



OAKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL MINUTES of the GOVERNING BODY MEETING

HELD VIRTUALLY

18th May 2026, 6:00-8:00pm

Name	Post	Attending	Apologies accepted	Apologies not received / accepted
Governors				
Maria Whitmarsh (HT)	Headteacher	✓		
Rachel Gander (RG)	Foundation Trust Gv/ Chair	✓		
Gemma Fawcitt (GF)	Staff Governor	✓ (from 6:15)		
Joe Crook (JC)	Co-opted Governor		✓	
Ben Hammond (BH)	Co-opted Governor	✓ (from 6:04-6:27)		
Jayanand Kumarguru (JK)	LA Governor	✓		
Laurence Harding (LH)	Foundation Trust Governor	✓		
Amy Ryan (AR)	Parent Gov / ViceChair	✓		
Foteini Stavroulia	Parent Governor	✓ (from 6:13)		
Other attendees				
Aaron Rattan (SBM)	School Business Manager	✓ (Items 1-5)		
Raylene Poppleton (RP)	Clerk	✓		
Quoracy - 50% of Governors (5)				

Actions arising from this meeting

Item	Action
3	Clerk to update the Standing Orders to reflect the use of Associate Members on panels.

Minutes

Item	Action
1. Welcome, apologies and absences.	
The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 6:01pm. Governors were thanked for the short notice change to a virtual meeting. Apologies had been received from JK and BH for the in person meeting but were able to join virtually. Apologies were accepted from JC.	
2. Declaration of Pecuniary/Business Interests	
No changes to the declarations of interest were declared. Governors had no pecuniary/business interests to declare in this agenda.	
3. Items of Urgent Business	

	The clerk informed governors how associate members may be used on panels and following discussions governors agreed that Associate Members could be appointed to HR and Complaints panels where they were made up of Trust governors and no other Oakwood governors were available. DECISION: Associate Members may be appointed to HR and Complaints panels where Oakwood Governors were not available. In those cases the Associate Member would be a 4th member of the panel where the quorum was 3. Action: Clerk to update the Standing Orders to reflect the change.	Clerk
4.	Reflection	
	The headteacher asked governors - "If a fly on the wall sat through our last three meetings, would they be able to identify our top three strategic priorities for the school, or would they just think we are very good at 'monitoring the weather'?" Governors discussed this and felt that the Ofsted meeting had gone well and the board were well prepared for Ofsted. Changes to the leadership report proposed at this meeting may mean that more the discussion at FGB meetings would be strategic. They also discussed the extent to which there was a culture of challenge on the board.	
5.	Finance & Resources	
5.1	Governors were provided written reports by the SBM and informed that they had met with Local Authority (LA) Finance on 14/5/2026 to review the budgets. The school was in a situation where it had a continual deficit budget and the 26-27 in year deficit was forecast to be circa £129K, leading to a cumulative deficit approaching £500K. As a result, the LA had extended the budget deadline indefinitely. It was explained that there were extenuating circumstances for 2026-27 but subsequent years were forecasting in-year budgets breaking even, assuming there were no unexpected changes. This meant that the deficit was not reduced and the LA would not allow this. The school was required to show that the deficit would be reducing. A meeting was scheduled for the SBM and SLT on 20/05/2026 to go through the budget and deficit recovery plan. There was no 2026-27 budget and deficit recovery plan at this meeting for approval. Plans would be developed for presentation to the GB for approval in due course. FS joined the meeting Staffing was the largest area of spending for the school and changes would be examined to see if replacements were needed or if experienced staff could be replaced by ECT's. This could reduce costs and could form part of the Deficit Recovery Plan (DRP).	

	Question: The staffing report showed the staffing at 0.9-1.9FTE above typical staffing levels. Would the staffing analysis bring that down without impacting learning? Response: That would be the discussion - balancing the costs and the teaching to reach a middle ground so that there was a positive impact on the budget without an impact on teaching. Question: Did the financial information presented include the staff changes that were known about? Response: Yes. Those were included - including all staff changes and maternity. For the last few years the income had not met the staffing needs and due to a reducing birth rate the school was expecting 10 fewer pupils. Governors discussed how a reduction of 10 pupils in a year group did not allow for class changes that would reduce staffing levels across the school. Question: Was there anything suggesting the school should change the PAN due to the trend in pupils numbers continuing downward? Response: The PAN would need to reduce to 45 as otherwise that wouldn't reduce staffing. There were schools in a worse position and with worse projected number on roll who would need to reduce their PAN. The school was aware of the financial position it was in and was trying to do what it could by looking at every line of spending and being frugal. For example the spend on education supplies was half that of a comparable school. Subscriptions had been reduced. The school was cutting what was possible without impacting the children's education. GF joined the meeting. Forest School staffing was 0.8FTE but that had an impact on inclusion. Governors had historically challenged the spending on the Forest School to ensure the benefit was good value and the spend was justified. The level of teacher required for the role was discussed and governors advised that it needed someone trained and there was a cost to the training. Question: Was there scope for shared admin services across the Trust schools? Response: The SBM was currently shared by 2 schools and that may become 3 from September. The SBM would like to work towards a shared service but that was some time off and for Headteachers and Chairs to discuss. HR was shared by the Trust. The sharing of other staff across the trust was raised and how redeployment could be looked at in a restructure. Question: Would any staff like to reduce their hours? Response: The HT advised that staff had been asked and only one member of staff had responded positively to this.	
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	BH left the meeting.	
5.2	<u>Budget 2025-26</u> Governors had received the budget report in advance of the meeting. Question: The cost of 'other staff' in the budget - was that supply staff? Response: That related to an incorrect coding for catering staff. DECISION: Governors APPROVED the 2025-26 budget.	
5.3	<u>Budget Setting 2026-27 & 3 Year Plan</u> Question: Has the school ever been in this position before with the DRP? Response: Schools in deficit always have to produce a DRP, but with the deficit reaching this size. The LA was looking at it very closely and it needed to demonstrate that the school was taking action to address it. Governors commented on the impact of the local government reorganisation, the levels of need within the school. It was confirmed that the timing had not been set by the LA for governor approval of the DRP. Question: Can a governor from the Finance & Resources Committee have a regular meeting with the SBM? Response: Yes	
5.4	<u>Annual Health & Safety Report</u> The report was shared ahead of the meeting. It was explained that the report included a list of actions and progress from the last governor Health & Safety walk. Following discussion it was agreed that this would be reviewed at the next F&R committee meeting.	
5.5	<u>Staffing Update</u> A report was shared for information ahead of the meeting for information that had been used in the budget discussions. The SBM was thanked for their contribution and left the meeting.	
6.	Minutes of previous meetings	
	The draft minutes of the FGB on 16/03/2026 were reviewed. DECISION: The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record by those present. The Meeting Chair's electronic signature was used to sign the minutes after the meeting and the final version filed on the governor drive.	
7.	Matters Arising & Actions	
	Completed actions had been removed from the active log ahead of the meeting. The active actions were reviewed and updated. The Safeguarding Governor had completed the SCR check.	
8.	Pay Committee	
	The last meeting took place on 06/03/2026. The committee had met to consider an application to move to UPS, which after evaluation had been approved.	
9.	Bridge Education Trust	

	The Trust board had met on 05/05/2026 to discuss the Trust's Vision and Values with the support of an external facilitator. It was felt that the headteachers and governors present at the session had different expectations - Headteachers having the aim for a strategic direction and the Governors more practical working together. It was agreed that HT's would draw this up at the next HT meeting and it was hoped the next session would be productive. The next Trust board meeting would take place on 17/06/2026 Governors had been asked about how the Trust worked during the Ofsted inspection.	
10.	Headteacher's Report	
10.1	The Leadership Report to Governors was provided ahead of the meeting. The HT explained that the report was slimmed down due to the Ofsted inspection. The written questions submitted in advance were then reviewed and responded to with key points discussed at the meeting. <i>Written answers were shared with all governors before the meeting and were included in the Appendix at the end of these minutes.</i> Question: The school follows the Trust Attendance Model. Can the school do anything else to improve attendance? Response: No. They had to sit them on the same day but not at the same time. Staggering tests was an established practice and covered in the guidance. All pupils would complete their tests in the morning - none in the afternoon. Question: How was the new filtering and monitoring service going and had reports been received? Response: So far this was positive - The HT & DHT were able to log on and see evidence of the filtering. There were some ongoing issues with youtube for staff which were being investigated. The HT had full confidence in the service but needed to ensure the service was running optimally. Governors commented on the positive impact of the behaviour interventions. Governors were told that 3 staff were retiring and other changes were discussed. Governors were sad to hear that three highly regarded members of staff were retiring and knew that children were fond of them and had benefitted from their kindness, knowledge and expertise over the years. Governors wished them well in their retirement. Governors discussed the feedback from the Trust led GDS writing session and were advised that phase leads were supporting work on marking codes.	

	Question: What have been the most significant operational or strategic challenges this term, and what had been learned from them? Response: Ofsted. It was a new framework. The school was only the fourth or fifth school in Southampton to have been inspected under the new framework, and only 2 had published their reports, so the school had very little experience from others to draw on. We learned that we know our school well, that the framework is thorough, rigorous and, certainly for us, felt fair and allowed us to give a representative view of Oakwood. It was hoped that the report would be available before half term for fact checking. <u>Leadership Report Template Changes</u> The HT had shared a new template for the Leadership Report ahead of the meeting. Question: Are you aware of any other schools where this format has been tried and tested? Response: This was not a tried and tested format but included everything that was needed. The focus was on the strategic rather than the operational. The current report contained a lot of context but didn't focus on strategy. It was proposed that the new format would be a termly written report and a verbal report at the other meeting. Following discussion it was agreed that this aligned with what governors had been preparing with the LA ahead of the inspection and it kept the reporting more strategic. It was agreed that the new format would be trialled from September and adjusted as the year progressed. Governors asked that data points from the previous report be included as comparison and following discussion it was felt that data may be presented as separate items rather than included in the report. Question: If doing a termly report would this be a better use of time? Response: The report writing would be more onerous but if only once per term and more could be gotten from it then this would be more useful. Question: Would governors still be able to submit written questions in advance? Response: Yes. Timings could be looked at for that.	
10.2	School Closure 27/06/2026 The school had to close on that day due to a power cut in the local area. Governors were asked if an additional school day should be added to the end of the summer term to make this up. Governors discussed and felt that many families would have already made commitments or arrangements after the end of term so attendance would be low. DECISION: Governors AGREED that the school should not be asked to make up the extra school day.	
10.3	SIP Update This had not been updated since the Ofsted inspection. The inspection was a springboard to move forward from..	

10.4	SEND Update The report was shared ahead of the meeting. Governors were advised that the 2nd round of pupil progress meetings had taken place and this data was up to date. Question: Are there comparisons to see trends to SEND? Would it be helpful for governors to understand the trends in relation to the budget plans? Response: This could be looked at if governors felt it would be helpful as context for impact on the school needs/demands in the budget. Governors discussed the impact of SEND on staff deployment and the impact on the need for TA's in relation to the number of EHCP's. Consultations for Year R, the numbers in each year group and the mapping of increasing need was discussed. Question: Are SEMH needs growing? Response: Yes. Also the need for Speech and Language which was why the school committed to having a SALSA trained TA. Generally this was a secondary need and formed part of a risk assessment in needing to be able to understand where adults need to be helping pupils be regulated. Quality first teaching and adaptation helped those with cognitive needs. Benefits of working with the Southampton Inclusion Partnership had been seen and were being cascaded. Question: Was there anything in the report that needed to be understood from a budget perspective eg: EP time or pupil premium? Response: Pupil premium was related to disadvantage but not necessarily SEND. The school bought in 7 EP days at circa £500 per day. At present most EP work was around EHCP consults but in the future it was hoped that this could include staff training.	
10.5	Parent Survey Responses The feedback was generally positive as was the feedback for the Ofsted survey. 1 respondent had negative comments. Question: Parents had asked about paying for afterschool clubs with vouchers which was not possible since the move to the new payment system? Response: This would be raised with the SBM to see what could be done. There was a school focus on having wrap around care. Question: What percentage of the respondents were negative for "My child feels safe at school"? Response: Out of 43 responses, there was 1 disagree and 1 strongly disagree. Governors discussed and hoped that anyone who felt that would raise that directly with the school.	

	Question: The response rate of 10% appeared low for a survey at parents evening? Response: The response rate was higher when it took into account that one response was per family which may include multiple children. The low attendance rate at a recent coffee morning for SEN families was discussed as more had attended previous sessions, and their survey received more respondents in October. Question: How can the number of responses be increased? Response: The survey also went out in the school newsletter. Many parents didn't respond to surveys when everything was okay and there had been other recent surveys.	
11.	Policies	
11.1	Data Protection No change DECISION: Policy APPROVED by governors	
11.2	Attendance No changes and in line with Trust DECISION: Policy APPROVED by governors	
11.3	RSHE This was updated to reflect new statutory guidance DECISION: Policy APPROVED by governors	
11.4	School Uniform Changes to school uniform policy from September due to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 were discussed. The school recognised that it was more difficult to get brown uniforms in supermarkets than some other colours. Question: What logo'd items were mandated in the school uniform? Response: None. Branded items were offered but there was little take up and they were not required. The difficulty was related to local supermarkets not offering the range of colours. The school had a lost property box and offered out items that were not claimed. Free items were also supplied to children eligible for Pupil Premium. Uniform items were offered from 2 suppliers, online and in person. Governors discussed whether Sainsburys as a local supermarket could be lobbied to stock brown. Question: Are parents directed to local community Facebook groups where people offered their used uniform for free? Asda were also known to sell non branded uniforms in brown and that could be ordered online. Some supermarkets also offered discounts. Response: That could be added to the newsletter with links. Question: Do any other schools do a different colour uniform item in Year 6? Response: Fairisle Junior School did. Not all pupils at Oakwood took this up. Question: Could OSA funding be used to reduce the cost of Year 6 jumpers for pupils? Response: Yes	

	Governors discussed whether more could be done for the community and the impact on sustainability of having Year 6 hoodies and jumpers. It was felt that outgoing year 6 pupils might donate jumpers if wearing the hoody. The board felt it was important to support families with the cost of living and sustainability. DECISION: Policy APPROVED by governors	
	Accessibility Plan and Lockdown Policy Items 11.5 and 11.6 were carried over to the next meeting. The HT advised that the Lockdown Policy was still being worked on as the SBM was sourcing walkie talkies to try out.	
12.	Equality Objectives & Policy	
	This item was being worked on and improvements being made. The Equality Objectives were on the school website but it was felt the format was not good for measurability or improvement.	
13.	Governor Visits	
	Governors were thanked for completing visits and updating the log. reviewed the updated visit log. Governors discussed different options for the focus on the next Governor In School days and asked that it include the opportunity to meet with staff informally so they could get to know the governors. It was felt familiarity would help with monitoring. Other visits may include monitoring the phonics screening and timetables checks. Dates and visits were agreed for the week commencing 15th June. <u>SATs Monitoring</u> The monitoring was positive and governors were impressed with how calm the children and how they 'took it in their stride'. They also saw evidence of how the pupils supported each other and felt the school should be proud of how it had prepared the children for this. This was the first year of doing a staggered approach and the feedback from staff on that had been positive. The detailed administration and how the process was managed was discussed. Results would be available in July.	
14.	Governor Training & Skills	
	The Skills Audit was reviewed and a few areas were highlighted for strengthening. Financial Planning - it was important to ensure that those on the F&R Committee were strategic and had the right skills to scrutinise the finance. Chair Experience - there were limitations on who could Chair the board or committees. Following discussions it was AR agreed to consider becoming Chair of Finance and Resources from September as they had the right skills. The	

	clerk would be able to connect them with other finance governors/Chairs in the Trust for advice or mentoring. LH would consider being Vice-Chair from September. Governors were asked to look at training on HR disciplinary panels and a link would be shared by the clerk. The new requirement for governors to have Workplace Harassment training was also explained.	
15.	Governor Correspondence & Clerking Matters	
	No items to raise.	
16.	AOB	
	There being no other business the meeting closed at 7:58pm.	

Dates of Remaining Meetings 2025 - 2026		
Full Governing Body 6:00-8:00pm	Finance Committee 12:30-1:30pm [Hybrid]	Governors In School Days (visit during the week)
06/07/2026		15/06/2026

Appendix

Questions asked and answered in advance of the meeting		
Topic	Question	Response
Admissions	What is the projected Reception intake number for September 2026? How does this compare to PAN?	50 on a PAN of 60. This had massive budget implications and was a loss of £40,000 on next year's budget share (taken from October 2026 census data). One more child (with an EHCP) may add to that number, and a second had been consulted on.
	What trends have we seen in intake over the past 3-5 years?	Intake was generally very stable at 60. This year reflected the local picture of a low birth rate year, and many schools had much much lower admission numbers than their PAN than we do.
Attendance	Is any additional plan being considered to review the slight dip in attendance? Is it too early to tell the impact of the EBSA provision in place? What groups are significantly lower in comparison with Trust/National data?	We continue to monitor attendance closely with plans in place for individual families who are struggling to maintain good levels. Unfortunately, some of our attendance is affected by unauthorised holidays, for which we follow the guidance and fine where appropriate.

Safeguarding	Are there any safeguarding issues that governors need to be made aware of?	No issues.
SEN/LAC/Pupil Premium	What do you mean by 'SIP outreach work'?	Southampton Inclusion Partnership - the outreach service from Springwell school.
	5 on a reduced timetable - is this significant? What trends (if any) are we seeing? Are there a growing number of children on reduced timetables?	5 on a reduced timetable was quite high for the school. However, all had very appropriate reasons and the reasons explained.
Behaviour	This seems like a lower number compared with previous reports?	One child who was at risk of suspensions had moved to a specialist setting, another who was beginning to be at risk of PEX was attending Compass School and going to a specialist setting in September. Two pupils were on reduced timetables enabling them to regulate their emotions more successfully and a number of strategies had been trialled with some other pupils which had some positive impact.
Staffing & HR	Had a Maths Lead been appointed yet?	A current member of staff had officially applied for the KS1 maths lead role, and another staff member had expressed an interest in the KS2 role.
CPD	Do you have any feedback from staff on Whole school writing book scrutiny and is there any evidence of the training being put into practice?	Evidence from the Trust-led GDS writing session, particularly in Year 2 books, showed how scaffolds and adaptations were being used to support and challenge pupils. There were still some inconsistencies with the use of marking codes, and an ongoing need to focus on foundational skills in the older year groups.
Wellbeing		
Parental Engagement	Could anxiety sessions be something that could be delivered online?	Possibly, but it was being delivered by the Mental Health in Schools team.

Site and Building	Governors heard there was a bird above a classroom - Did this signify a failure in our new roof?	The school had birds everywhere! Some birds had nested in the gutters. There were no concerns about the roof at this stage
	Did the gas work get completed successfully?	Gas work was completed successfully.
	Well done for dealing efficiently with the honey bee situation - and great to see you took advantage of the learning opportunity to educate the children on honey bees.	It was thought it was a wasps nest, but found it was bees, and a licensed beekeeper arranged to collect them, but in the meantime, they disappeared. They swarm into large nest-like groups and then when the queen decides to move on, they all follow!
SIP		