Governing Body of the Winchcombe School Board
Minutes of the Governing Board
Tuesday 28th April 2026 at 5.00pm remote meeting

Present: Liam Anderson (LA) (Chair) co-opted governor; Harry James (vice chair) (HJ)[Part]; Dani Clay (DC) elected staff governor; Rob Clay (RC) elected parent governor; Andy Smithyman (AS) co-opted governor; Gary Smith (GS) co-opted governor, Sarah Whatmore (SW) Local Authority appointed governor; Laurence Andrews (L Andrews) co-opted governor; Georgina Furr (GF) elected parent governor;	
Apologies: Matt Percy (MP) (Head teacher);	
Absent:	
In attendance: Christina Pummell (CP), Clerk; Elode Scarlett (ES) (Deputy Head teacher); Clair Lloyd-Butler (CLB) SBM	

Key: Strategic direction/Challenge or Question/Answer/Action/*Extract*

1. Apologies Abi Preston-Rees, Matt Percy and Georgina Furr
The meeting was quorate

2.Declaration of any other business
None.

3.Declaration of interests
None

4. Minutes of the meeting of 2nd March 2026
It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting and were signed by LA.
Clerk to upload minutes to the school website: ASAP

5. Matters arising (see actions log from minutes of meeting dated 26.01.26 updated)

	Actions from meeting of 26.01.26	By whom	By when	Update
1	Upload 26.01.26 minutes to the school website	Clerk	ASAP	Completed.
2	H&S walkaround	GS/CLB	27/03/26	GS confirmed the visit had been scheduled but postponed due to staff absence; it would be rebooked for this term.
3	Behaviour Policy – working party	MP	31/03/26	ES confirmed this had been paused.
4	Review of governance	HJ	27/03/26	Work was underway to summarise responses; HJ would report back with findings and key themes.
5	Governors' monitoring schedule- amend	LA	27/03/26	LA confirmed the monitoring schedule had been updated and uploaded to GovernorHub. Thanks

				were noted to governors who had completed visits this term, including Sarah (EYFS) and George (Pupil Premium).
6	SEN policy – upload to website and school policies folder	Clerk	ASAP	Completed.
7	First Aid Policy – amend and upload to website and school policies folder	Clerk	ASAP	Completed.
8	Accessibility Plan - upload to website and school policies folder	Clerk	ASAP	Completed.
9	Staff capacity/well-being	AS	ongoing	The staff wellbeing working group had been discussed previously; LA and ES would reconnect to agree next steps.

6. Budget Approval

HJ joined the meeting at 5:07pm.

LA reported that the Finance Committee had met to review the budget and five-year forecast and thanked the SBM for the detailed work.

HJ summarised that the school was moving into a deficit budget with a recovery plan to return to surplus within five years. The plan included detailed assumptions but would require difficult decisions over time. LA noted the need to strengthen alignment between financial planning and the school's strategic priorities (SDP), ensuring spending reflects key priorities.

The Board acknowledged the improved position compared to the previous year.

The SBM confirmed a licensed deficit application would need to be submitted alongside the budget. She advised that the local authority could reject the application, in which case the budget would need to be revisited.

The SBM noted minor amendments since the Finance Committee meeting, including updated pension contributions, improving the position slightly and allowing more capacity for lunchtime supervision and pastoral support.

GS queried catering income/expenditure lines. The SBM explained that catering income (UIFSM/FSM) was not directly shown in Fund 01 as payments were made directly to the caterer; expenditure was largely offset by funding, with the remainder linked to paid meals. Overall, the position was broadly cost-neutral.

RC asked about the level of confidence in delivering the plan, given the risk of the deficit application being rejected. The SBM noted some assumptions carried risk but confirmed robust monthly monitoring would track variances. Natural staffing changes (e.g. end of TA contracts, SEND hub) provided flexibility to manage costs. The Finance Committee would review this regularly.

RC queried projected deficits in later years (e.g. 2029). The SBM explained that limited assumptions had been made for those years, but the projections highlighted the need for forward planning to avoid slipping back into deficit. Careful decision-making on appointments and salary progression would be required.

LA confirmed that future staffing decisions would be brought to governors and closely monitored.

Andy asked how the budget aligned with the school's direction and whether approval required unanimity or consensus.

ES confirmed the budget supported the school's current direction, particularly strengthening pastoral provision, and reflected the needs of a complex cohort. She emphasised a focus on improving outcomes for all pupils. The SBM noted the budget had been largely reactive due to limited strategic input to date, but future budgets could shift significantly with clearer leadership direction. Years 2–5 remained flexible and would be refined over time. AS commented on wider sector challenges, noting projected deficits reflected systemic funding pressures. He emphasised the importance of aligning financial planning with the school's long-term vision. ES reinforced that pupil outcomes must remain central and that financial decisions should not detract from this. HJ asked about the timeline for the deficit application. The SBM confirmed submission was due mid-May, with a response expected by the end of the month. Strategic Direction and Governance HJ noted that the governance review would focus on the Board setting a clear long-term vision (e.g. becoming a centre of excellence), aligned with financial planning. This would include identifying priorities, costing them, and exploring wider collaboration opportunities. HJ also highlighted: The need for regular (monthly) budget monitoring between the SBM and Finance Chair. The importance of identifying contingency savings in advance. The value of maintaining a rolling five-year budget to understand long-term impact of decisions. No further questions were raised. The Board approved the budget. The SBM would keep governors updated, including any feedback from the local authority.
7. Safeguarding ES reported that safeguarding systems were being reviewed and strengthened, with clearer accountability and oversight. The safeguarding inbox was monitored by multiple staff members. Consideration was being given to training an additional DSL. LA highlighted the importance of robust oversight and visibility. SW confirmed she had arranged a visit with the SBM to review the SCR and noted the evolving role of governors in this area (increased focus on scrutiny and questioning).
8. Leadership Update ES confirmed she was in the acting Head role and finalising the SLT structure, with communication to follow. The Executive Head arrangement had been paused due to capacity at local authority level. Alternative support options were being explored. LA would provide updates. GF asked whether additional support could be secured to assist with SIP/RIP delivery. ES confirmed she was drawing on internal strengths across staff and SLT, who had responded positively. She requested patience and continued support from governors. LA noted a focus on behaviour (Years 4 and 5) following recent learning walks. ES emphasised the need for clarity of direction and cautioned against introducing too many external inputs, which could dilute focus. Support should align with the school's priorities. HJ stressed the importance of carefully planning governing board meetings to ensure strong focus on key priorities. If greater depth was required, governors were signposted to additional information rather than covering all detail within meetings. Governor monitoring visits were intended to focus on key areas and provide succinct feedback on what was going well and what required further attention. Reports from GF and SW were noted as good quality and helpful in avoiding duplication at meetings.

Communication to parents and staff regarding the MP's absence would be managed by LA and ES as needed.
9. Policies Capability Policy - GS noted that dates within the policy were outdated. The SBM confirmed this was the existing version and required updating (front page and footer). SW noted the policy was a model version and referenced local authority wording that did not fully apply. It required adaptation to reflect the school's context (e.g. delegation of dismissal decisions and removal of references not applicable to academies). It was agreed this should be amended to reflect a school-specific policy. It was agreed that, once updates were made, the policy would be circulated and approved via email. LA reiterated the approach of adapting model policies to make them school-specific. GF confirmed updates would be made and circulated for approval by a set date. Action: CP to review and circulate to governors. ECT Policy - RC noted that no summary of changes or review process had been provided and requested this for future policies. The SBM suggested using tracked changes or a covering statement outlining updates. RC queried whether the policy aligned with updated Early Career Framework guidance. ES confirmed it had been written by Mrs Quirt and was compliant. The policy was approved. Governors discussed improving consistency across policies, including version control, review dates, and clarity on updates. Action: SBM and ES review policy process to ensure stronger governor oversight. HJ referenced a best practice document ("9 steps to heaven") and agreed to circulate it to governors and upload to GovernorHub. Leave of Absence Policy - RC queried whether the policy aligned with the Employment Rights Bill. The SBM confirmed it had been provided by the HR provider and should be compliant. GF asked whether a menopause policy was in place. The SBM confirmed one was available via the HR provider but not yet adopted. Action: SBM to obtain and implement a menopause policy. Return to work processes were discussed. The SBM and ES confirmed processes existed but were unsure whether these were formally captured in policy. Action: SBM to review inclusion of return-to-work procedures within policies. SW queried whether adoption-related provisions (e.g. pre-adoption appointments and post-adoption leave) were included. Action: SBM to check and update as required. It was agreed that this policy would also be updated by SBM and ES and circulated for email approval. Nursery Policy - SW noted several amendments were required, including updates to dates, costs, and terminology (e.g. "funded entitlement"). Additional wording changes were identified (e.g. references to roles and terminology such as "children in local authority care"). SW agreed to provide tracked changes. GS noted that the hourly rate (currently £6.xx) required review and benchmarking within the next year. The SBM confirmed that charges were expected to increase, as discussed at the Finance Committee. It was agreed that, following amendments by SBM and ES, the policy would be circulated for approval.
10. Next FGB Meeting Governors discussed timing of the next FGB meeting to ensure alignment with monitoring and evaluation activity. It was agreed that the previously scheduled July meeting was too far away. LA and ES would confirm an interim meeting date, aligned with progress reports (week commencing 8 June), and circulate this within the following week. ES would provide interim progress updates via email. LA would also share fortnightly updates with governors.

15. AOB None.
16. Date & time of next meeting Finance Committee 15th June FGB 17th June at 4:30pm FGB 13th July
The meeting closed at 6:19pm.

	Actions from meeting of 26.01.26	**By whom**	**By when**	**Update**
2	H&S walkaround	GS/CLB	27/03/26	It would be rebooked for this term.
3	Behaviour Policy – working party	MP	31/03/26	Paused.
4	Review of governance	HJ	27/03/26	Work was underway to summarise responses; HJ would report back with findings and key themes.
5	Governors' monitoring schedule- amend	LA	27/03/26	LA confirmed the monitoring schedule had been updated and uploaded to GovernorHub. Thanks were noted to governors who had completed visits this term, including SW (EYFS) and GF (Pupil Premium).
9	Staff capacity/well-being	AS	ongoing	The staff wellbeing working group had been discussed previously; LA and ES would reconnect to agree next steps.
	Actions from 28.04.3026			
10	Clerk to upload minutes to	Clerk	Next meeting	

Minutes of the meeting of 28.04.2026

Signed .... Date ....

	the school website: ASAP			
11	CP to review Capability Policy and circulate to governors.	Clerk	Next meeting	
12	Action: SBM and ES review policy process to ensure stronger governor oversight	SBM/ES	Ongoing	
13	HJ referenced a best practice document (“9 steps to heaven”) and agreed to circulate it to governors and upload to GovernorHub.	HJ	Next meeting	
14	SBM to obtain and implement a menopause policy	SBM	Next meeting	
15	Action: SBM to review inclusion of return-to-work procedures within policies. SW queried whether adoption-related provisions (e.g. pre-adoption appointments and post-adoption leave) were included. Action: SBM to check and update as required. It was agreed that this policy would also be updated by SBM and ES and circulated for email approval.	SBM/ES	Next meeting	
16	SW agreed to provide tracked changes.	SW	Next meeting	
17	Nursery Policy - pricing - It was agreed that, following amendments by SBM and	SBM/ES	Next meeting	

	ES, the policy would be circulated for approval.			
18	LA and ES would confirm an interim meeting date, aligned with progress reports (week commencing 8 June), and circulate this within the following week.	LA/ES	1st June 2026	
19	ES would provide interim progress updates via email. LA would also share fortnightly updates with governors.	ES/LA	Ongoing	

Signed …………   Date …………….