

Governors General Meeting Minutes Worthing High School

**Tuesday 8 July 2025
Conference Room E13, Worthing High School**

Members	Louise Davey (LDA), Chair	Neil Ambrose (NAM), Vice Chair
	Amanda Allibone (AAL)	John Bull (JBU)
	Caroline Carroll (CCA)	Adrian Cook (ACO), Head of School
	Ian Fielding (IFI)	Lorna Sinsbury (LSI)
	Emma Taylor (ETA)	
Clerk to Governors & Company Secretary	Tracy Reed (TRE)	
Invited Guests	Richard Cohen (RCO), Chair of Trustees	
	Pan Panayiotou (PPU), Exec Headteacher WHS/ CEO SDET	
	Sarah Jones (SJO), Chief Finance & Operating Officer	
	Scott Swift (SSW), Deputy Headteacher	
	Claire Vilday (CVI), Assistant Headteacher	

1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Neil Ambrose and Emma Taylor; Pan Panayiotou attended via Teams for part of the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Notice and Quorum</p> <p>Due notice had been served and the meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
4.	<p>Pecuniary Interests</p> <p>There were no pecuniary interests declared.</p>	
5.	<p>Resignations/Vacancies/Appointments to Governing Body</p> <p>See items 16 and 17.</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes of WHS LGB meeting 20 May 2025</p> <p>With regard to the minutes JBU said he was impressed that WSCC had listened to the school's comments on the Safeguarding Policy (item 7, first paragraph). ACO clarified that WSCC had sent them the first draft of the Policy and they had returned it with feedback; WSCC now had to incorporate KCSIE and the Policy would be issued in September at which point it would become evident just how much of the school's feedback they had taken on board.</p> <p>JBU had a query about the discussion on the challenges of collaborating with other schools in order to continue to offer subjects that might otherwise be at risk (item 8, final paragraph). He wondered why there should be an issue over which school had responsibility for a child when they were at a school other than that at which they were enrolled, and suggested it happened all the time. SSW explained that this did not happen very often and whilst it was not insurmountable it would be very complex logistically.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	

<p>7.</p>	<p>Matters arising from the meeting of 20 May 2025</p> <p><u>Minutes of the WHS LGB meeting held on 1 April 2025.</u> <i>Governors to forward any issues with the minutes to TRE.</i> No issues were received: the minutes were approved.</p> <p><u>Curriculum and outcomes update.</u> <i>ASI to look at last year's data and compare it with this year in order to see whether the change in the offer of core and non-core had affected attendance.</i> This would be covered in the HoS report at this meeting.</p> <p><u>Head of School's Report.</u> <i>LSI to share article giving attendance rates for local secondary schools.</i> LSI had shared the article.</p> <p><u>CFOO report.</u> <i>Governors to contact SJO if they have any questions about the FMR.</i> No questions were received.</p> <p><u>Trips.</u> <i>ACO to bring list of trips beyond 2026 to next LGB meeting.</i> This would be covered later in the meeting.</p> <p><u>Trips.</u> <i>ACO to check the cover provided by the Kenya trip company.</i> No further information so far.</p> <p><u>Policies. Mobile Devices.</u> <i>SSW to amend the wording in section 3.3 in order to clarify the meaning around phone usage and consequence cards at the end of the school day.</i> Done.</p> <p><u>Policies. School Uniform.</u> <i>SSW to add a line to the Uniform Policy to the effect that second hand uniform was acceptable and to signpost the Friends of Worthing High.</i> Done.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>Starting with Trust matters, PPU said that the current executive model had been in place for a couple of years. As the Trust developed it was now appropriate to consider changing the Head of School roles filled by Adrian Cook and Justine Chubb to Headteacher, and to acknowledge the accompanying accountability element of those posts. The matter had been discussed and fully supported at Trust level and would be communicated via the school newsletter.</p> <p>In terms of developing the Trust, work with the Southwater schools continued but there had been challenges in forming an agreement. PPU said Governors should also be aware of what could happen with the redesignation of boundaries and the devolution of East Sussex, West Sussex, and Brighton and Hove. There was a suggestion that Brighton and Hove may be moving more into West Sussex, but PPU believed that view was not shared by local MPs.</p> <p>PPU acknowledged it had been a very busy year for the executive team and the Governors. He believed WHS was in a strong position and was well thought of but it was important to keep in mind what the school offered as well as the challenges with recruitment, funding, and so on. Budgets would become increasingly more challenging. He said that an incredible amount of work had brought the school to the best place and he believed that come August there would be positive outcomes compared to previous years.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>CPD and Teaching and Learning</p> <p>CVI gave a comprehensive presentation, Teaching and learning update 2024 /25, under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible consistencies and principles of strong practice Behaviour for learning Impact of EFA Monitoring and evaluation CPD <p>LDA referred to the long list of different courses that people had done and asked if it was the case that there was an assessment and that staff were steered towards courses in order to address gaps, or was it completely free choice. CVI explained that there was an element</p>	

of direction in that personal CPD should link to the school development priorities and be agreed by line managers. Personal CPD for this year would be launched on the September INSET day and agreed with line managers on the October INSET day. The range of courses on offer was broader and monitoring had resulted in a significant uptake in the amount of personal CPD being completed.

RCO asked if teaching to the top made sense when there were less high attainers coming through in the year groups. CVI explained that it did, because teaching in the middle or bottom would not raise aspiration: the aspirational teaching aim was to bring everybody up to the state standard. ACO added that a lesson was pitched for stretch rather than to hit a target. The aspirational target for one student could be very different for another.

CVI said that WHS would like to become an EFA ambassador school at the end of the two years. Work was underway to review the induction process for staff and it was noted that engagement with National College courses was had increased significantly. WHS had also broadened its membership of The Key which now included leadership training and KCSIE.

CVI concluded with saying she thought it had been a very successful year. LDA thanked her for the presentation and she left the meeting.

10. Head of School's Report

Quality of education. ACO reminded Governors that predicted outcomes were based on performance across key stage 4 and two sets of mock examinations. The forecast was one of improvement including Attainment 8 over 50 which would put WHS significantly above national average compared to the previous year. He stressed that these were forecasts and much work had been done to improve predictions and current grades because he was aware that historically the data had been slightly unreliable. ACO believed the figures in his report gave a more accurate picture but he wanted to manage Governors' expectations.

The DP gap was forecast to be significantly reduced to the point where DP students could realistically be expected to reach non-DP attainment levels, quite a significant achievement. There had been a lot of work to make sure that the school was totally aligned in terms of where its responsibility stood towards supporting PP and DP students from Year 7 to Year 11.

RCO asked if the gap would have been different had the school still been tracking progress. ACO responded that it was proportional and so the internal progress gap would have narrowed as well: it was a shift for the whole school. High profile disadvantaged students likely to have challenges accessing exams had been identified early on and were supported with intervention programmes: the same was true for grade 4s and 5s. The forecast was for something above national average this year in terms of Attainment 8. Middle and higher prior attainers were forecast to achieve better than the national average last year; the narrowest gap was with the HPAs and that had been an ongoing focus.

LDA asked if the increase in Attainment 8 this year was sustainable. ACO responded that this had been a compliant, not overly academic, year group. The students coming through had arrived in Year 7 as below national average. Consequently there would be an attainment dip for Years 10, 9, 8 and possibly 7. Even if they achieved their aspirational target grades, their attainment rate would still dip, regardless of how hard staff worked with them. ACO added that Year 9 was interesting: their Attainment 8 could well be the poorest the school had ever seen. They were a compliant year group and their progress would be strong and that was why it was important that progress measures would return in two years to provide that context.

RCO asked why there had been three years in a row that were weak compared to the national average. ACO said there had been a steady decline whereas before the school had been around average and seen positive progress. It seemed to be that attainment in key stage 2 was generally dipping in the locality.

Behaviour and attitudes. Turning first to attendance, ACO reported that Worthing High attendance was above national average but there were areas of concern as detailed in his

report. ACO described how the school had used the Attend app to look at parent engagement. An email had gone out to all parents, divided into pupil premium and non-pupil premium. The recipient had to click on a link in the email in order to read the full message, thereby identifying which parents had read the email. The engagement percentages were 68.92% pupil premium and 76.4%.non-pupil premium. This provided a watchlist of parents that were not engaging or reading school communications, and prompted thoughts about how to communicate differently. RCO asked if it was possible to follow-up with those parents and let them know that they still had something to read. ACO explained that the school would send a text, check again for a response, and then start making phone calls. Work needed to be done on turning passive engagement into positive engagement before it affected their child's attendance.

In response to LDA's question, ACO confirmed that there was often positive engagement and parents would reach out to pastoral leaders or tutors.

CCA referred to the suggestion in Julian Grant's SIP report for a family liaison officer. It was agreed that it could have some merit but it could be cumbersome to set up as well as expensive. ACO advised that the data from the Attend app provided a more robust body of evidence from which to start arranging home visits or engaging with the local authority.

ACO now wanted to see how many of the 68.92% pupil premium parents that had opened the email would actually come into school for parents' evenings, parental meetings, and so on. The data from the engagement email would help establish thresholds for sending out specific communications - more pointed messages about the importance of attendance and links to future outcomes. The hope was that using the app would provide better insight and that the school would start to see an improvement with family engagement leading to better attendance.

JBU asked if it was certain that parents and carers had the necessary electronic devices. ACO responded that it was not a one hundred percent certainty but the school asked families annually if they needed devices and there was always some response. However all parents/carers had email addresses and there had only ever been one bounce back from a whole parent/carer emailing. Whether or not they engaged with the email was another matter. ACO confirmed that the school constantly offered parents the opportunity to come into school and talk.

LSI asked if, when a parent reached out for help, the school had sufficient resources to help. ACO replied that there was a limit to what was available. The school's EBSA provision had developed this year but there was still more that could be done.

There was discussion around the apparent lack of any message on the importance of attendance from central Government considering they had called it a national priority. The suggestion was that there should be a social media campaign such as with mobile phones in schools.

ACO advised that two of the seven elements of the school development plan concerned attendance, reinforcing that it was a key priority.

LSI asked what schools that had better attendance than WHS did differently. ACO said he thought they had set out expectations on attendance at the start and were a little harder-edged. WHS had tried that with the Year 7 parents and attendance was relatively strong. Where he believed the school needed to improve was reaching the Year 7s taking one or two days off each term because if they were not picked up swiftly one or two would grow into three or four days and parents would not think twice about absenting their children.

ACO recounted being told by parents that they were taking their children out of school for a holiday and would accept the fine because the saving more than compensated for it. Schools would not be able to affect that mindset without some support from central Government. ACO would include a detailed section on attendance in his reports going forward and would keep Governors updated on the impact that Attend was having and how it was being used. The initial data posed a lot of questions and the object now was to try and answer those questions.

LSI asked what the biggest reason was for non-attendance. Physical health was the most common cause but mental health reasons for absence had grown over the years and SEND students were more likely to have such issues. ACO said that the data was available and it would be useful to look into it. There followed a long discussion about mental health, mental illness, and the effect on attendance.

In response to a comment about the rewards budget, ACO noted the importance of acknowledging good attendance. This was used strategically when attendance was beginning to decline.

Behaviour. SSW referred to a chasm between primary school and secondary school where students transitioned from a no consequence culture in primary school to secondary school where behavioural issues would not be tolerated. There was a risk then that parents could become adversarial and challenge the school's decisions. It was hoped that the home school agreement, signed by the school and parents at face-to-face transitions meetings, would encourage considerable improvement.

SSW continued that WSCC persisted in placing EHCP students at WHS despite the school explaining that they could not meet the needs of those students. As a result, Year 8 in particular had a minority of students dominating student behaviour through their dysregulated behaviour. This would continue to be an issue where there was a high number of EHCP students, and there would be sixteen joining in the new Year 7 in September. Encouragingly however, behaviour had improved throughout the year as Year 7s and 8s started to learn about simple boundaries and the Worthing way of doing things, and that there would be a consequence of their behaviour.

The school would look at an alternative curriculum for Year 8 next year so that as they moved to Year 9, for one day a week students would access a more vocational programme rather than national curriculum subjects.

Suspensions always increased in the summer term because students had gone through the layers of support, interventions and sanction and had reached the point where the next stage would be a suspension.

In response to a question from LDA, SSW explained this had been the first year that the school had run one-to-one interviews between parents, students, and the ELT and SLT, and gone through the home school agreement in detail and explained what the expectations would be.

Having established that other local secondary schools followed a similar behaviour policy to Worthing High's, RCO asked if there was scope for a joint letter to primary schools appraising them of the standards that would be expected of their students when they reached secondary school and suggesting that tolerant therapeutic behaviour strategies put them at a disadvantage. ACO explained that WSCC had promoted the therapeutic approach with primary schools post-pandemic, and they were now having to deal with extreme behaviour on a level never before experienced. Years 7 and 8 appeared to present challenges at secondary schools across the locality. ACO clarified that in Worthing High's case this applied to only about 6 or 7% of Year 8s. Year 7s exhibited more low-level disruption, and they came to school ready to challenge.

Referring to the two recent permanent exclusions, ACO explained to Governors that they had been one-off incidents and not the result of failed interventions. One of the exclusions concerned an SSC student and it was felt that if the specialist support centre had been able to provide the resources promised by the local authority five years ago, the school would have been able to meet that student's needs. It was the third permanent exclusion where the environment had led to such a situation, and ACO felt it was important for Governors to be aware of that.

Personal development. The consultation on the RSE curriculum had concluded and there was a draft available but it had not yet passed into legislation. ACO believed it would be ready for implementation by all schools in 2026, but judging by the draft, the WHS RSE curriculum was fairly compliant with it. The policy would be reviewed as soon as the

	<p>legislation had been passed. The challenge was that the KCSIE guidelines for the next academic year had been written based on parts of the RSE curriculum yet to be legalised and there was some inconsistency which made things slightly complex.</p> <p>There would be some Chinese students visiting the school in the following week and WHS had already been offered an exchange visit for August 2026. It was quite challenging to find exchange partners in China because the Government had to validate exchange schools; hosting the students would do that as well as bringing a modest income that would certainly cover the students' visit.</p> <p><u>Careers</u>. The audit of provision was underway in the light of the changes to the Gatsby benchmarks. The biggest challenge would be embedding relevant careers materials across the curriculum and that would be a main focus in curriculum development next year to ensure that WHS was compliant when careers guidance came into force in September 2026.</p> <p><u>Leadership and management</u>. The main learning point from Helen Gabrielides' WSCC consultancy visit report concerned consistency of provision for HPA students across their school journey. She also noted significant improvement in teaching and learning throughout the year, and consistent positive behaviour in classrooms, with very low-level disruption.</p> <p><u>School development plan</u>. The school development plan consisted of seven priority areas. Outcomes over the summer could effect changes to these priorities and so ACO would bring a draft plan to the first Governors' meeting of the new academic year.</p> <p>LDA asked how the key stage 3 curriculum was being measured. ACO responded that it was difficult to set a smart target and that it would come through quality assurance, teaching and learning: assessments were not always used to inform planning. He clarified that key stage 3 curriculum planning was constantly ongoing in order to ensure that the bedrock was solid.</p> <p><u>Staffing</u>. The school had a full complement of teachers but was quite significantly short of LSAs. This provided an opportunity to look at the staffing model in inclusion, and to be sure in September that any recruitment added best value.</p>	ACO
11.	<p>CFOO report</p> <p>SJO advised that the Trustees had approved the budget. It included the 4% recommended pay award for teachers, but SJO had found out that afternoon that the grant associated with the award would be reduced from £7 per pupil to £5 in the second half of the year. The national insurance grant had been similarly affected.</p> <p>The proposed support staff pay award of 3.2% had been rejected by the unions. SJO had budgeted for 3.2%; the award would not be funded.</p> <p>SJO had incorporated 3% interest on most items within the budget. She had only modelled in 0.5% for the actual grant funding which was what it was from last year to this year, showing that there was already a disparity between expenditure and income. SJO commented that it was a very decreasing picture moving forward.</p> <p>Within the budget for the next three years, the strategy was to assume that when a UPS resigned they would be replaced with a main pay scale post. SJO had also had to model in reducing support staff numbers and potentially some leadership. She added that it did not mean that it would happen: Trustees had agreed to include those measures in order to submit a balanced budget and explain to the DfE that if more funding was not forthcoming, that was what would happen. SJO would rewrite the budget in September/October.</p> <p>RCO asked if, considering the LSA roles that needed to be filled, and given the fact that the budget included fewer LSAs, should it not just be accepted that the roles would not be filled at the moment. ACO responded that there was a significant shortfall and there would have to be a compromise because needs were not currently being met. SJO said that as was usually the case, the reality in September would be very different from what she had modelled.</p>	SJO

	<p>The surplus at the end of next year would be £446. The following year would have £63k surplus but that would be by reducing teachers and it was not really sensible to try and forecast anything beyond the next year.</p> <p>With regard to this year the deficit was reducing and SJO predicted £177k deficit, of which £96k was designated. The actual in year deficit was about £80k and reducing; SJO was fairly confident that it would get close to zero. The overall reserves would be about £650k which would be a good position to be in.</p> <p>A major development in terms of financial monitoring was new cost centres for ACO and JCH. This gave much greater transparency over cost centres and spend, allowing redeployment of funds.</p> <p>All budget holders now had read only access to the finance system so they could see their own budgets in real time and make more informed decisions.</p> <p>SJO would provide an absence report at the very end of term.</p> <p><u>Risk register</u>. The latest risk register had been to Trustees. SJO had removed some items such as Covid. There was still significant risk of underfunding, and potential for staff industrial action because the unions were still balloting.</p> <p>There was now a policy associated with the risk register and risk management.</p> <p><u>Trips and visits</u>. The 2026 residential trip to Berlin was approved. ADD TO DECISIONS</p> <p>It was clarified that the skiing trip was annual and not biennial as in the enrichment provision map.</p>	SJO
12.	<p>Clerking matters</p> <p><u>Governor training</u>. Governors were asked if they were able to access the Learning Link and to inform TRE of any training that they completed, or if they had issues accessing the Link.</p> <p><u>Trustee and Governor training policy</u>. RCO reported that Trustees had approved the Trustee and Governor training policy. It was acknowledged that Governors were accustomed to doing the annual safeguarding and KCSIE training, but there were certain key occurrences, such as exclusion panels, that they might not necessarily have received training on. Trustees had agreed that to do such specific tasks, Governors should have undertaken specific training. The policy contained specific links to one and two-hour courses on the Learning Link and would be circulated to Governors ahead of the next academic year.</p>	TRE
13.	<p>Policies for Review</p> <p><u>Assessment and feedback policy</u>. Due to the late submission of the policy, Governors were asked to read it and send any comments to TRE. ACO advised that there were no significant changes to the existing policy.</p>	Governors
14.	<p>Chair's actions</p> <p>There were no Chair's actions.</p>	
15.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>LDA advised that teacher Mostefa Beda was retiring after seventeen years: it was agreed that she would sign a card for him on behalf of the Governors.</p>	LDA
16.	<p>Appointment of the Chair of WHS LGB</p> <p>In the absence of any other nominees, LDA indicated her willingness to continue as Chair. She was proposed by JBU, seconded by ACO, and appointed.</p>	

17.	<p>Appointment of the Vice Chair of WHS LGB</p> <p>NAM had previously indicated his willingness to remain as Vice Chair. There were no other nominations. NAM was proposed by JBU, seconded by LDA and appointed.</p>	
18.	<p>Dates and times of GB Meeting for Academic Year 2025-2026</p> <p>It transpired that Tuesday was no longer a convenient day on which to meet and that Wednesdays should be tried instead. TRE would circulate new dates.</p>	TRE
	LDA closed the meeting at 1755.	

Chair

Date