in the workshop and show their parents how they answer questions and we then play some maths games with them which then form the basis of future homework tasks. Turnout this year was very high across all classes and parents have been very positive in their feedback saying they found it helpful to see what their children were learning and how to extend their understanding.

Next steps:

- Heads of School (SL, NO'S and RJ) to develop a script for the learning walk feedback with Year and Phase Leaders; remove timeframe from this process.
- Ensure teachers are clear about the HoS role in the process and why they will be in class more regularly:
    - quality assure the role of the Year or Phase Leaders
    - to ensure the suite of CPD resources meets the evolving needs of the teachers
- When providing guidance on how to deliver effective feedback, take time to clarify the difference:
    - between 'noticed' and 'special mentions' when you see 'expected' practice (notice) or 'highly effective' practice (special mentions)
    - between motivational and developmental feedback; there's a place for both.
- Ensure that teachers are given the opportunity to provide regular feedback on:
    - the 'lesson observation / walk' process
    - the 'lesson observation / walk' proforma
    - the Professional Growth discussion process

[Governor discussion] -

KK: Great feedback on the family maths workshops - perhaps something for us Governors to call out in a next governor update to parents - thanks for engagement etc.

LM: Re provision for DA children - I would look forward to the proposed CPD for governors around Ofsted - Inclusion - and following recent training session around Tackling Educational DA and being asked about governor impact on this - I propose we consider a governor focus at the Away Day.

MS: Agreed - MS to agree Ofsted training date with Dave Cole for the summer term 2026 with FGB – **ACTION 5.1 MS**

TE: This is a very strong and reassuring report, with clear evidence of impact, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The consistency of approach, strength of adaptive teaching and clear leadership vision are real strengths. It's especially encouraging to see how well inclusion is embedded across the school. I look forward to seeing how this excellent work is sustained over time, particularly in maintaining consistency, tracking long-term impact and supporting staff capacity.

OA: Thanks MS. The level of detail around teaching (POET, questioning, modelling) is excellent.

SrL: I've had a number of informal chats with parents recently - especially year 3 parents - which have centred on SEN provision at the school - both from a 'my child needs more SEN support' and from a perceived disruption in classroom concerns - not directly quoting this paper but the media around it may have provided a backdrop. In each case I've steered the parent to engage with the school on the specifics directly. But wondering if there are any plans for some kind of response to this paper - what the school position is, how we're responding and how we are confident that the school provision remains in line with best practice.

MS: Currently the SEND White Paper is out for consultation and the school will not be delivering parental sessions on this until this process from the DfE is completed and Headteachers and Sencos have received full training from the LA.

[Advance Headteacher's Update and discussion on GVO end]

MS confirmed that she had circulated her update in advance of the meeting and displayed it here, and she provided a summary for governors.

MS advised that, in response to the target identified in the report, Ofsted related training and CPD opportunities for governors have been identified. She noted that, now that Dave is working in the role of School Performance Advisor rather than as a coach, it has been particularly valuable for SLd and NO'S to have dedicated meeting time with him. MS confirmed that questions submitted in advance via GVO had been answered. LW commented that the workshops sounded very positive. MS reported that they had been very successful. KK added that the workshops are especially valuable when attendance is strong and thanked those governors who had attended.

Q: Has parental engagement improved from Reception as a result of this work?

MS explained that phonics and maths workshops are routinely delivered, and that the recent focus had been on encouraging broader parental engagement. CKH reported that attendance had been noticeably higher, which she attributed to the workshops being advertised to a wider range of parents, and she provided further context. MP added that early engagement with parents in the early years makes a significant difference; when parents are given opportunities to engage early and share a common language with the school, this supports children's development and confidence.

MS then displayed the SPA report and provided an overview. She explained that Dave now has a clearer overview of practice across the school and is helping to build a culture of collective efficiency. This work is being refined through ongoing feedback from year and phase leaders, particularly around what constitutes effective feedback and how the appraisal and coaching systems can be further improved to strengthen support across the federation.

Governors confirmed that they had no further questions.

BP/HLF MoU and Collaboration Action Plan

Governors discussed the distinction between the Memorandum of Understanding and the role of the collaboration working party. MS explained that the working party focuses on oversight and development of the collaboration, while the MoU sets out the formal framework. MS advised that she would share the collaboration action plan with working party governors and provided a further overview of the work underway – **ACTION 5.2 – MS**

LC provided an overview of the collaborative work to date, noting that Brunswick Primary has been very keen to work with HLF and that the relationship has been positive. She highlighted joint work on an Oracy project and a particular focus on early years collaboration.

Q: A significant amount of support is being provided to Brunswick. Is there learning coming back to HLF as well?

LC responded that working alongside another school is always valuable. She noted that Brunswick does some things differently, and that collaborative projects have been mutually beneficial. She acknowledged that HLF has provided targeted support in key school improvement areas where Brunswick has been drawing on HLF's expertise.

Q: Can you give an example of where Brunswick does things differently?

LC explained that this is more evident in working culture rather than specific practices. MS added that Brunswick has some strong aspects of personal development work, including a clear focus on staff and pupil belonging. She also highlighted positive work in PSHE and community embedded practice, which has been impressive. MS noted that Brunswick also faces significant challenges, particularly around staff retention and lower-than-expected attainment outcomes, which remain key priorities for them. LC added that Brunswick is a highly inclusive school, with a similar pupil profile to HLF, and that there is strong alignment in approaches to supporting children and the wider community.

Q: What check-ins are taking place at Holland Road and School Road to ensure staff are not becoming overstretched, particularly when SLT are working across sites?

MS provided an overview of current arrangements and a broader discussion followed. She advised that dedicated time has been scheduled on Thursday with the SLT to reflect further on workload, capacity and support, and to review how staff wellbeing is being monitored and addressed across the federation.

Q: Is there anything governors can do to help with this, for example through coaching or agreeing a clearer timeline?

MS advised that several measures are already in place to support this work.

Q: Given that pressure is currently at a peak, is there a checkpoint built in to reflect on this?

MS explained that she now holds weekly meetings with Ashley Seymour Williams, which is a recent change, and that there are ongoing check-ins with Heads of School to monitor capacity and pressure. LM added that governors also have a role in ensuring that the local authority provides appropriate additional support, including engagement with Brunswick's governing body, and gave further context.

Q: As part of the consultation, indicators of success relate to pupil attainment. Is the federation being held accountable for this?

MS confirmed that the federation will be held accountable through the Ofsted inspection process. LM reiterated her thanks to MS for taking on this work, and a broader discussion followed. MS noted that this could be discussed further at the collaboration meeting with Ashley. She explained that there is scope to utilise more HLF staff expertise, but this is not financially viable unless it is appropriately funded, and she outlined some possible examples. LM confirmed that governors will be attending the collaboration meeting on Thursday but noted that there is not yet a clear mechanism for wider governor feedback. MS advised that this could be discussed further with Georgina at that meeting. LW reflected on the wider strategic context, including the implications of the White Paper, the direction of travel towards academisation, and the challenges this presents for federations. She noted that it is currently unclear what the local authority's position is, and a broader discussion followed.

Q: Do Heads of School have time and space away from their sites, even once or twice a term, to reflect and work strategically?

MS confirmed that this is in place. She explained that Heads of School are given time for professional development, with cover arranged where required, and provided further detail on the benefits of working with Dave in his role as SPA, particularly in relation to strategic development.

Q: Is there a point at which we take a 'temperature check' on our position regarding federation across the city as a strategic direction for us?

LM noted that while the planned away day may be slightly later than ideal, there will be a pre-meeting with Georgina, Richard and Ashley. She explained that this is typically the point at which MS asks the local authority to articulate its longer term vision more clearly. LM suggested that an extraordinary FGB meeting at the end of May might be required. SrL commented that it may be more beneficial to hold an FGB discussion around this time and not to commit to any position with the local authority before governors have had the opportunity to consider it fully. LW confirmed that any commitment would require FGB approval and that governors would discuss this in detail before any decisions are made. A broader discussion followed. MS reminded governors that the White Paper is currently in consultation with the DfE, and that any clarity at this stage remains aspirational rather than definitive.

6. Governor Strategic Direction

Brunswick Primary Working Party Update

[*See item 5 above*].

7. Committee Updates

Safeguarding committee feedback

LM reported that there were no major updates from the Safeguarding Committee. She highlighted an interesting development around the team's use of AI to analyse information recorded on CPOMS and to explore what additional functionality may be possible. LM also noted the scale and complexity of need that the safeguarding team is currently working with, including extensive work alongside interdisciplinary teams and external agencies.

OA commented on the Bounce survey, noting that it had been very impressive when reviewed during the most recent monitoring visit.

LW reported that she had undertaken a SEND monitoring visit with TE earlier this term. TE commented that policies and procedures were well thought through and that practice across the school was consistent. LW added that, during the summer term SEND visit, the SEND team will provide anonymised case studies to talk through with governors, which she noted is particularly insightful and helps to demonstrate the depth and quality of the work being undertaken. LW further reflected on the significance of SEND within the context of the current White Paper, noting that inclusion is a major focus and that the school is likely further advanced than many others in terms of its provision. She advised that the consultation would continue to be followed as it develops. LW also reported that she had attended an NGA webinar on the White Paper, describing it as interesting, with a high level of engagement and critical feedback from governors. She noted that many aspects remain at a questions-and-answers stage and are likely to evolve over time.

LM suggested that, where possible, joint monitoring visits incorporating safeguarding and SEND would be beneficial, particularly given the overlap in data being reviewed. She also noted that recent training on tackling disadvantage had highlighted further areas that could be explored through future monitoring activity.

Finance & Leadership committee

SrL reported that SSh has undertaken a practical review and analysis of the school's cleaning provision. She explained that at one site the current in-house arrangement is less effective, and that SSh has developed a revised plan. While this will result in a slightly higher direct cost, it is expected to deliver better value overall by reducing the time and operational burden on the senior leadership team. SrL noted that the school's improved financial position now enables more strategic decision-making of this nature.

SrL also reminded governors that all are expected to complete the NGA finance training. Following a brief discussion, TW agreed to circulate the relevant information to all governors – **ACTION 7.1 - TW**

Curriculum & Inclusion committee

DK thanked Jess Bray and the wider Maths team for delivering an excellent presentation on the maths key priority. He summarised that the presentation focused on the Mastering Number programme, which is being used across the federation. He explained that this involves an additional 15-minute daily session designed to build mathematical fluency, develop children's confidence in maths and further embed the principles of effective teaching. DK noted that the programme is having a positive impact and is also contributing to closing the gender gap between girls' and boys' attainment in maths.

DK also provided an update on behaviour, and the work schools are doing to offer workshops and resources to parents, with the aim of helping families align approaches with the school where possible. He reported that, as part of the committee's discussions, an action was agreed for the governing board following a recommendation from Dave Cole during his SPA visit. Dave had suggested that all governors receive training on the new Ofsted inclusion framework principles. MS confirmed that this training will take place at the Full Governing Body meeting on 7 July.

TE shared positive feedback from parents regarding the maths workshops, noting that these had been well received. LW added that the workshops had been particularly helpful for parents in understanding the impact of the approach on their children and how it supports learning, and a broader discussion followed. MP commented that across the range of initiatives, a key strength is the alignment of language between families and schools, which helps to build routines, shared understanding and a sense of community. She also noted the value of the resources around the principles of expert teaching and highlighted how strategically the senior leadership team is thinking about systems. MP commented that achieving consistency across three sites would be extremely challenging without this strategic approach and said it was encouraging to see this work in action.

8. Equalities

Anti-Racism update

LW reported that she and KK had attended the most recent meeting. CKH presented an update, displaying materials from the previous month's meeting and summarising the latest Brighton & Hove anti-racism lead meeting. She explained that this meeting largely reflected on the past five years of the project and the funding that has supported it. CKH noted that this was useful in highlighting that the school is comparatively well advanced in its anti-racism work. A key point from the meeting was that the initial five-year funding period is coming to an end, and that the local authority is moving towards a paid model to ensure the sustainability of the team's work.

CKH shared a summary of recent pupil work, including examples and feedback from children, noting that pupils expressed gratitude towards their teachers. Feedback from the Belonging project has been very positive. She explained that the written element of this work is being adapted for Early Years and will be developed further during Summer 1. CKH then provided an update on the My Hair, My Heritage project, which is launching the following afternoon. She explained that the project will take the form of a photography exhibition, with just under 100 people signed up to attend. CKH expressed her delight at the level of interest and described how the exhibition will be displayed in a gallery-style format. She highlighted the strong involvement of parents and members of the local community, including support from local hairdressers and braiders. CKH also advised that a raffle has been organised, with a number of prizes donated by parents, and that funds raised will be reinvested into future anti-racism projects.

Q: Was there a good turnout from parents at the last meeting?

CKH confirmed that attendance was strong and included a mix of parents who had attended previously and new participants.

MS commented that the scale and growth of the work is an incredible achievement, highlighting the ambition of the programme and its positive impact on community engagement, including the parent working group. TE reported that he had attended anti-racism training for governors a few weeks earlier, and that this had reinforced that the school is performing strongly in this area. A broader discussion followed, with governors sharing examples of anti-racism work across the school.

Q: Will there be any marketing of this work, for example through Instagram?

CKH explained that an expression-of-interest form is being launched to explore the possibility of publishing the photographs, and she provided further context around this. SrL noted that, in light of longer-term considerations around pupil numbers, it is beneficial to make the school's work in this area visible. CKH confirmed that all governors are welcome to attend the launch event if they are available.

9. Policy Reviews

MS confirmed that she had reviewed and responded to the comments raised on the GVO regarding the policies. She also advised that the school meals policy had been updated in line with the comments previously submitted by MA.

Mobile phone policy

[Advance discussion on GVO]:

Q: Please could you share any general feedback you may have had from the school community about this and whether there have been any issues in relation to enforcing it?

MS: The smartphone policy is going really well and HLF is really pleased that this change has been made.

There have been only two or three incidents of phones or smartwatches coming into school. On each occasion the parent was phoned to collect, and parent said they had forgotten about the policy change. Year 6 teachers report only a couple of children bring brick phones per class.

There has been a big reduction in number of WhatsApp incidents having to be dealt with at school.

[Advance discussion on GVO end]

Admissions Policy, Exclusion Policy, First Aid & Administration of Medicine, Attendance Management Policy (Staff) and School Meals Debt Policy

Governors confirmed that there were no questions on these policies.

Governors confirmed their approval of all of these policies.

Emergency Plan

MS summarised the Emergency Plan, including updates on evacuation procedures and the nearby sites that can be used if evacuation from school premises is required. She explained that this is a model policy, with much of the content already reviewed by the local authority, and that the school has completed the sections requiring site-specific information. A broader discussion followed, including consideration of different scenarios such as flooding and gas leaks.

Q: Were there any lessons learned from recent incidents in terms of the implementation of emergency procedures, or did everything go to plan?

MS confirmed that procedures were followed correctly and that plans operated as intended. A broader discussion followed. LC commented that the new Office Manager, Layla, has been excellent and has undertaken a significant amount of work to strengthen emergency planning and procedures.

Q: How often are staff informed or reminded about emergency plans?

MS advised that emergency procedures are covered through annual staff training and that emergency "grab bags" are checked and updated regularly. She added that where an emergency would require evacuation off site, this is practised as part of fire drills. SrL commended the management of this work and thanked staff for their efforts.

All governors confirmed their approval of the Emergency Plan.

10. Governor Monitoring for Spring Term

Monitoring activity for the Spring term was noted as having been covered within the committee feedback items discussed earlier in the meeting.

DK reported on upcoming curriculum monitoring visits. He advised that some governors will have the opportunity to observe the Mastering Number programme in practice. He also noted that NO'S will speak with RJ to identify opportunities for English monitoring, following Alex stepping down as the English link governor. DK added that opportunities for pupil voice activity should be arranged and will be explored further next term.

LM suggested that there may also be value in capturing staff voice as part of monitoring activity. SrL confirmed that the Finance and Leadership monitoring plan includes this, explaining that monthly finance meetings are already in place and that the next meeting will be used to establish a clearer audit trail for future reference. She noted that this will form part of the Spring term monitoring, with continuation into the

Summer term. MS advised that Emily will be invited to attend these meetings to minute discussions, ensuring a clear and consistent audit trail is maintained.

11. AOB

KK reported that there have been no formal applications for current governor vacancies, although informal conversations are ongoing with individuals who may be interested in joining as co-opted governors.

Q: From a safeguarding perspective, in the event of an evacuation, how are pupils or adults supported if they are unable to leave the building?

MS explained that all schools have accessibility plans in place and that individual pupils are risk-assessed accordingly. Where necessary, pupils have specific action plans to support evacuation or safe management in an emergency. She provided further clarification and context.

Q: Are full evacuation drills carried out every three years?

MS confirmed that full evacuation drills are undertaken every three years, while standard fire drills take place termly and, at times, more frequently, for example when fire alarms are activated inadvertently. MS and CKH also confirmed that teachers and teaching assistants have clear procedures to check the entire premises during evacuations, including additional vigilance for pupils with neurodiversity who may hide or find evacuations particularly challenging.

LW concluded by formally welcoming KK as Chair of Governors and thanked LM for her leadership and support during the handover.

Date of next meeting:	19th May 2026, 6.00pm Portland Road
Time closed:	19:47pm

*** Please see Action Points from this meeting below

Action points from FGB meeting held on 24th March 2026

Item/Action	**By**	**Person responsible**
5.1 MS to agree Ofsted training date with Dave Cole for the summer term 2026 with FGB	**Summer FGB**	**MS**

5.2 MS to share the BP collaboration action plan and summary with governors	**Summer FGB**	**MS**
7.1 TW to circulate details of the NGA finance training to all governors	**Summer FGB**	**TW**

Appendix (see below)

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LEARN

1. FGB Agenda 24.03.26 - final
10. Governor Feedback Form - Tacking Educational DA March 26 (1)
10. SEND monitoring report Feb 04 2026
2. FGB minutes 27.01.26 DRAFT (final)
3. AK - Nomination form for parent governor at HLF
3. Governing Board Strategic Priorities - 25-26 March 26
3. Governor monitoring visit report H&S Jan 26 HR
3. Maria Puertas Co-opted application Supporting statement
5. Finance Update - FGB
5. HLF Verbal Heads Report March FGB (1)
5. HR_SPA_Visit_Report_Spring_Term_2026
5. SEND_White_Paper (1)
5. SR-PR SPA Visit Report Spring Term 2026
8. Anti-Racist Working Party February 2026
9. Final - Mobile Phone Policy 2026
9. HLF Admissions Policy with Partnership Agreement Summer 2025
9. HLF Attendance Management Policy for Schools March 2025
9. Joint First Aid and Administration of Medicine Policy - March 2026
9. School Meals Debt Policy 2025
9. Updated - HLF Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy Summer 2025
HLF Emergency Plan Template Schools - March 2026
Teacher Survey Hove Federation Data Report