

Name	Type of Governor	Present	Apologies
Madeleine Southern	Headteacher	Yes	
Lisa Marshall (Chair)	Co-Opted	Yes	
Louise Wilkinson (Vice Chair)	Co-Opted	Yes	
Lorna Cummings	Staff	Yes <i>(Item 3 onwards)</i>	
Marcel Amour	Co-Opted	Yes	
Emer Gardener	Co-Opted	No	Yes
David Karp	Co-Opted	Yes	
Anne Marie Williamson	Parent	Yes	
Sarra Lee	Parent	Yes	
Alex Scott	Co-Opted	No	Yes
Sam Self	Co-Opted	Yes	
Oyinkolade Akinleye	Co-Opted	Yes	
Katie Kershaw	Co-Opted	Yes	
Abby Hedger-Jones	Associate	Yes	
Sam Ledger	Deputy Head	Yes <i>(Items 1 – 5)</i>	
Niamh O'Shea	Deputy Head	No	Yes
Rachel Jeffers	Deputy Head	No	Yes
Sarah Shaw	School Business Manager	Yes <i>(Items 1 – 3)</i>	
Tom Way	Clerk	Yes	
Vacancy	LA		

Quorum: 11 out of 13 governors were present. The meeting was quorate (at least 50% attending).

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

1. Introduction

Welcome

LM welcomed governors to the meeting.

Apologies

Governors confirmed that apologies had been received from AS, EG, NoS and RJ.

Notification of any urgent business

LM confirmed that the Ofsted inspection result has now been released publicly.

LM also advised that EG has submitted her resignation from the governing body. This decision was due to increased work pressures, which means she is no longer able to commit to the role.

Declarations of Interest

N/A

2. Minutes of FGB meeting held on 20.05.25

Approval

All governors confirmed their approval of the minutes.

Matters arising

N/A

Progress on actions

The following actions have been met:

- Governors have deferred the action to agree a basis for the class ratio and budget split between WHIS and HJS for September onwards to the F&L committee
- MS has amended the wording of the First Aid policy to provide greater clarity around the Breakfast Club and After School Club for both school sites
- TW has checked for governing body self-evaluation tools on the NGA website

The following actions are ongoing:

N/A

3. Finance

Recap Financial School Context

SrL advised that it would be helpful for everyone to have a retrospective overview of the 2024/25 financial year, which ended in March. While SrL feels closely connected to the figures and has a good understanding

of the financial position, it's important that all governors are equally informed and provided with a top-down summary of the school's finances.

The school's total expenditure for the period was approximately £7 million. Funding is received through a formula-based income model, where each enrolled pupil generates an allocated budget. However, this funding is typically insufficient to cover costs. The school continues to face challenges due to under-enrolment and a legacy deficit.

The school has been particularly effective at generating additional income, securing approximately £1.5 million beyond the core formula funding. Despite this, there remains a funding gap of around £1.6 million. This shortfall has been addressed through a combination of additional income and a licensed deficit arrangement. The licensed deficit is part of an agreed financial plan with the Local Authority (LA), which allows for a small overdrawn position. The school is operating within this plan and remains comfortable with the current financial outlook. Over 97% of the funding gap has been covered by revenue income. This underscores the importance of wraparound care, enrichment clubs, grants, and the broader efforts of the team to secure supplementary funding. These initiatives are critical to maintaining financial stability. SSh confirmed that both schools remained within their licensed deficit limits at the end of the financial year. SrL noted that this was a significant challenge and came down to the wire. Had the school exceeded the agreed limits, it could have faced criticism. However, the situation was managed carefully and in a controlled manner. SrL also referenced other schools facing more severe financial difficulties.

The school's total expenditure of approximately £7 million is primarily driven by staffing costs, which account for around £6 million. SrL provided an overview of all staff roles and associated costs. In addition, nearly £0.5 million is spent on essential services to the school, including property management, HR, payroll, and other operational support. SSh noted that these services are part of a somewhat monopolistic arrangement, meaning the school is required to pay for them and cannot easily reduce costs, even as part of a federation. These costs apply to both schools within the federation. SrL highlighted photocopying as another example of a significant expense. SSh confirmed that the school has already implemented cost-cutting measures in this area and has communicated these changes to staff.

SrL provided further detail on premises-related costs, noting that the school operates across multiple buildings. Additional staffing costs include indirect expenses such as agency staff and tutoring programmes. Curriculum-related spending totals approximately £100,000, with swimming and school trips accounting for around £97,000. SrL highlighted IT costs and mentioned ongoing discussions with the Parent Working Group (PWG) to explore potential support for IT needs. The school currently spends £17,000 on IT support, which covers one individual and is considered good value for money. IT software costs are included within the curriculum budget line and amount to approximately £600,000, while IT hardware costs are around £200,000. An additional £24,000 has been allocated for IT investment. MS gave an overview of the IT investment strategy, which supports a rolling programme. MS expressed confidence in the current approach and efforts to raise funding. SLd noted the necessity of providing teachers with computers, while SSh highlighted the need to maintain a server and flagged an upcoming challenge with the expiration of the Microsoft Windows licence. SLd added that this presents a funding issue. SrL emphasised that IT is a key area for board oversight. Currently, there is no formal strategy in place, and it remains essential to ensure continuity of service.

Q: Are there any cybersecurity risks?

SLd clarified that it is not a case of cybersecurity risk, but rather the risk of equipment or software becoming obsolete or failing. An example was given of software used by the infants' department, which has either already expired or is close to doing so, with no clear plan yet for replacement. SSh noted that much of the school's IT equipment is outdated and unable to support newer software. The Holland Road site is particularly vulnerable, having opened 10–11 years ago with equipment that is now reaching the end of its life cycle. The PWG has been very supportive. A recent Teams meeting helped raise awareness among parents, who had not fully realised the scale of investment required. MS added that in previous years, the school would allocate a portion of the budget for future IT needs, but this is no longer possible under current financial constraints.

LW highlighted the issue of obsolete software, and SrL confirmed that an audit is currently underway with the IT technician, which will include a review of these risks. SSh noted that the next PWG meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, where further discussions will take place with the IT technician.

Q: At the public meeting last week, there was discussion among parents regarding fundraising. The PTA appears to view its fundraising as being solely for their own site, and there is some reluctance among parents if funds are directed toward the other site. Is PWG fundraising separate from this? Will SSh and the SLT have control over how PWG funds are used?

SSh clarified that any funds raised through the PWG will be directed toward the school's identified needs, with decisions made by the school leadership team. SrL explained that the PTA operates under a defined set of terms of reference and is obligated to fundraise only for specific, agreed-upon purposes. In contrast, the PWG is a separate entity and not bound by the same restrictions. MS confirmed that the IT-related fundraising initiative will be managed separately from PTA activities.

SrL provided a breakdown of the school's additional income, which totals approximately £1.6 million. Key sources include:

- **Grants, Local Authority contributions, and Free School Meals:** Approximately £400,000.
- **Wraparound care, clubs, and lettings:** Another £400,000, with recognition of the excellent work done to maximise income in this area.
- **Pupil Premium:** £127,000.
- **Parent Contributions:** Around £97,000, including voluntary contributions such as £30 per parent for swimming, where families are able to contribute. These funds help support broader school activities.

SrL also gave an overview of the variety of payment types used by parents. . Communications around payments are handled sensitively, given the varying financial circumstances of families.

Q: Are there different ways for parents to make payments?

MS confirmed that there are multiple payment options available for parents. AMW noted that this is largely a communications issue and suggested a broader discussion around improving how payment information is shared. KK raised the possibility of providing clearer, consolidated guidance for parents in one place to help simplify the process. DK suggested that in-person school events could be used as opportunities for staff to raise awareness and assist parents with making payments more easily. There was a wider discussion around

streamlining communications related to payments, with a view to making the process more accessible and user-friendly for all families.

LC arrived.

Q: Do we have the technology or capability to take payments at parent events or similar occasions?

MS confirmed that this should be technically possible, and a discussion followed around when and how this might be implemented appropriately. SSh clarified that the school is not permitted to ask parents directly for money; any contributions must be framed as voluntary donations.

Q: Can incentives be used in communications to encourage contributions?

MS noted that various approaches have already been tried and that the messaging in communications has been made as clear as possible. A broader discussion followed about the effectiveness of current strategies and potential improvements.

Licensed deficit application update

SSh presented the licensed deficit data to governors, including the submitted budget plan for 2025/26. This forms part of the five-year financial recovery strategy. The current deficit stands at £670,651, which has not significantly reduced since last year, but this was anticipated. A positive development is that the in-year position for Year 1 shows a small surplus of £2,000. This surplus is projected to grow annually, with the plan reaching a balanced position by Year 5. SSh acknowledged that there will be challenges along the way, but a comprehensive risk assessment document has been prepared to support the plan. The recovery plan submitted to the LA is clear and RAG-rated, allowing for effective tracking of progress. Potential headwinds, such as pay increases, have been factored into the planning. MS noted that the school is working closely with the LA, which has been beneficial throughout the process. SSh added that while some schools have already held their licensed deficit meetings, the school's meeting is still pending due to the complexity of the federation's bespoke financial system, which covers two schools.

Q: Has there been any pushback from the LA about the recovery plan being weighted toward Years 4 and 5?

MS responded that the LA has been supportive, likely due to the school's open, transparent, and collaborative approach throughout the process. SSh added that other schools may have been less flexible, which could explain differing responses. MS also noted that the school operates across three sites with large buildings, which adds complexity and cost. The LA appears to recognise that the school is doing everything it can to manage the situation responsibly. Srl mentioned that the LA is currently dealing with other high-priority issues in the area, which may also influence their level of scrutiny. MS added that the LA is taking firmer action with schools they believe are not engaging seriously with financial recovery.

No further questions were raised.

5-Year Financial Recovery Plan

Ssh shared a positive update that the school's five-year licensed deficit plan was officially approved earlier today.

Class ratio and budget split between WHIS and HJS for September

Governors confirmed that this item has been deferred to the F&L committee in Autumn.

Governors thanked Ssh for attending and for all of her work.

Ssh left the meeting.

4. Headteacher's update

Ofsted feedback - HJS

MS presented the notes from the recent Ofsted feedback, which had been circulated to governors, and provided an overview of the key highlights.

MS advised that inspectors praised the schools scientifically mapped pedagogical approach, describing it as a particular strength. The feedback on Pupil Voice was also very positive, with clear recognition of the impact of the school's detailed planning. Governors confirmed they had reviewed the feedback and agreed it was very strong. MS noted the consistency observed across classrooms, highlighting SLd's work on behaviour and attitudes. Inspectors commented on the children's strong attitudes to learning and acknowledged the deliberate, well-thought-out approach taken across the school. Teachers were recognised as being well-trained and supported.

SLd reflected on the school's journey since joining the federation a few years ago. He questioned whether both schools would have achieved an 'Outstanding' rating at that time but felt that the current feedback clearly reflects the progress made. He emphasised that this result is not accidental and is the product of a rigorous and intentional systems. The feedback sends a clear message to staff that their hard work has directly contributed to this outcome. Achieving an 'Outstanding' rating is extremely difficult and rare. SLd stressed that every element of the school's work must be interconnected and aligned. Success cannot come from disparate efforts; everything must feed into a unified, strategic approach.

Q: With the philosophy of integration being something, you've lived and breathed, and now seen validated, do you think other school leaders truly understand and experience it in the same way? And is there something we can do to help share this and possibly package it?

MS responded that the philosophy must be lived and breathed to be fully understood. SLd added that leaders need to know what it looks and feels like in practice and then commit to it directly. The challenge often lies in moderation, because if a school doesn't share the same values or strategic alignment, even the

most thorough explanations may not have an impact. AMW noted that while this school has clear strategic priorities, the question is whether other schools have similarly aligned priorities. A broader discussion followed around how best to communicate and share this with other schools, particularly those that may not yet have the same key priorities. SLd reflected on the past few years since the federation was formed, noting that this period has seen the highest level of staff engagement. Teachers have consistently provided feedback, and there is a strong sense that staff feel involved in the school and genuinely want to be part of its community.

SrL described the journey of HJS as a transformation from a “Good” school to an “Outstanding” one. The work undertaken since the federation has significantly advanced both schools. LW emphasised that the alignment achieved across the schools is a direct result of the efforts made since federating. It has required a huge amount of work, but the results clearly demonstrate its success. SLd noted that staff now have strong confidence in their practice, which was evident during the inspection. She provided an overview of how this confidence has developed. MS confirmed this, adding that staff were eager to showcase their work and take pride in what they are doing.

MS advised that she would send the full report to governors shortly, and it will also be available on the school website, and she gave a summary of it here. There was a broader discussion around the report.

SLd shared that staff have expressed interest in creating a new banner to reflect the school’s recent achievements. He also reflected on recent interactions with prospective parents during taster days. In the past, there had been concerns among some parents regarding academisation. However, during these recent visits, many of those same parents engaged positively with Reception staff about school readiness and expressed a shift in perception. SLd noted that the communications sent out by the school regarding academisation appear to have had a meaningful impact. The information helped address concerns and contributed to a more informed and supportive parent community.

OA queried the inspection timeframe, and LM advised that the next inspection is expected to take place in four years.

SrL shared that they had researched other schools in the area with an Outstanding Ofsted grade. The findings showed that this school serves the highest number of children under an Outstanding designation locally, with very few other schools in the area holding the same status. SrL noted that this is an important perspective for the LA to consider. There was a broader discussion about how the school compares nationally and the potential value of positioning this in wider communications. SrL emphasised the importance of conveying this message, particularly as the school currently has available places and is not operating at full capacity.

MS reported that the SATs results were received this morning and will be shared alongside the Ofsted report. The headline figures are as follows:

- **Combined (Reading, Writing, Maths):** 75.4%
- **Greater Depth (GD) Combined:** 9%
- **Reading:** 81% (12% GD)
- **Maths:** 85% (41% GD)
- **Science:** 92%

- **Writing:** 82% (12.8% GD)

MS noted that class-level results will also be shared, although this was not a formal agenda item. It was felt important to celebrate the outcomes. SLd described the results as outrageously good and phenomenal, particularly in relation to the GD figures. He emphasised that such outcomes are rare and would not be seen in many other schools nationally. MS provided further context about the cohort, highlighting the significance of the achievements.

Q: Is this the highest-rated GD performance?

MS responded that she believes it is, and LC agreed that this is likely the case. SLd added that achieving 75% combined at Age-Related Expectations (ARE) is a very strong result.

LA Offer Update

MS thanked SrL for taking notes at the recent showcase evening and confirmed that the summary had been circulated and was displayed during the meeting. She provided an overview of this, noting that it was well received by parents, who expressed positive feedback. There was some clarification around the wording used by the LA in their communications. MS explained that the LA has acknowledged past criticisms and is now either facilitating or exploring more targeted support in specific areas, particularly around wraparound provision. Parents were generally supportive during the event, and there were no particularly challenging questions raised. SrL added that the evening was constructive and positive overall, with a good atmosphere and engagement from attendees. A broader discussion followed around the LA's evolving role and the importance of continued collaboration.

5. Governance

Strategic Priorities – (standing item)

LM confirmed that the strategic priorities document had been reviewed and circulated in advance of the meeting. As this will be a focus for the autumn term, LM did not go into detail but provided a brief overview. The document is RAG-rated, and a basic draft will be ready for the autumn term. Committees will then be able to develop their own priorities based on this framework. LW noted that the priorities are aligned with those of the leadership team and suggested they could also be included in school communications.

SLd left the meeting.

Self-evaluation

Governors confirmed that this would be covered in the away day session following this meeting.

LM informed the group that she and LW will not be continuing in their roles as Co-Chairs from September, citing workload pressures as the primary reason. LM further clarified that she may step down from the board

shortly after, whereas LW is expected to remain as a governor. LW reflected on the effectiveness of the Co-Chair model, noting that it has worked well and may be worth continuing. She suggested that this could be part of a broader discussion moving forward. MS expressed her appreciation for both LM and LW, describing their contributions as outstanding. She remarked that it is a great loss not to have LM with the board soon, acknowledging the significant support LM has provided and crediting her as a key factor in the board's achievement of an Outstanding grade. LM was thanked warmly and shared that she has learned a great deal during her time in the role.

AHJ raised a concern about the possibility of not being able to find either a new Co-Chair or a single Chair, prompting a wider discussion on potential next steps. MS offered to support the transition process and assist any new appointee. LW also confirmed she would be available to provide guidance and advice, and there was a broader discussion around this.

The following governor vacancies are anticipated in the Autumn term:

- **Parent Governor Election** – A vacancy will be filled through an upcoming election process.
- **Staff Governor Election** – A staff governor position will also be filled via election.
- **Co-opted Governor** – One co-opted governor vacancy is available.
- **Local Authority Governor** – One LA governor vacancy is available.

Q: How does the staff governor role fit into the structure now that LC is serving as Co-Executive Head?

LM explained that she had sought guidance from Governor Support regarding this matter. Discussions have taken place, and it was confirmed that LC's role as staff governor is due to end soon. Once this transition occurs, a new staff governor will be appointed to represent the staff.

6. Committee Updates

Safeguarding committee feedback

TW advised that the 03.07.25 minutes are not ready yet but will be available for the next meeting.

Finance & Leadership committee

TW confirmed that the minutes from 13.05.25 were circulated to governors in advance. There was a discussion around the risk assessment within the minutes.

Q: How was the experience meeting with the PWG? Was it constructive?

MS shared that the meeting was very good and productive. SrL noted that they came across very well and were respectful and engaged throughout. MS added that it would be good to invite them back in the future, should they be willing to return.

Q: Are they accountable somewhere in some way?

MS explained that all meetings they attend are minuted and shared, and they do not take any action without first seeking approval. LM added that this should be viewed through the lens of risk assessment and highlighted the need for a more formal structure. While it may not have been appropriate to introduce such a structure at the outset, she agreed that it would be beneficial to implement one now. SrL added that this had been discussed with AS and raised with them directly. As part of formalising their role and responsibilities, this issue will be reviewed in the context of planning for the next academic year.

Q: How large is the group?

MS explained that there are approximately 100 people included in the communications, but the majority of the work is carried out by Kim and Jess. Individual projects also have different parents supporting them, depending on the focus.

DK noted that there had been a public meeting the previous week and suggested that it might be helpful to develop more effective communication channels with parents. He mentioned instances where parents were unaware of certain activities and proposed that the group could potentially help brainstorm improvements in this area. LW added that this is a nationwide issue affecting all schools and should be considered as part of a broader discussion.

Curriculum & Inclusion

TW advised that the 26.06.25 minutes are not ready yet but will be available for the next meeting.

DK and MS gave a brief overview of the meeting.

7. Equalities

Anti-Racism update

AMW advised that the parents' meeting took place last week. Although attendance was limited, those who did attend were highly engaged. AMW confirmed that she will write up a summary of the meeting and circulate it as soon as possible. There was discussion around the possibility of creating a leaflet to signpost the process for responding to incidents. The group also explored the idea that violence in school is non-negotiable, as is anti-racism, and raised the question of what the threshold or standard should be in these areas. AMW also noted that there is an event taking place next week, which all are welcome to attend.

There was a discussion around the importance of recognising and celebrating the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of parents within the school community. One idea raised was to invite parents to share and demystify aspects of their cultures through events or classroom visits, helping to build understanding and inclusivity.

AMW reported that a recent anti-racism group session with children had taken place and was very positive. The session was well-received and contributed to ongoing efforts to embed anti-racist values in the school

culture. A parent has also established links with a local synagogue, creating an opportunity for further engagement and learning. This connection is now in place and available as a resource or partnership option moving forward. AMW noted that while the anti-racism parent group is not currently well attended, those who do participate are highly engaged and constructive. She expressed a desire to increase participation, as the group has already generated valuable ideas and outcomes. AMW confirmed her thanks to Caroline Kemp-Harris, Catrin Pierce, Rachael Dawson, Hasret Acar and Luciane Jury.

Q: Is the impact of parents coming into school being captured? And will someone take over from you when you leave?

AMW clarified that she attends the sessions, but the group is run by others. SrL noted that if someone is to take over the monitoring role, it would be helpful to have documentation in place. AMW provided further context and an overview of the current setup.

AMW shared that she recently attended the anti-racism conference organised by the LA. The event was led by Caroline Kemp-Harris. Although AMW had to leave early, she will circulate notes from the conference once available. She expressed thanks to Caroline for running the event and for showcasing the school as part of the programme.

Governors expressed thanks to AMW for her work and contributions.

8. Policy Reviews

Behaviour policy, Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School, Early Career Teachers

MS confirmed that these policies are not ready for approval yet, and governors agreed that this would be deferred to the next FGB meeting.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy, School Complaints procedure, Off-Site Visits policy, Parent/Carer Code of Conduct, HJS Accessibility Plan, WHIS Accessibility Plan, Flexi-Schooling policy

MS agreed that she will amend the WHIS Accessibility Plan as per AMW's comment regarding the wording of the toilet facilities – **ACTION 8.1 - MS**

Governors confirmed that there were no other questions on these policies.

Governors confirmed their approval of the policies listed above.

9. Governor Monitoring for Summer Term

LM provided an overview of the monitoring reports that had been circulated. She noted that the safeguarding visit was cut short due to the Ofsted inspection; however, it was agreed that this still qualifies as a monitoring visit for the term.

Governors confirmed that there were no questions.

10. Strategic Direction

Governors confirmed that this will be covered in the away day session following this meeting.

11. AOB

LM offered huge thanks to AMW for all her work, highlighting the many initiatives she has led and the new ideas she has brought into the school. LM described AMW as a beacon for anti-racist work, noting the legacy and positive impact she will have on the school and its pupils for years to come. She also expressed personal gratitude for AMW's support to both herself and LW, adding that she will be greatly missed. AMW thanked the governing body, describing it as an amazing group and a joy to work with. She shared that she has learned a great deal during her time with the school and praised the strong sense of team spirit that has developed. She expressed her gratitude to all and said she will miss everyone.

Date of next meeting:	7 th October 2025, 6.00pm Portland Road
Time closed:	17:40pm

***** Please see Action Points from this meeting below**

Action points from FGB meeting held on 8th July 2025

Item/Action	By	Person responsible
8.1 MS to amend the WHIS Accessibility Plan so that 'disabled toilets' are referred to as 'accessible toilets'	Autumn FGB meeting	MS

Appendix (see below)

1. FGB Agenda 08.07.25

2. FGB minutes 20.05.25 DRAFT (final)

3a. FGB Finance overview - FY24-5 v1.0 FINAL

3b. Hove Learning Federation Recovery Plan July 2025 - FGB

4c. Hove Junior School Ofsted feedback notes June 2025

5a. Governor Overview of Draft Key Priorities 2025-6

5a. REVIEW - Governing Board Strategic Priorities - 24-25

5b. Your Governance Journey at a glance

6b. F&L minutes 13.05.25 DRAFT (final)

6b. F&L minutes 13.05.25 DRAFT CONFIDENTIAL (final)

8d. HLF Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy Summer 2025

8e. HLF Complaints Procedure Summer 2025

8f. HLF Off-Site Visit Policy Summer 2025

8g. HLF Parent and Carer Code of Conduct - September 2025

8h. HJS Accessibility Plan - Summer 2025

8i. WHIS Accessibility plan - Summer 2025

8j. HLF Flexi-schooling Policy - Summer 2025

9. Governor Monitoring - H&S Summer 25

9. Governor Monitoring Visit Report - Finance Monitoring June25 v1.0 FINAL

LA Update June 2025

Ofsted Report - 10379746 - Hove Junior School - 114403 final pdf