



Ruskin Community High School

FULL GOVERNORS BOARD MEETING 3rd December 2025 at 4:00pm Venue – School

MINUTES – PART ONE

Present:	John Rhodes (Chair) Dean Postlethwaite (HT) Emma Szymura (ES) Marion McKenzie (MMc) Peter Storey (PS) Don Higgs (DH) Denise McCumskey (DMc) William Ollier (WO) Peter Thorpe (PT) Natalie Cross (NC) Duncan Burrow (DB) Chris Griffin (CG) Margo Veitch (MV) Milena Kwaczynska (MK) Neha Shahi (NS)	LA Governor – Chair of Governors Headteacher Co-opted Governor – Deputy Head Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor – via TEAMS until 17.08
Apologies:	Debbie Jones (DJ) Hazel Goodwin (SBM)	Co-opted Governor School Business Manager
In attendance:	Natalie Burke (NB) Claire Harrison (CH) Sarah Robson (SR) Jo Rankin (JRa) Su Garbutt (Clerk)	Assistant Headteacher Assistant Headteacher Assistant Headteacher Assistant Headteacher Senior Governance Officer

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME & APOLOGIES
Discussion:	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Governors received and accepted apologies from DJ and HG.

AGENDA ITEM 2	CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, (PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE)
Discussion:	a) The Headteacher informed the meeting that he was a HT representative on the LA Schools Forum. b) Governors were reminded to complete the annual declaration form on Governor Hub for the 2025/26 academic year.



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	c) Governors noted the school was responsible for updating the register of business interests on the school website and Get Information About Schools.
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AGENDA ITEM 3	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	There were no items of any other business for discussion.

AGENDA ITEM 4	MEMBERSHIP
Discussion:	<p>a) Governors noted that Ms Milena Kwaczynska had been elected as a parent governor with a term of office from 06/11/25 until 05/11/29.</p> <p>b) Governors confirmed the current vacancies in accordance with the constitution: 1 x Co-opted Governor</p>

AGENDA ITEM 5	APPROVAL OF THE PART 1 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS
Discussion:	Governors approved the minutes from the meeting on 07.10.25 as a correct record and the minutes would be electronically signed by the Chair.
Decision:	Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the above meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 6	MATTERS ARISING
Discussion:	There were no matters arising for discussion

AGENDA ITEM 7	CHAIR'S ACTION
Discussion:	<p>The Chair reported he had visited the school regarding the heating/boiler work and had approved some additional funding for the project. The sum was within the Headteachers remit, but as the funding was relating to asbestos removal, the Chair of Governors approval had been sought and agreed.</p> <p>Governor question: Are asbestos checks conducted yearly? <i>Response: Yes. As far as we are aware there are no other areas which contain asbestos. The asbestos was found in the ground during the recent works. The asbestos risk assessment is up to date.</i></p>



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AGENDA ITEM 8	PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>Governors received the reports from the following committees: LME – 18/11/25 SDW – 19/11/25</p> <p>The minutes of the TLA meeting held on 19/11/25 were not available and would be circulated via governor hub for comment by the Clerk when ready.</p> <p><u>SEND Governor Visit:</u></p> <p>The Board received a verbal report from the recent visit. A detailed report had been submitted to the relevant committee.</p> <p>The School Inspection Toolkit from Ofsted had highlighted that inclusion, safeguarding and SEND should be included throughout all documents. DH had visited the school to look at physical disability and how this was reflected in the schools policies, procedures and everyday workings of the school. He had arranged to meet with a young person affected by a physical disability, but unfortunately they were away from school due to illness that day. However, DH had been able to receive an update from staff.</p> <p>BO commented that he had seen this in action during one of his visits when he observed the differentiation for a pupil with a physical disability.</p> <p>DH informed the meeting that 50% of the students within the school were on the Vulnerably Children's Register. Some are due to one area/element, but others can have up to 7 or 8 different elements.</p> <p>CH stated that there were more than 50 individuals discussed at weekly meetings and it was a huge undertaking to track and measure these students. It was extremely useful that staff were all aware of the challenges these young people were facing. Inclusion was a whole school approach.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>DH had visited the school to review the Single Central Record. It has now all been digitized which was a massive undertaking. This had shown some minor gaps, such as staff who had been in role for over 20 years and therefore had not been required to update some records.</p> <p>A pro-forma had been completed for each staff member where a gap was shown and this showed what was missing and what checks had been done. It also highlighted why there was a gap if it was not possible to rectify it, such as a missing reference from over 20 years ago.</p>



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	<p>The SCR had been signed by Claire Harrison, Sian Owens and Donald Higgs.</p> <p>The board was informed that there were still some difficulties showing on the SCR for two recent staff who had joined the school from overseas. These would be passed to specialist companies for completion.</p> <p>Governor question: Are any of the missing documents to do with qualifications? <i>Response: No. These are all non-teaching members of staff. They are part time cleaning staff or invigilators.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Have they completed a DBS? <i>Response: Yes, all is fine with the DBS. We are just unable to get police checks from the countries they have come from. The overseas checks are different to a DBS. If you have lived abroad for over 2 years then an additional police check should be undertaken.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Do we have a date when the specialist company will give us the information required? <i>Response: We have pushed them but the countries we are dealing with are Hong Kong and Ukraine. Hong Kong do not give out police checks and Ukraine is difficult due to the current war. We have plenty of evidence to show how we are pursuing getting these checks done.</i></p>
Action:	Clerk to upload TLA minutes to governor hub when approved by the Chair of Committee and HT.

AGENDA ITEM 9	FINANCE UPDATE
Discussion:	<p>The latest plans and financial projections had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting and discussed in detail at the Leadership and Management Committee held on 18th November 2025.</p> <p>The budget was on track in most cost areas.</p> <p>It was noted that at present it was not clear how the budget for next academic year would incorporate the pay award, and whether this would be fully funded by the government.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>



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AGENDA ITEM 10	HEADTEACHERS REPORT
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p><u>Attendance</u></p> <p>Attendance remained a high priority for the school with a focus on ensuing systems and processes were tightened further. This had shown real positives and attendance to date was at 93%.</p> <p><i>Governor question: There has been a dip mentioned in the last two weeks, is this due to illness?</i></p> <p><i>Response: Yes. Another local school shut for 3 days for a deep clean and all local schools have reported a significant dip due to sickness in the past few weeks.</i></p> <p><u>Jane Lowe Attendance Report</u></p> <p>Governors were informed that Jane Lowe, DFE Ambassador for Attendance had visited the school on 5th November 2025. Her report had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting and had been noted and discussed at the SDW meeting.</p> <p><i>Governor comment: When we were last inspected by Ofsted, attendance was marked badly even though we feel we do everything possible, including going to a child's home.</i></p> <p><i>Response: We are continuing with all the initiatives we have previously used and the recent positive report from Jane Lowe shows that the systems we have in place are working. As mentioned, the recent dip was due to a very high sickness rate nationally as "flu season" has started very early this year.</i></p> <p><i>A governor noted that they felt during the last inspection, the inspectors did not fully understand the socio-economic area of the school.</i></p> <p><i>Governor question: Are there any initiatives we can pinpoint for the increase in attendance?</i></p> <p><i>Response: It is difficult to show one area having more impact than another. However, this year I think all the systems and processes have come together and become efficient and effective. Our home visits set us above some schools as most don't do this.</i></p> <p>Governors noted the school now used a new system called Attend and this had been fully in use since September. This had different stages of attendance and parents were included and understood the stages. The new system had produced a competitive element between forms to see who had the best attendance. It also allowed staff to target poor attendees more easily.</p> <p>Staff undertook over 100 visits a week and this was showing an impact on attendance. The school had 3 family social workers who worked with families of students full time. The visit from Jane Lowe had shown no flaws in the systems being used by the school. Every area had been rated GREEN.</p>



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Governor question: Do we use the government information regarding lost attendance and how this can affect future earnings?

Response: Yes, the information is in the student handbook and there are assemblies which also highlight how attendance links back to income. These are shown in relation to houses, cars, holidays etc.

Governors noted a curriculum review has now been completed. ES was now reviewing the Options being offered to ensure they were all viable. There would now be 4 open buckets (as opposed to 3) to give more scope.

Governors noted the SIP report which had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting. A follow up visit would take place in January 2026 which would be linked to this visit.

Inclusion Resource Centre (IRC)

CH informed the board that the refurbishment was now complete and the centre was being used by those at risk of permanent exclusion. There was one student using the facility at present on a bespoke 6-week programme. Once this was completed they would transition back to lessons.

The centre also had two smaller rooms which were being used for counselling and mentoring.

Governor question: When the refurbishment was being discussed, did you consider sensory needs?

Response: We do have a separate sensory room in SEND Hive area. These rooms are primarily used for counselling and mentoring and we were advised to use neutral colours and to have very little up on the walls. This encourages a calmer environment.

Parental Engagement

The SEND coffee mornings were proving very popular and the pastoral awards mornings recognised all achievements, not just academic improvements.

During these meetings, Ofsted questionnaires were circulated to try and get feedback. However, it was disappointing that we had got lots of responses, but these all disappeared a few days later as the questionnaire changed due to the updated framework/

Remembrance Service

The Headteacher stated it had been an honour to welcome once again 101-year old veteran Sergeant Bernard Morgan and his daughter Shelia to the service. He read a poem for the students and answered their questions. It had been a very positive experience for the young people and they had shown excellent respect and recognised the importance of the day.

Governors noted the appendices mentioned in the report.



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AGENDA ITEM 11	SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Discussion:	<p>The plan was on Governor Hub in draft and this would remain as a draft until the new Ofsted framework was secured. There would not be any significant changes, and it would hopefully be finalised by the February 2026 half term.</p> <p>The Headteacher thanked the SLT for their focus and input into the document.</p> <p>Governor question: Do we have specific strategic plans for inclusivity? Are there specific objectives?</p> <p><i>Response: We are guided by the toolkit and CH is overseeing inclusion. SEND/Safeguarding brings together everything, but inclusivity means every child in the school. We are running whole school training on the SEND Toolkit on Monday. The biggest focus for inclusivity is quality first teaching in the classroom. If we get that right for everyone, then it will be right for SEND students.</i></p> <p><i>Inclusivity permeates into everything. We are looking at having a specific inclusion page on the website, and an inclusion statement. What is happening in practice also needs to be shown such as the IRC, the Hub and the Hive.</i></p>
Action:	Clerk to add to the Spring Term FGB agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 12	PUPIL PERFORMANCE
Discussion:	<p>ES shared an update with governors which had been uploaded onto Governor Hub for all governors to view prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The document included: IDSR 25 data Predictions for the current Year 11</p> <p>The board were informed that there was a strong focus on those students who teachers felt could move into the next group. At present there were 28 students in this group and staff had pulled as many pupil premium students into the group as possible. However, it was noted that a lot did not meet the threshold.</p> <p>Intervention strategies data was broken down for curriculum leaders and then broken into sub-groups. Every child was tracked, where they are currently and what interventions they were receiving. All staff received a booklet so they can see which students they teach were in which sub-groups.</p>



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	<p>The SLT had reviewed the interventions from last year and changed or discontinued those which were not as effective as they would have wished.</p> <p>Governor question: How much involvement do parents have? <i>Response: We have a parents evening this week and teachers have prioritised 25 students. There is a fortnightly check in, and parental info goes out then. Before Christmas, there is a meeting for Year 11 parents which highlights revision resources and strategies they can use to help and support revision. We also have a motivational speaker coming in March to speak to the students.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Are we still stretching the high achievers? <i>Response: Yes. There is still a focus on achieving as many 7 – 9 grades. However, we do need to ensure we prioritise the right areas to focus on, and at the moment it is the 9 – 5 students.</i></p>
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AGENDA ITEM 13	ATTENDANCE AND INCLUSION
Discussion:	This item had been discussed in the Headteachers report.

AGENDA ITEM 14	GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
Discussion:	The statement had been reviewed and uploaded to Governor Hub and the school website.

AGENDA ITEM 15	GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
Discussion:	<p>The clerk would add a link to the Governor Hub notice board to the Effectiveness questionnaire and all governors were asked to complete this.</p> <p>The spring training programme would be uploaded when available.</p> <p>Governors were asked to ensure they updated their own profile with any training undertaken, and also to inform Sian Owen at the school.</p>
Action:	<p>Clerk to provide link to Effectiveness tool.</p> <p>Clerk to upload the LA spring training programme when available.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 16	PLANNED RESIDENTIAL VISITS
Discussion:	<p>Governors noted the following visits:</p> <p>Barcelona – Easter</p> <p>DoE expeditions to Coniston</p>



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	DMc would continue to review the risk assessments on behalf of the board.
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AGENDA ITEM 17	POLICIES
Discussion:	<p>Governors approved the following policies as presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Accessibility Plan/Policy b) Administration of Medicines c) Admissions Policy d) Attendance Policy e) Capability Policy and Procedures Support Staff f) Careers Policy g) Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy h) ECT Policy i) Freedom of Information j) GDPR STATUTORY/Data Protection Policy k) Governors allowances & Expenses l) Staff Code of Conduct Policy m) Staff Disciplinary <p>The following policies have been noted at Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n) Absence Management Policy and Procedure o) Alternative Provision and Off Site Direction Policy p) Anti-Bullying Policy q) Assessment and Progress Policy r) CCTV Policy s) Curriculum Policy t) Leave and Time Off Policy u) Marking and Feedback Policy v) Records Management w) Ruskin Home School Agreement

AGENDA ITEM 18	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	There were no items of any other business for discussion.

AGENDA ITEM 19	MEETING DATES FOR 2025/26 ACADEMIC YEAR
Discussion:	The meeting schedule had been agreed as:



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	<p>Spring LME – 10.03.26 - 4:00pm SDW/TLA – 11.03.26- 3.15pm/4.15pm FGB – 18.03.26 - 4:00pm</p> <p>Summer LME – 16.06.26 - 4:00pm SDW/TLA - 17.06.26- 3.15pm/4.15pm FGB – 01.07.26 - 4:00pm</p>
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AGENDA ITEM 20	IMPACT STATEMENT
Decision:	<p>Governors helped to move the school forward in this meeting by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how the school will continue to keep Inclusion at the forefront of everything they do • Further understanding and discussing the strategies and processes in place regarding attendance • Understanding the community the school serves; how different cultures can have different priorities, and how the school can ensure these gaps are bridged. • Continuing to monitoring safeguarding within the school, as shown by the discussions around the Single Central Record

The Part 1 meeting ended at 5.30 pm

The meeting moved to the Part 2.

Chair.....

Date.....