

# Governors General Meeting Minutes Worthing High School

**Wednesday 3 December 2025  
Classroom B9, Worthing High School**

<b>Members:</b>	Louise Davey (LDA), Chair	Neil Ambrose (NAM), Vice Chair
	Amanda Allibone (AAL)	John Bull (JBU)
	Caroline Carroll (CCA)	Adrian Cook (ACO), Headteacher
	Ian Fielding (IFI)	Lorna Sinsbury (LSI)
	Emma Taylor (ETA)	
<b>Clerk to Governors &amp; Company Secretary</b>	Tracy Reed	
<b>Invited Guests</b>	Richard Cohen (RCO), Chair of Trustees (link Trustee)	
	Terry Parkin (TPA), Vice Chair of Trustees	
	Pan Panayiotou (PPU), CEO South Downs Education Trust	
	Sarah Jones (SJO), Chief Finance & Operating Officer	
	Scott Swift (SSW) Deputy Headteacher	

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome</b>  The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies for absence had been received from Amanda Allibone, Pan Panayiotou, and Sarah Jones. John Bull arrived at 1650.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Notice and Quorum</b>  Due notice had been served and the meeting was declared quorate.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Pecuniary Interests</b>  There were no pecuniary interests declared.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Resignations/Vacancies/Appointments to Governing Body</b>  Nothing to report.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous WHS LGB meeting</b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Matters arising from the meeting of 24 September 2025</b>  <u>GCSE results analysis.</u> Staff to advise the numbers of candidates entered for each subject (to suggest where investment in the school might have a greater return). <i>Noted for next September meeting.</i>  <u>Safeguarding.</u> Governors to complete the online safeguarding training. <i>Completed.</i>  <u>Safeguarding.</u> NMA to source the data on the number of students seen by Thought-Full for JBU <i>To check with NMA/JBU.</i>	

	<p><u>Link Governors</u>. Link Governors to set up visits before Christmas. <i>NAM had already made some visits.</i></p> <p><u>Link Governors</u>. ACO to re-circulate the areas of governance table. <i>Completed.</i></p> <p><u>Code of Conduct</u>. TRE to send the Code to Governors for signature. <i>All Codes signed.</i></p> <p><u>Policies</u>. Governors to provide any feedback on the Safeguarding policy by 1 October 2025, and by 8 October 2025 for the other policies. <i>All policies agreed.</i></p>	
8.	<p><b>CEO Report</b></p> <p>In the absence of PPU, ACO advised that Worthing High was full on first preferences at 214, and was the only secondary comprehensive in Worthing to be in that situation. With the falling birth rate in mind, the school was looking at its marketing and transition processes from Years 5, 6, and 7 to ensure robust numbers moving forward.</p> <p>Worthing High had been interviewed to become a Behaviour and Attendance Hub lead school; the outcome was expected later in the week. If successful, the commitment would be similar to the previous Behaviour Hub role in supporting schools locally and in the south east.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>ACO explained that from now on he would format his reports to align with the new Ofsted framework focuses to ensure that Governors become more familiar with the Ofsted terminology.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding</u>. Safeguarding training was being introduced wherever possible. The focus was on low-level concerns and the accurate reporting of them, with the emphasis on 'ignore any doubts and just report'. This applied to students as well. The DSL, Nick Mariosa (NMA) was working on case studies analysing situations that might make students more susceptible to safeguarding concerns. All staff were compliant having completed their statutory safeguarding training.</p> <p><u>Inclusion</u>. In the context of Ofsted, this included pupil premium and SEND students, and ACO's report would focus mainly on these areas.</p> <p>ACO referred Governors to the pupil premium strategy and statement of intent: it required Governors' approval so that it could be uploaded to the website before the end of term. He explained that the detailed action plan was used internally and the content for the website was intentionally vague in terms of outcomes and success criteria: too much information could leave the school open to challenge by those who might not have an expert eye.</p> <p>The statement of intent was largely unchanged because the type of disadvantaged pupil that the school was attracting had not changed either. The challenges were the same as last year also, but ACO identified them because it was important for Governors to know what they were and to scrutinise provision based on the challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Financial challenges</li> <li>• Engagement with wider school life (referred to as extracurricular)</li> <li>• Learning skills (a capacity to work in a metacognitive way)</li> <li>• Concerns with entry level data including disparity of outcomes on entry, particularly in English and maths</li> </ul> <p>The breakdown of costs was an overview based on teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies (e.g. behaviour and attendance).</p> <p>LDA asked if it was possible to quantify the success criteria or was it the case that any reduction in the gap was a success; she felt there should be some kind of measure around</p>	

it. ACO said that the (internal) action plan would quantify everything; the aim was for the information in the public domain to remain vague.

RCO referred to the broader definition of disadvantaged pupils and in particular the bereaved child. He asked if they were included as part of the assessment. ACO explained they were not because it was based on students in receipt of pupil premium, but many of the strategies supporting them would also support a bereaved child.

**Governors agreed that the pupil premium strategy and statement of intent could be uploaded to the website.**

Turning to the internal action plan ACO pointed out that it was deliberately linked closely to the school development plan. The key focus areas were attendance, rewards, quality first teaching, targeted intervention, and parental engagement. There were starting to be benefits from a number of new strategies implemented that year. Narrowing the gap by three attainment 8 points reflected that the pupil premium strategy was working and only needed refining rather than changing significantly. The action plan would be presented to Governors periodically to show progress.

A programme of workshops designed to engage with pupil premium parents and carers had been really impactful; they were a key lever in supporting better attendance and attainment. All stakeholders in the school were prioritising pupil premium students so that they were receiving the best attention. This spilled over into the classroom as much as possible, and helped ensure that provision in the classroom was consistently strong for all pupil premium students.

The cohort of complex SEND students in Year 8 was now in Year 9 and little had changed. ACO went into detail about how the cohort's needs were met in the classroom and that they were now accessing the whole curriculum. It had also had a positive effect on the behaviour metrics as previously they were having an impact on those around them. In response to a question from CCA, ACO said there had been no student voice but what indicated the progress made by the cohort was that none of them had been C3'd from class. There was detailed discussion about the particular cohort, the logistics involved in teaching them, and the impact on other students in the same classes. The summer term would be a challenge because of the pinch point created by the exams and the staff to look after them being less readily available. The bespoke curriculum for the cohort was constantly refined to ensure that it was meaningful and developmental. Teachers were working as creatively as possible because there were some students that could not access the full curriculum and they needed the extra support.

Curriculum and teaching. Some elements of the national curriculum review had been received positively but in general it had been expected to be a little more transformational. There would be adjustments to the number and length of examinations and an end to pressure to put students through EBacc. Indications were that the computer science and English curriculums would be significantly redesigned. ACO said the school would still push languages and humanities but it would also have the flexibility to ensure students had access to a broad and varied range of qualifications.

The DfE had not agreed or approved certain elements and there were questions about how it would link to the White Paper. Subject leaders were prepped for when the review moved into legislation. There was disappointment about the retention of the bucket of eight subjects because it was not accessible to a large and growing number of students.

There was evidence of greater expertise and understanding in the school, particularly around formative assessment. There was more confidence in observing practice where it was felt it could be better, and in articulating that. This was the impact of embedding formative assessment. On the whole, teaching and learning was in a very strong place and teachers were meeting common expectations. Positive practice was being shared across teams.

ACO was looking to achieve ambassadorial status with the Schools, Students and Teachers network (SSAT) and believed that the EFA mentor and school improvement partner (SIP)

was in agreement and had started the process. The culture around teaching had changed phenomenally since the SIP's first visit, and was focused on consolidation which was what students needed for success in exams and assessments.

Governors were asked if they had any questions. ETA asked about the correlation between the number of admissions and SEND. ACO responded that there were more SEND students in the system and Worthing High had been the school of choice for SEND students since pre-Covid. It had the SSC and a positive reputation of inclusion. However, this meant that the school was not attracting as many high prior attaining girls, they tended to go to Davison's, but Worthing High were trying to challenge that because their outcomes for high prior attaining girls were really strong. LDA wondered whether the current narrative around misogynistic behaviour had a bearing; ACO thought this was possible, together with Davison's outstanding Ofsted rating, achieved at the very end of the last Ofsted framework. It was acknowledged that Davison's achieved good outcomes, and that it was important for Worthing High to market the school as providing students at the top end with the best possible pathway whilst not losing sight of the school's inclusive nature.

Looking at role models in the school, ACO commented that the SLT was now better balanced and female leadership was growing, but the Headteacher and two deputies were all male and this was something to be mindful of. LDA asked if female staff and students were at the forefront of the marketing material. ACO responded that it was but more could be done to share positive experiences.

There was further discussion about marketing the school in a way that might encourage more female students. One suggestion was to give examples of students' destinations after Worthing High. There was anecdotal evidence that girls who went to Davison's did well academically but were a bit naïve about boys. ACO referenced the Girls' Leaders Group as a good platform from which to be able to start sharing the female narrative. Also discussed were the different styles of teaching boys and girls, and the different ways in which they learned. ACO questioned whether, if the school achieved hub status again, that could be a spring to be able to challenge a misconception around behaviour in the classroom.

ACO took it as an action to carry out an analysis of destinations post Worthing High based on gender.

ACO

[1645 RCO left.]

There was a suggestion for the female leaders' group to have a stand at the Open Day, together with other ideas from the discussion that could be reviewed in preparation for the next year's marketing.

[1650 JBU arrived.]

Achievement. The validated results would not be published officially until January but there were no changes to any of the inspection data summary reports (IDSR). Year 11 had just completed mock exams: the process had been positive and behaviour was good. There had been some concerns about engagement, but students engaged really well. Marking was underway and the updates on mock outcomes would be at the next Governors' meeting.

ACO explained that there would be a dip in the outcomes compared to previous years because subject leaders had inflated predicted grades to keep the students engaged. It defeated the object of targeted interventions because they were based on inaccurate grades. Consequently, grades would no longer be shared with students and staff had been instructed to be completely accurate in future. There was no contextual data for comparison and so it was not possible to gauge progress between now and the end of the academic year. ACO said there would be a narrative ready for the next Governors' meeting and he would try and contextualise it as best he could.

JBU asked if there would be another set of mocks but ACO advised that there would not be enough time to do anything with the outcomes, and it would take up curriculum time. He confirmed that adjustments had been made for this particular year group and believed that the model moving forward, having one set of mocks in Year 10 and one in Year 11,

would work better for the students. There needed to be an analysis of the progress from Year 10 to Year 11 from the student perspective.

In response to ETA, ACO said the exams had impacted attendance but that it was very good during the two weeks of the mocks. Logistically, the impact on the school was much the same as usual. It was hoped that attendance for the current week would have picked up.

Targeted interventions could happen once the data had been inputted. First and best intervention for pupil premium students would apply, which would ensure that they were prioritised in the event of limited capacity of intervention. There was good staff engagement but ACO cautioned against taking it for granted because they were being asked to do a little extra for no extra pay. He hoped the culture would continue so that period zeros and sixes ran without too much challenge.

Attendance and behaviour. ACO advised that now the school had the Attend app to analyse attendance data it was possible to test out various hypotheses, and proceeded to share some examples. The suggestion that pupil premium students tended to have more than one day off at a time was shown to be the case. Consequently, following a day off, all pupils had a return to school meeting. The first and best principle was applied for pupil premium students meaning that their meeting would take place with the member of staff most qualified to do it. The meetings were invaluable in cases where they led to students revealing that they were worried about something, or needed something. It was an extra layer of mentoring made possible by the Attend app and the impact would be measured this term.

Turning to Five by Friday ACO explained that there was now a targeted list of students for teachers to choose from based on their attendance. Five by Friday was where all teaching staff made positive emails or phone calls to five different students. Initial analysis showed that it had positively impacted their attendance and whilst it was tailing off a little now, it definitely was not getting worse. It was important that they understood the principle behind the targeted list and the impact.

Whilst there were no clear patterns at the moment, analysing the data from the Attend app could show if students' attendance was influenced by particular events such as assembly days, certain subjects, etc. There needed to be more thought around where certain events, i.e. mocks, were placed. ACO was keen to see what the impact on attendance would be with the forthcoming Thursday SRE and the early finishes at the end of term. SSW noted that students liked coming in to school on social events like a non-uniform day.

ACO advised that the DfE had given Worthing High an AI generated ABIE target (attendance baseline improvement expectation target) of 91.5%. Last week was the first week that attendance had fallen but overall, the school was at 92.99%. He believed that this was the most challenging term for attendance and to be ahead of the ABIE target was positive. However, the target in the school development plan would not change. The ABIE did not give a pupil premium specific target.

ACO explained that the target was based on pre-Covid levels, geographical area, and other schools' attendance figures. Attendance was healthy at the moment but could become more challenging over time. There was discussion as to whether interventions and communications with parents/carers had helped with the attendance rates. ACO said it was difficult to measure but the school did track students who were at risk of persistent absence and targeted them with more communications than the rest of the school.

ETA queried whether a student was automatically recorded as an unauthorised absence if they arrived late. ACO confirmed that they were, unless the school had received a reason from home. However, the school had adjusted its times in line with DfE guidance and the last entry was as late as it could be.

Attendance policy. It was deemed logical to review the Attendance policy at this point. LSI commented that there needed to be clear guidance on what to do about taking the register when students were in assembly, and pointed out some instances of repetition. **The policy was approved subject to amendment.** ACO took it as an action to explain the local authority technical language following comments from JBU.

ACO

Behaviour. To put the issue of behaviour in context locally and nationally, SSW explained that the year group causing most concern was Year 9. This was the year group that had been impacted the most during Covid having been in Year 4 at the time.

The suspension rate for schools in the Area South locality was an average of 19.3 per one hundred students. The current suspension rate for Worthing High was 4.6 per hundred, the second lowest suspension rate in Area South, and lower than Davison's. The highest number of suspensions issued to a school in the area in one academic year was 783, equalling five suspensions for every school day.

SSW observed that challenging behaviours were manifesting themselves earlier in primary schools. Worthing High had more SEND students than ever before and pupil premium was at the same level, meaning that there was still the same level of disadvantaged pupils. The key element in Worthing High's low suspension rate was the staff. He cited an example whereby teachers were asked to convey to students that scarves would be confiscated if they continued to wear them in school: within two days there was not a scarf to be seen.

SSW continued that there were students that joined Worthing High with challenging behaviours but staff were expected to use supportive therapeutic strategies to encourage purposeful learning and high expectations. There was a real focus on behaviour for excellence within the classroom; the school had joined up teaching and learning with behaviour because it was fundamental to it rather than separate. There was also an emphasis on support in the classroom: SEND students would not be successful unless their learning was accessible and broken down for them.

Referring Governors to the graphs in his paper, SSW pointed out that there had been the highest number of C3s in the last seven years. This was because staff were not tolerating bad behaviour or disruption to learning.

SSW said they were beginning to see internal truancy from students: students believed they had a right to negotiate and exercise their self-will by walking out of a lesson. Students were then refusing to engage with staff or return to class, hence the increase in C3s. A handful of the same students doing this at Worthing. ACO said that corridor presence was extremely important at combatting it because it was hard to reverse internal truancy once it started, but it was not an issue at Worthing High as yet.

Other issues being looked at included punctuality; three lates incurred a ninety-minute detention. Similarly, students should have the correct equipment with them. Pupil premium students without a pencil case would be given one filled with equipment, all other students needed to have one with them.

Citing a recent example involving a Year 7 student, SSW explained the school was having to deal with the breakdown in relationships at home where the child was in charge and able to negotiate their own behaviour. It was only a minority but some students did not experience clear directed instructions at home and so it was about creating and reinforcing the norms when they were in school, which took longer for some students than for others to engage with. SSW advised that the school would continue to provide the consistencies and the metrics would go up, but that was because of trying to maintain behaviour, raising the bar, and did not mean that behaviour had deteriorated.

JBU asked about positive behaviour. ACO explained the pupil premium rewards programme. It would be important for Governors to see: how many pupils had received an award, how many were in the top, middle and bottom layers. It was acknowledged that quite often the middle layer was the one at risk.

SSW explained how the rewards breakfast had now moved to the afternoons with the emphasis around a certificate and badge presented by the progress leader. Gold and purple awards were presented by ACO and the highest reward was afternoon tea with him.

NAM asked if there had been a shift in the average length of fixed-term suspensions. SSW explained that the school did not issue a suspension for less than one and a half days but instead put in place an internal consequence which it was felt would be more effective,

particularly where there was a need to safeguard the student. If a student repeated the same offence, the suspension could be increased to two and a half or three days, and so on. Worthing High had a very good relationship with Angmering and the two schools accommodated each other's students if a suspension reached the six plus day. SSW explained that a half day was used because if the incident happened during the day, the student would already be in school and registered. SSW said he would bring Governors some headlines around rewards.

SSW

Personal development and wellbeing. Governors were aware of the well-established student leadership group and the female leadership group. ACO advised of the introduction of a positive masculinity group to include role modelling, delivering assemblies, and highlighting the culture that the school wished to encourage. The societal issues around misogynistic and sexist behaviours needed to be tackled in school.

The growth of student leadership now fed into the teaching and learning programme through the embedded formative assessment whereby student teacher learning leads went into sessions and delivered their feedback and observations. Some of the students were very insightful to the extent that another body could grow from that group to do more general work around teaching and learning, which would have a good impact on the school.

There would be an audit of the careers programme based on the new Gatsby benchmark. It would not be as positive as in the past because of quite significant changes but this would provide the action plan going forward.

The annual careers event went very well, with every provider attending. ACO advised Governors know that Martin Smith (MSI) had done a really great job.

Leadership and governance. Everything in the school development plan was still amber. There was a lot of analysis to do with the interventions that had been in place from the start of the year, particularly around attendance. The school would hope to see some positive trends. ACO would update the Governors on a termly basis so that they could see the school development plan evaluation.

The school was investing in Parentkind, an organisation that invested resources in representing parent views. This would enable Worthing High to audit its parent engagement processes and show commitment to supporting parent voice. The school would also carry out a self-evaluation, leading to a kite mark bronze award: in terms of marketing this would show that the school was invested in supporting parental engagement.

New Ofsted framework. The new areas of focus were:

- Safeguarding
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and behaviour
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Leadership and governance

ACO advised that inspections still lasted two days, and focused on a mutually agreed area based on the school development plan: ACO suspected this would include high prior attaining students and pupil premium outcomes. Some of the learning walks would focus on which subjects were doing this well in these areas and which were still developing. The other focus of the learning walks would be built around six students, regardless of the number of students on roll. Inspectors would observe their day at school, their books, etc., and hear their voices. ACO was waiting to hear from school experience to see who selected the six students and what the process was like. The feedback he had received was that it was very much focused on the senior leadership team.

The framework was designed to support parents and carers make informed decisions about schools. There were five standards of evaluation: 'exceptional' would not be awarded unless the school could evidence that it was doing something that other schools were not

	<p>doing, a system improvement for example. Once inspectors were satisfied that everything was secure, in consultation with the leadership team, they would then accompany the team to find practice that suggested it was strong. The process was more objective. When parents accessed the report online there would be a narrative around what the school did well and what the school needed to do better.</p> <p>Areas evaluated as needing attention would receive monitoring visits every two years. Areas causing concern would receive termly monitoring visits. The cycle of inspections remained unchanged, similarly the legal framework underpinning the process.</p> <p>Worthing High would have lots of opportunity to learn from other schools going through the process and ACO would continue to keep Governors informed. However, he assured them that the school would remain more student-centred than Ofsted-focused.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>CFOO Report</b></p> <p><u>Performance management.</u> In SJO's absence ACO advised that all but one incremental progression had been approved.</p> <p>Changes had been made to make progression more accessible to part-time members of staff. A number of part-time staff had self-selected not to apply for progression because elements of the policy did not give the platform to provide their career stage expectation evidence. This was now possible, and their increments were all approved.</p> <p><u>Budget.</u> SJO had provided the FMR spreadsheet. ACO mentioned the 6.5% teachers' pay increase over the next three years, adding that this would put significant pressures on all school budgets. Trust reserves would be depleted significantly over the next three years.</p> <p>The FACC had met only the previous day and SJO would give a full update at the next Governors' meeting.</p> <p><u>Trips.</u> ACO recounted that he had felt privileged to be able to make a visit to China with PPU. They had signed friendly school agreements with a number of schools: the Chinese government would only allow schools into their country if they had made that friendly agreement. He believed it would make for an incredible trip for students and it fulfilled so many curriculum areas. He hoped that a student trip would be possible in 2028: students would have to self-fund but there was access to some subsidies. Fundraising and access to grants could also be explored. Pupil premium students would be encouraged to go but the school could not afford to fund them. ACO said that the trip to Kenya would be a good precursor because that was based around fundraising. Worthing High would continue to host students from China.</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Link Governors</b></p> <p>There were no link Governor reports.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Clerking matters</b></p> <p>The Code of Conduct had been covered earlier.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Policies for Review</b></p> <p>The Attendance policy had been approved subject to amendments (see item 10 above).</p>	
<b>14.</b>	<p><b>Chair's actions</b></p> <p>The Chair had no actions to report.</p>	
<b>15.</b>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>LDA noted that SJO had circulated the risk register, which was now divided up into different tabs for the different schools in the Trust. It did not need detailed scrutiny but it would be useful if Governors could have a look at it so see if they had any comment to make.</p>	

	TRE would circulate the Worthing High risk register and it would henceforward be a regular item on the agenda.	TRE
16.	<b>Dates and times of GB Meeting for Academic Year 2025-2026</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 January 2026 [Post meeting note: moved to 12 February 2026.]</li> <li>• 18 March 2026</li> <li>• 13 May 2026</li> <li>• 1 July 2026</li> </ul>	
	The Chair closed the meeting at 1803.	

Chair .....

Date .....