



Harlands Primary School

Striving for excellence, valuing everyone and our world

THE TRUSTEES OF HARLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL HAYWARDS HEATH

MINUTES

DATE: Thursday, 9 July 2026 @ 6.30pm in School

PRESENT: Jennie Doyle, Frank Gainsbury, Russell Goodrum, Debra Hollingum, Beth Larkman, Kim Lower, David McKeown-Webster, David Nisbet, Mark Pawson, Laura Pollard, Michael Swiggs (Chair) and Toni Watson

IN ATTENDANCE: Karen Michael (Governance Professional/Clerk)
Kate Binchy (Finance Manager, for Budget and Wraparound Care)
Alex Buckley (Associate Trustee)
Sally Nixey (Deputy Head)

The meeting was taken out of order, so that the Finance Manager could be released, but is recorded in agenda order for clarity.

- 1 **Apologies for absence** had been received from Charlotte Blake, Chris Robbins, Andy Colgate (Staff Voice) and Carl Phillips (Associate). No notice had been received from Dave Brooks.

The following **declarations of interest** should be noted:

Jennie Doyle	Child at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Frank Gainsbury	FR Gainsbury
Russell Goodrum	Child at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Debra Hollingum	Children at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Beth Larkman	Child at Harlands AND a person in her employ who has been appointed as Wraparound Childcare Manager
Kim Lower	Children at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
David Nisbet	Child at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Toni Watson	Child at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Alex Buckley	Children at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee

- 2 There were no **urgent matters** that were not on the agenda.

- 3 Both the main **minutes** and the **part II minutes** of the meeting held on 19 March were approved.

- 4 Under **matters arising**, it was noted the new school website was anticipated to become live in September. Issues that had arisen in respect of filing the Annual Confirmation Statement with Companies House had been satisfactorily resolved. *(Governance Professional's retrospective note: as the issue had stemmed from new Companies House procedures/requirements, it has been accepted that the confirmation statement was filed "on time".)*

- 5 **Update on MATs/Schools Bill/White Paper** – the Chair briefly recapped, for the benefit of new Trustees, why this was a standing item on current agendas. There had

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been no recent developments that would change the school's stance of "watch and wait". Meanwhile, in respect of the Schools' Bill, the respective Trustee Committees were now reflecting the revised focus in their agendas.

- 6 **Headteacher's Report** – the following points were drawn to Trustees' attention:
- High SEN monitoring numbers, reflecting a substantial increase
 - Safeguarding context, with reference to Crawley in particular
 - Some behaviour issues with Year 5 children, but these were improving
 - Implementation of the smart phone policy for children from September 2026
 - RHSE policy – a parental consultation would follow shortly
 - SEN workloads remained massive with limited resources, exacerbated by children struggling with the heat; the inclusion spaces were for the benefit of every child though, as part of inclusion meaning "ordinarily available inclusive practice"
 - SATs results had been delayed; however, writing was based on teacher assessment
 - Year 1 phonics were at national level
 - For the Year 4 multiplication check, one class were lower achieving than the other
 - Attendance remained strong, including for those with SEN
 - Behaviour remained good, despite the heat
 - Lots of things to celebrate - Sports Day, Year 6 Barton Hall, a science festival, PTA Colour Run, PTA Love our School, PTA Summer Fair where a lot of our new families had attended
 - Parent survey had taken place, and included new questions related to Ofsted. Issues picked up in the survey including communication around academic progress and access to clubs (ACTION: Beth Larkman would try to establish what other local schools had on offer.)

Trustees asked that their thanks be recorded to the members of staff who run some of the clubs, and also those who supported the recent Summer Fair.

Trustees commented that the survey results were good, and noted that the strong progress in SEN reflected implementing the deficit budget for 2025/26.

An extensive discussion around the question of bullying took place which included points around what was bullying, parents not telling the school when it was happening, children not really understanding what was bullying themselves. This was an area where the school needed to work in partnership with parents, sharing with them via either written communication or parental workshops, information on eg Zones of Regulation, how to talk to your child, regular reading etc. It was also noted that wider parental support with reading generally would be appreciated.

7 **Reporting to the Trustee Board**

Resources Committee: 2026/27 Budget - noting that the broad budget prototype, which had not included anything for wraparound care, had first been seen by Audit & Risk and then gone to Resources Committee with wraparound included, the version shared for the Board meeting had been further revised to take account of the recent announcement about pay awards and funding. A fairly cautious approach had been taken in respect of wraparound provision as much of this had to be a "best estimate" at this stage. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the benefits of the bulge year onto the budget would only come once the children had left the school; the value of this was estimated to be around £135k dependent upon pupil numbers at the final reckoning. No further bulge classes were likely given falling birth rates.

It was also noted that the school was effectively now in the position of running a business (wraparound care) in order to fund itself, as could be seen from the £110k (maximum) deficit this academic year which had to be taken from reserves.

Further points to note where that the PE grant had been removed; it was expected that WSCC would be providing a £15k grant to help with the conversion of a cloakroom into an intervention space. Some costs in relation to wraparound care eg insurance, had been apportioned within the budget.

Asked where the surplus/deficit was likely to be looking further ahead, it was noted that it was highly likely that at some point there would be a crisis and funding for education would need to be rethought. The reality of the SEN reforms and their impact including the need for funding was already a national issue.

Noting that the Finance Manager was to be congratulated on having achieved a balanced budget, it was approved UNANIMOUSLY. The budget would now be shared with DfE and from September, the monthly management accounts, which included the approved budget and a working budget, would be taken to the Resources Committee rather than Audit & Risk.

The revised Investment Policy was AGREED.

Wraparound Childcare – having briefly recapped on the situation with the current providers, it was confirmed that the school had now recruited a manager, and were in the process of recruiting playleaders, with back-up plans in place which included using school staff. Bookings were running well, with Tuesday and Thursday being days where the uptake was particularly high. Ideally, the project would have 15 staff, and the school was in the fortunate position of being able to provide an inhouse mentor/coach for them.

Trustees had a number of questions:

- *How were staff numbers determined?* The Finance Manager had talked with other providers about ratios vs cost effectiveness
- *What about SEN children?* No 1:1 support would be available, though it was noted that all wraparound staff would be trained in the same way as Teaching Assistants
- *Scheme of delegation/policies?* Noting that whilst some school policies would come across to wraparound, 11 additional policies were also needed, alongside a separate scheme of delegation. **ACTION: Headteacher to devise a scheme of delegation, and then a small Sub-Committee of Trustees would review this and the policies**

Audit & Risk – already covered under Resources item above

Pay Review – had met and also reviewed the Headteacher's performance

School Improvement – this had focussed on the Ofsted inspection toolkit, priorities for the next academic year, inclusion, the new RHSE curriculum and new requirements around allergies in schools.

Other updates

Safeguarding – there had been one further suspension since the Headteacher's report had been written; the Trustee link for safeguarding needed to be reviewed.

SEN report – there were now 60 children on the actual SEN register, with a further 130 being monitored. Work was ongoing to submit EHCNAs, which would lead (hopefully) to the agreement of EHCPs. It was noted that sometimes SEN issues with the younger children only really became apparent when they were seen against their peers.

Summer works – the following points were noted:

- The CIF bids for the roof and fencing had both been declined, and were being appealed, though it was not thought the appeals were likely to succeed.

- Solar PV panels were being considered for installation on the existing newer part of the roof (ie the extension), if this would be viable.
- Window film was also being considered, though it could have the effect of making rooms appear rather dark in the winter months. Awnings were another possibility.
- The conversion of a second cloakroom to an intervention space was going ahead, hopefully with the benefit of a £15k grant from WSCC (see the budget item above).
- Improvements to the studio and Inclusion Room doors to create an acoustic barrier would take place.
- The Inclusion Room door/window and the main front door would be replaced/repared.
- High level gutters would be cleared – this required the use of a cherry picker.
- The fencing alongside the much improved path at the side of the school needed attention; WSCC had been approached about this given it was a public footpath.
- The all weather path would be completed, with the help of PTA funding.

Community matters – it was noted that the PTA was struggling to get its own trustees, including specifically a new treasurer.

Training – Trustees were always welcome to attend on INSET days, and were also reminded that the latest version of KCSIE 2026 would be circulated to them, for them to digest, in early September.

Although Andy Colgate was unable to attend, Trustees asked for any *staff voice* input that staff present would like to share. Noting that education pressures were relentless, the team spirit was incredibly strong, but morale was obviously affected, with huge demands being placed on teachers, not just to be educators. However, teachers were fortunate to still have general Teaching Assistants in class; Trustees noted that there was little they could do other than to be aware, and help reinforce with staff the tight financial situation.

Trustees also asked about the impact of AI on teaching. Whilst it could be useful in some circumstances, it was not something that necessarily could help staff well-being. However, noting that AI can “learn” a particular individual’s style, there could be some mileage in using it to help draft the extensive EHCP paperwork, though care would have to be taken that this was not at the expense of losing the high success rate achieved by the Inclusion Manager.

8 **Administration**

The appointments of Russell Goodrum as Chair and Jennie Doyle as Vice Chair, both effective from 1 September 2026, were noted. It was also confirmed that Michael Swiggs remained in post until 31 August, should anything requiring Chair’s Action arise in the interim.

The appointment of Derek Gwynne as Associate Trustee for a further year to help with internal audit was also confirmed

9 **Policy updates** – these were approved at Committee level.

10 Approval was requested and granted for the Year 6 2026/27 cohort to attend a **residential visit to PGL Barton Hall** during the period 14-18 June 2027. In a brief discussion around costs, it was confirmed that the basic cost for 2027 had been held at 2026 levels, though the coach travel might have a small impact. Support was available for

those in receipt of free school meals.

11 There had been no **Chair's Action** to report, though the Chair commented that at this point of the year, it would be normal to consider a 360 review of the Chair. Russell Goodrum noted that he would be reviewing membership of the various Trustee Committees, and also link roles, and would be in touch with individuals in the coming weeks.

The meeting concluded with a presentation to Michael Swiggs, this being his final meeting as a Trustee, having served since September 2017, becoming Chair in 2019. Michael commented that he had thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of serving the school as a Trustee (not having been able to take an active role as a parent due to his personal commitments at the time), and that he wished the school and the Trustees well for the future.

12 **Dates and times of full board meetings for 2026/27**

Thursday, 17 September @ 7.00pm

Tuesday, 1 December @ 8.30am (Accounts) – *not yet agreed with auditors*

Week beginning 18 January 2027 – AGM with Members

Thursday, 18 March 2027 @ 7.00pm

Tuesday, 6 July 2027 @ 7.00pm

Dates for the Committees will be set in September.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed:

Chair of Governors

September 2026