



**Minutes of the Oswald Road Primary School's FGB Meeting
held on Monday 31st March 2025 at 6.15pm at School**

Present

Peter Martin (PM)	Co-opted Governor (Chair of Governors)
Stephen Bradley (SB)	Co-opted Governor
Martha Courtauld (MC)	Co-opted Governor
James Flanagan (JF)	Co-opted Governor
Stephen Haddock (SH)	LA Governor
Ernst ter Horst (EtH)	Co-opted Governor
Deborah Howard (DH)	Headteacher (ex-officio)
Nic McAllister (NM)	Parent Governor
Helen Savage (HS)	Staff Governor
Jennie Wiggins (JW) *	Co-opted Governor
Victoria Wilshaw (VW)	Parent Governor

In Attendance

Joe Stevenson (JS)	Associate Member
Kim Spooner	Clerk

** present until part of agenda item 9*

The meeting met its quorum (11/6) and commenced at 6.21pm.

1. Welcome/Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from VT.

Resolved: That the apologies of the above-named governor were accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest/s

Resolved: There were none.

3. Governing Body Membership

a) To agree Committee membership/voting rights for Associate Member (JS)

Resolved: That Joe Stevenson was agreed as a member of the Resources Committee (with voting rights) for the 2024-25 academic year.

MC announced that she would be leaving the country in October but would continue as a governor until that point.

4. Part I Minutes of the meeting held 25 November 2024

Resolved: That the Part I minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 November 2024 were formally approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Actions/Matters Arising

a) Actions

Previous actions were noted as complete or superseded apart from:

3 **Peter Martin** to on-board/arrange induction for new members – **Pending**.

5a c/f **Stephen Bradley & Ernst ter Horst** to complete annual declarations – **Pending**.

5a **Peter Martin** to send declarations link to VT, SHa & JS – **Pending**.

5a c/f **Governors** (*as applicable*) to complete skills audit / Level 1 safeguarding training – **Pending** (*except for MC, JF, DH, PM & JW*). The Chair emphasised the importance of completing this (unless already completed elsewhere). All certificates were to be sent to Ellie Linton (EL). **ACTION: JF** to send his certificate to EL.

5b **Peter Martin** to share Governors For Schools induction training link with VT, SHa & JS – **Pending**.

b) Matters Arising

Academisation

The Headteacher shared her concern about the long-term vulnerability of Oswald Road remaining a Maintained School, despite the school being currently strong and stable with positive staff morale. Governors agreed that although there is no immediate pressure to academise (the current Government being less focused on academisation and conversion funding having been withdrawn), there is a need to be a proactive and future-focused. Governors noted that Federating or grouping with other schools was an option to be explored. The Headteacher emphasised the importance of not worrying staff and maintaining transparency.

The Headteacher shared positive impressions from initial conversations with a Single Academy Trust (SAT) (Burnage High School) and a local Multi Academy Trust (MAT), noting potential benefits of joining such as:

- early involvement in shaping a Trust
- access to additional expertise (eg: EAL support, CPD, specialist staff)
- use of shared facilities and resources
- opportunities for Oswald Road's staff to contribute and share their expertise.

The Headteacher emphasised the need to make a decision that is right for the school and to protect the school's autonomy, ethos and distinctiveness. Mixed experiences of academisation were acknowledged; some Trusts offer strong support and autonomy, while others are more prescriptive. **A governor cautioned that the school's high level of income generation might be pooled within a Trust.**

The Headteacher expressed interest in low-risk, project-based collaboration to assess alignment and potential benefits. The Headteacher suggested that initial collaborative work could be around international new arrivals and strengthening processes for children who start at the school with no English. **Governors AGREED. ACTION: DH** to engage with Burnage High School for potential project collaboration.

Governors also agreed that the Headteacher should explore other options without commitment, including further research into the experiences of nearby schools that have academised. **ACTION: DH** to initiate contact with local academies to explore their experience of academisation. **ACTION: DH** to compile list of possible Trusts and start initial conversations/arrange mutual visits/start initial SWOT/cost-benefit analysis. **MC volunteered to support the research into academies. ACTION: MC. SH would ask his**

wife for further insight into academisation. ACTION: SH. All findings would be brought back to a future FGB meeting for an informed discussion.

Religious leave

The Headteacher updated that the policy appears to be working well. It has been discussed in Union meetings and no concerns were raised. The recent religious observance period passed without any issues.

Field of Os

The Headteacher shared an update on the current situation regarding the Field of Os, noting efforts to confirm the change of land use, which is currently classed as a school playing field. Clarification is still needed on whether the correct process has been followed, with ongoing concerns about the lack of formal confirmation. The Chair explained that approximately one third of the field (which will include a hall, toilets and changing rooms) is proposed for release to Unity Arts. While Unity Arts have worked co-operatively with the school, the benefits to the school remain unclear. The remaining two-thirds of the field is intended for development into a Forest School.

The Chair shared the site plan on-screen.

Q. Are we assured that the land we will be left with is what we want?

A. Yes, we are happy that it will be sufficient.

Q. Will the school not own the land anymore?

A. The section will be leased to the Council. The school will still own the rest of the field.

Additional concerns were discussed regarding:

- uncertainty around the school's responsibilities
- maintenance expectations
- clarity of boundary responsibilities
- community perceptions and potential backlash if developments proceed without transparent communication
- lack of project milestones, clear timelines or school-influenced design input
- compliance with legislation around the disposal of school playing fields, which typically requires Secretary of State approval.

Governors expressed a desire to assert the school's interests more clearly. Governors remained supportive of developing the area but stressed the importance of being proactive and involved in the decision-making. It was agreed the school should create a sketch plan outlining their vision to influence negotiations and ensure the site serves both school and community. **A governor volunteered to assist in drafting a vision sketch ACTION: EtH and suggested that it would be helpful to liaise with the parent who had led on the Pocket Park project to create a unified strategy. ACTION: DH** to contact parent (LS).

The Headteacher would chase John Francoli from MCC and co-ordinate a meeting including PM and EtH. **ACTIONS: DH**

6. Committee Reports / discussion points arising from Committee meetings

a) Resources – 20 January 2025 & 24 March 2025

Governors noted the Committee meeting minutes and received a verbal update from the Chair of the Committee that the most recent meeting included a briefing on budget preparations.

b) Resources Committee meeting – 11 November 2024

Governors received the minutes further to the verbal update provided at the previous FGB meeting.

c) Teaching & Learning Committee – 13 January 2025

Governors noted the Committee meeting minutes and received a verbal update from the Chair and the Chair of the Committee that the meeting included:

- attainment and progress data presented in a new way that shows individual progression within different groups
- discussion of Writing: the time needed to embed new practice and how assessment is subjective and more difficult than for other areas.

7. Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) for approval

RESOLVED: That the SFVS was APPROVED for submission to the LA.

ACTION: DH to ask School Business Manager if the document needs to be signed by the Chair.

8. Policies/Procedures for approval

Governors had added comments/tracked changes to the circulated policies in advance of the meeting.

a) Revised SEND Policy

RESOLVED: That the SEND Policy was AGREED.

b) Access to Resources Policy

RESOLVED: That the Access to Resources Policy was AGREED.

ci) Remote Learning & Meeting Policy

RESOLVED: That the Remote Learning & Meeting Policy was AGREED.

cii) Remote Learning guidance

RESOLVED: That the Remote Learning guidance was NOTED/AGREED.

d) Fasting Policy

RESOLVED: That the Fasting Policy was AGREED.

The following policies would normally be approved by the Resources Committee, but were included for FGB approval due to the most recent Resources Committee meeting having a shortened agenda:

e) Smoke Free Policy

RESOLVED: That the Smoke Free Policy was AGREED.

f) Absconding Policy

RESOLVED: That the Absconding Policy was AGREED.

g) Green Procurement Policy

RESOLVED: That the Green Procurement Policy was AGREED.

h) Restructure and Redundancy Policy

A governor queried if governors had received the most up-to-date version of the policy, noting that the name of the school had not been inserted. The Headteacher explained that the policy would be proof-read and formatted post-approval.

RESOLVED: That the Restructure and Redundancy Policy was **AGREED**.

i) Volunteer Policy

Q. Does the school's insurance policy cover volunteers?

A. Yes. The Headteacher noted that the wording was potentially confusing and would seek clarification.

ACTION: DH.

Q. Is the process (in terms of induction training/declarations) applicable for high school student volunteers?

A. The Headteacher undertook to clarify with the Deputy Headteacher whether the process was different for a high school student compared to other volunteers. **ACTION:** DH.

RESOLVED: That the Volunteer Policy was **AGREED**, subject to the noted clarifications.

j) Staff Domestic Abuse Policy

RESOLVED: That the Staff Domestic Abuse Policy was **AGREED**.

k) Attendance Management Policy

An extension of the policy renewal date was requested. The new policy would be presented at the next FGB meeting.

RESOLVED: That the policy renewal date was extended to June 2025.

9. Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher drew attention to the following points from her written report (circulated in advance of the meeting as paper 9):

Demographics

- Pupil numbers continue to be monitored.

Q. Does the number of EAL pupils increase every year?

A. The Headteacher did not think the figure was accurate as it was based on self-reported information. The true figure was likely to be higher.

Staffing

- Staffing changes were explained. Teachers will be placed where needed to ensure the right people are able to support leadership roles and ensure strong continuation next year during the Assistant Headteacher's period of maternity leave. The school is exploring the potential to contract 'Place2Be' rather than advertise for a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), following the resignation of a pastoral TA. The HLTA role was to take into account the increased complexity of need in the school, but after further discussion, the school felt the Place2Be offer would be most appropriate, due to their qualifications and evidence-based approach. The proposal was discussed at the Resources Committee meeting in March.

Q. Do we currently have a Place2Be volunteer?

A. Yes, for one day and we are looking at increasing that. The crossover between the school's existing counsellor and Place2Be will be streamlined to achieve a cost saving or to potentially offer different therapies.

Attendance

- Pupil attendance and Persistent Absence (PA) are not showing any cause for concern.

- There is a pattern of absence either side of a holiday period and fines do not have any impact.
- The school is in the top 20-30% of schools, nationally, for attendance:
 - overall attendance is 95.7% which ranks the school 30/136 schools
 - Severe Absence (SA) is 0.6% which ranks the school 66/136 schools. Within the SA group, two children have 2% attendance.
- Attendance figures compared to last year were included on page 4 of the report. There were no concerns in the data.
- Patterns within groups analysis were highlighted. FSM is lower than the national average and so remains a focus.
- Pupil Premium attendance is 92%. An analysis of that group was included on page 4 of the report. The impact of the 24.6% 'at risk' of PA was noted.
- Governors reviewed the cumulative attendance and weekly analysis and noted the spikes around holiday times for Pupil Premium children.

Q. Is that school-specific because the national figures do not seem to follow the same pattern?

A. It might flag more for Oswald Road because it is a small group (61 children).

Q. Is 'absent' different to 'late'?

A. If a pupil arrives after the register mark, it counts as an absence. When we do child-level analysis, it might be lates that we need to target in terms of intervention.

- PA is highest in the non-statutory school age group.
- Anonymised context was provided for the four SA children, two of which are of significant concern.
- Anonymised context was also provided for the four children whose attendance is below 60%. The Headteacher highlighted that the pupils were all from EYFS and she was keen to ensure that negative patterns do not form.
- Part-time timetables were explained.

A governor shared their frustration that the raw attendance data does not reflect the amount of resources and effort the school is using to try to get pupils to attend school.

Stakeholder views

- A range of positive stakeholder comments were noted.

[JW left the meeting.]

- Concerns raised fall under the following themes:
 - staffing
 - communication (one specific regarding divorced parents and one regarding pastoral)
 - friendships/alleged bullying.
- One SEND-specific staffing issue was raised as a formal complaint but has since been withdrawn.

Safeguarding

- An incident has met the LADO threshold to consider transferable risk. The LADO is making that decision currently.

Behaviour

- The Headteacher highlighted that the current main concern around behaviour is language (racist and some linked to weight), despite the work that had been done around this before.

Q. Are those recent incidences?

A. Some of them. Sometimes reports are incorrectly tagged as racism and can skew the data, but I have heard children say some quite significant things that do need a proper response.

- There were 122 reflections for 73 children in Autumn 2, 78% of which were for boys.
- There were two high level reports in the Autumn Term and two internal suspensions.
- There were no suspensions or permanent exclusions in the Autumn Term.

Feedback from Autumn Term learning walk

The Headteacher referred governors to the teaching & learning walk report (paper 9a) .

Q. Is it just you (the Headteacher) who undertakes the learning walks?

A. Yes. It gave me a really good view of what is going on around the school. I will monitor anything flagged on the report when I re-visit after Easter.

Q. Is there anything you would like to flag to governors from the report?

A. There was a great level of expertise demonstrated across the school in so many different ways. There was a lot of consistency across Year groups and it was obvious where that was not the case. The design curriculum was also being followed everywhere.

A governor asked if the flexible groupings were found to be positive. The Headteacher confirmed they were.

A governor praised the 'Take A Look Tuesday' opportunity to see the school and stated that they found it to be generally very uplifting. The Headteacher agreed that it is a simple initiative that works well. **Another governor shared that not all parents were able to attend and it was difficult to see three or four children without a parent represented. Another governor asked if the school could rotate the day to help more parents to be able to attend.** The Headteacher did not think that changing the day would make a difference for those particular families.

Q. (re: page 3 of the report) Will you be re-considering the behaviour policy for lunchtimes?

A. Yes, definitely. We did a lot of work with lunchtime staff some time ago and they were feeling we need more of a positive policy so we tried a low-key restorative 'in the moment' approach but it has not worked because the children feel that the lunchtime staff are not responding to issues. Also, pupil voice about behaviour was the least enthusiastic; they talk about it being "okay".

10. School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Questions were invited on the SIP update included within the Headteacher's Report (paper 9).

Q. Is the Writing scheme delivering what you wanted?

A. Staff seem settled and have been implementing it consistently. The Staff Governor agreed and added that terminology was consistent across the Year groups. The Headteacher added that, during her recent learning walk, several children wanted to talk to her about it and about the texts they are using. The Staff Governor agreed that the texts were good.

Progress is being made for assessment across all subjects, supported by an external consultant who has led on cognitive science training to get staff to a unified position and then worked on essential knowledge. The Headteacher has taken position statements from all subject leads and will now prioritise support.

Q. Has it led to any changes in terms of how assessment is done?

A. We are all looking at what summative assessment looks like. It is shaping our thinking rather than completely transforming what we would do. The Staff Governor added that questioning summative assessment in all subjects was making staff more confident in what they are doing and it was really useful.

Q. Do staff see it as a constructive addition to their workload?

A. (answered by the Staff Governor) Yes.

In-house wraparound care has been successfully implemented and is going well. **A governor congratulated the school and noted that the timing was optimal for attracting new families to the school.**

Work on values and vision (behaviour culture) is continuing in available staff meeting time. A staff survey has shown differing opinion and Year 6 pupils have been asked the same questions so the comparison will be interesting.

Q. Are you trying to change the behaviour culture or articulate a vision?

A. The latter. Behaviour has always been good so we have not needed to discuss it a lot but things are changing and we need to come together and agree something that everyone buys into.

11. Chair's Action (if any)

There was none.

12. Governor Visits

The Chair updated the visits record in the meeting to reflect:

- **VW's** observation of the SEND panel meeting on 25 March 2025
- **JF's** safeguarding and attendance link governor visit. **ACTION: JF** to add date of visit to the visits record.
- **EtH's, PM's and JW's** participation in the Staff Disciplinary meeting on 10 February 2025. ***The Chair noted that there had been an issue with panel composition and asked how that will be improved in future.*** The Headteacher assured that conflicts of interest would be considered and confirmed in advance of the meeting. ***The Chair requested that similar meetings are held in a different room as it was difficult to hear over the noise coming from the playground.*** The Headteacher suggested that the Studio would be a better location.

13. Governor Training Attended/Required

Governors were reminded to record any relevant training.

14. Equality Objectives (Standing Item)

The Headteacher presented a demographic analysis of children who did not attend the Year 6 Residential, including a breakdown of ethnicities (paper 14). ***A governor noted the higher representation of children from minority ethnic backgrounds,*** which the Headteacher confirmed as a key finding. Efforts to gather feedback had resulted in limited responses and that would be re-visited. The school pays for 'We Are Adventurers' for those who do not attend the residential, ensuring those pupils still receive comparable experiences. ***Governors responded positively to the additional provision.***

A governor shared their view as a parent that the Year 6 residential had been a great success. They stated that their child was happy with all the activities and asked that thanks were passed on to the teachers involved. **ACTION: DH**

15. AOB

a) Uniform

The Headteacher raised that feedback from recent school tours indicated a recurring theme: potential parents expressing a desire for Oswald Road to have a school uniform. One visitor stated that the lack of uniform was the only factor that would prevent them from choosing the school. While the school currently operates an optional uniform policy, some tour visitors felt the school had not consulted widely or recently on this matter.

A governor highlighted scientific evidence suggesting that no uniform contributes positively to student activity, self-expression and engagement. The governor offered to seek out relevant supporting research and share it with the Headteacher. **ACTION: EtH**

The Headteacher shared her concern about polarising opinion among current parents if there was a suggestion to change the policy, as previous feedback had shown a near 50:50 split and the difficulty in

reaching consensus was acknowledged. The Headteacher noted the importance of balancing parental expectations without compromising the school's appeal. She added that the children are indifferent, are kind about their peers' clothing and enjoy having freedom of choice.

A governor commented that the current approach is seen by some as a positive unique selling point for the school.

Governors discussed whether clearer communication of the school's philosophy around uniform would help. It was suggested that governors' support could be cited when discussing the policy with prospective parents. The general consensus among governors was that the current approach is working and without clear evidence that it was affecting admissions numbers there was no strong case for change at present. Continued communication and monitoring of parental opinion through the annual survey was agreed as the next step. **ACTION: DH**

b) MCC Councillor

Governors agreed that the Chair should invite the local councillor to attend the next FGB meeting. **ACTION: PM**

c) Funding application

Q. Have we had a conclusion on the funding application for Nursery?

A. Not yet.

Q. Is there an opportunity to rent the caretaker's building to create income for the school?

A. No. The Headteacher explained the plans for usage of the building.

16. Next meeting dates:

- **FGB** 23 June 2025 6.15pm at school
- **T&L** 28 April 2025 at 5.15pm **online**
- **Resources** 09 June 2025 at 5.15pm **online.**

17. Confidential Matters

a) Part II minutes of the meeting held 25 November 2024

Resolved: That the Part II minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 November 2024 were formally approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

b) Matters Arising

There were none.

c) Any other confidential matters

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 9.05pm.

ACTIONS FROM FGB MEETING 31.03.25

Agenda Item	Who	What	When
5a c/f	Peter Martin	to on-board/arrange induction for new members	ASAP
5a c/f	Stephen Bradley & Ernst ter Horst	to complete annual declarations	ASAP
5a c/f	Peter Martin	to send declarations link to VT, SHa & JS	ASAP
5a c/f	Governors (SB, SHa, SH, EtH, NM, HS, JS, VT, VW)	to complete skills audit / Level 1 safeguarding training	ASAP

5a	James Flanagan	to send safeguarding training certificate to EL	ASAP
5a c/f	Peter Martin	to share Governors For Schools induction training link with VT, SHa & JS	ASAP
5b	Deborah Howard	to engage with Burnage High School for potential project collaboration	23.06.25
5b	Deborah Howard	to initiate contact with local academies to explore their experience of academisation	23.06.25
5b	Deborah Howard & Martha Courtauld	to compile list of possible Trusts and start initial conversations/arrange mutual visits/start initial SWOT/cost-benefit analysis	23.06.25
5b	Stephen Haddock	to seek further insight into academisation from Mrs Haddock	23.06.25
5b	Ernst ter Horst	to assist in drafting a vision sketch of the proposed school use of the Field of Os	ASAP
5b	Deborah Howard	to contact Pocket Park parent (LS)	ASAP
5b	Deborah Howard	to chase John Francoli (MCC) and co-ordinate a meeting including PM and EtH	ASAP
7	Deborah Howard	to ask CT if the SFVS document needs to be signed by PM	ASAP
8i	Deborah Howard	to seek clarification on insurance policy wording in Volunteer Policy	23.06.25
8i	Deborah Howard	to clarify with DW whether the volunteer process is different for a high school student compared to that for other volunteers	23.06.25
14	Deborah Howard	to share governor's thanks with Year 6 residential staff	ASAP
15a	Ernst ter Horst	to locate and share research evidence supporting the school's current non-uniform approach	23.06.25
15a	Deborah Howard	to include a question on uniform in the school's annual parent survey	Next parent survey
15b	Peter Martin	to invite MCC councillor to next FGB meeting	23.06.25

Future Agenda Items

FGB 23.06.25

- Attendance Management Policy for approval.

Peter Martin

27 / 07 / 2025

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