



# John Rankin Schools

Full Governing Body Meeting  
Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015, 6.30pm  
Upper School Workroom, JRI



## Minutes

**Governors Present:** Karen Babbage  
Simon Butler  
Rachel Evans  
Caroline Hearn (Vice Chair)  
Katie Makant  
Conrad North (Executive Headteacher)  
Alasdair Pearson (Chair of Governors)  
Amber Roots  
Tessa Roots

**Also in Attendance:** Teresa Crocker (Clerk)

JRI = John Rankin Infant & Nursery School  
JRJ = John Rankin Junior School

EHT = Executive Headteacher  
HoS = Head of School

<b><u>FGB MEETING:</u></b>	Action
<b><u>1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b>	
<p>The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all, and thanking governors for the trust and confidence placed in him. He assured governors that he did not underestimate the scale and complexity of the challenge that lay ahead for him, but that he was greatly encouraged by the talent, commitment, and support of those around the FGB table. He explained that among his targets were to address the present imbalance of individual contribution by sharing the workload, and in doing so to promote a culture of teamwork, shared knowledge, and fulfilment.</p> <p>He offered the example of the current and ongoing responsibility for the review and update of policies, particularly those which were statutory, and outstanding. He suggested that for the future individual governors might take on the work of two policies, adapting West Berks model policies as far as possible to suit the needs of John Rankin Federation, and presenting them when ready to the FGB.</p> <p>The Chair asked governors to join him in expressing thanks to Malcolm Douglas, former Chair, for his long service, commitment, and outstanding contribution to both the governing body and to John Rankin Schools.</p> <p>The Chair made clear his view that for the future he intended that FGB meetings be restricted to two hours. This in recognition of the time commitment given by governors, and in the interest of constructive but efficient debate. It was necessary to ensure that pertinent questions were being raised and debated meaningfully, but by sticking firmly to the planned agenda, and by ensuring that contributions were succinct and on point, this self-imposed discipline could be achieved.</p> <p>The Chair advised that he had received apologies from governor John Dyson, along with his</p>	

resignation, effective immediately. Mr Dyson has found it increasingly difficult to offer full commitment. Thanks were noted to John Dyson for his long and diligent service and particular hard-work with the Resources Committee.

The meeting was quorate.

## **2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

The Chair declared his interest as a Governor at Bradfield Church of England (VA) School, and as a Trustee of BMTA Education and Welfare Trust.

## **3. EHT REPORT**

The EHT advised that three out of the five Year 6 SATs (Standard Assessment Test) papers remarked received changes. As such the overall figures for the end of year 2014/15 increased in reading to: Level 4+ (87%) and Level 5+ (60%).

Governors questioned; the EHT responded:

**Q:** Is it an improving picture?

**A:** Yes for the 'more able' (Level 5+). The percentages achieving Level 4+ has dropped compared to last year, but if you look at the longer term picture (2-3 years) then for writing and maths it is an improving picture.

Governors were also advised that Year 2 is also an improving picture as last year and nationally, though the 'more able' pupils did not progress as well as had been hoped. As a result, targets and priorities for this year will focus on the 'More Able' and the 'PPG' (Pupil Premium Grant) pupils. Phonics is also an improving picture from Reception to Year 1.

**Q:** In the EHT report, there are promised termly reports from the HoSs and EHT to evaluate their impact and progress with the strategic development, which are not included in the planner, and are they are in addition to the performance reports?

**A:** Yes, these reports will be additional to what governors receive.

**ACTION:** Clerk to add 'receipt of FADE (focus, analysis, develop and execute) reports from the HoSs', to the year planner to be presented at the start of each large term.

Clerk

**Q:** In the monitoring plan presented, there is an absence of book scrutinies and JRI PPMs (pupil progress meetings) as a way of monitoring. Are governors invited to attend these events too?

**A:** The list presented were examples of activities which governors could join.

Governors sought clarification as to the procedure for undertaking these activities, to which the EHT asked that governors look at the calendar and once decided on an activity, to email him directly to arrange with the relevant member(s) of staff.

The EHT explained the KPIs (key performance indicators) linked to the SDP (school development plan).

**Q:** How were these determined? Is it from the Ofsted and/or the self-evaluation work? Some seem hard to measure.

**A:** These are overarching statements.

Following further discussion the EHT agreed to email all governors the success criteria relating to these statements.

**ACTION:** EHT to email all governors the success criteria by next meeting.

EHT

The Chair observed that the document, though well presented, required some further work in order to define all objectives as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely), understood and bought into by the SLT. Linking back to the objectives referred to in April, the EHT should be looking at 5/6 measurable objectives as a guide, though recognising that school development isn't limited to five objectives.

#### 4. POLICY REVIEW

i. Appraisal Policy

Governors were advised that the EHT and governor Karen Babbage had worked on the Appraisal policy, and whilst there are a few queries outstanding, the policy would be presented with the Teachers' Pay policy at the next FGB meeting with a view to gaining FGB approval.

**ACTION: EHT to finalise and provide Clerk with Appraisal policy, seven days before next FGB meeting.**

EHT

ii. Teachers' Pay Policy

As with the Appraisal policy above, following further work, there remained a few outstanding queries. The Chair, EHT and governor Karen Babbage had agreed to meet to discuss the points in order that the final draft could be presented at the next FGB meeting for approval.

**ACTION: Clerk to add 'Approval of Appraisal and Teachers' Pay policies' to October FGB agenda.**

**ACTION: EHT, Chair and KB to finalise and provide Clerk with Teachers' Pay policy, seven days before next FGB meeting.**

Clerk  
EHT/Chair/  
KB

iii. Charging and Remissions Policy and Financial Management Policy

Following investigation, governors were advised that the Local Authority (LA) do not have a model Charging and Remissions policy, so it was agreed that '(Based upon the WBC model)' would be removed.

One governor expressed concern that, in addition, the schools' Financial Management policy did not accurately reflect the model version available from the Local Authority. The Chair sought clarification that the current authorised signatory figures are correct and acceptable to governors. Those present acknowledged that they are, so the Chair proposed that the policy be approved as it is, with the intention to undertake a full review of the policy to include the move to a federated budget, and if appropriate, charging and remissions in time for the next financial year (April 2016). **Governors therefore approved the Financial Management policy as is, but to be reviewed in full, amended and presented to governors for approval ahead of the next financial year (deadline March 2016). Likewise, governors approved the amended Charging and Remissions policy with a review in one year.**

**ACTION: Clerk to amend, date and circulate approved Charging and Remissions and Financial Management policies by next FGB meeting.**

**ACTION: KB to send AP the WBC model Financial Management policy by 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.**

**ACTION: Chair to review and adapt WBC model Financial Management policy to bring to FGB for approval by March 2016 latest.**

Clerk

KB  
Chair

Due to GB membership changes, governors agreed the new signing arrangements as follows: Alasdair Pearson (Chair), Caroline Hearn (Vice Chair) and Katie Makant (Governor) will be the GB signatories. Alasdair Pearson will replace Malcolm Douglas and Katie Makant will replace John Dyson.

**ACTION: EHT to advise SBM of new signing arrangements. Relevant action to be taken to change signatories as a priority.**

EHT

iv. Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

Governors were advised that were further queries raised ahead of the meeting; as such the policy will be represented at the next FGB meeting.

**ACTION: CH to update, and pass to Clerk ahead of next meeting.**  
**ACTION: Clerk to add 'Approval of Safeguarding/Child Protection policy' to next FGB agenda.**

**C Hearn  
Clerk**

v. Leave of Absence Policy

Governors were made aware that there was confusion due to the action and policy to be presented largely due to two policies having the same name.

Governors proposed the two policies should be named:

- Leave of Absence for Staff
- Leave of Absence for Pupils (to cover fixed penalties etc.) to be presented to governors in January 2016.

Clarification was given that governors were seeking to establish how the monitoring and recording of staff absence (sickness absence and leave of absence for staff) was working, following the implementation of these policies in January 2015.

Governors were further advised that in some cases, line managers were not interviewing staff following sickness absence as the policy stated. The Chair sought clarity from the EHT as to a realistic time frame for updating governors about the implementation of these policies along with staff absence data (for the summer term) which is to be broken down as per the policies, and in the report format agreed in January. The EHT confirmed that November was an acceptable deadline.

**ACTION: EHT to present a review of the 'Implementation of Sickness Absence and Leave of Absence for Staff policies' to governors for discussion at November FGB meeting, together with the staff absence data for summer term 2015.**

**EHT**

**ACTION: Clerk to add approval of 'Leave of Absence for Staff' policy plus 'Receive staff absence data for summer term 2015' to November FGB agenda.**

**Clerk**

vi. Staff Code of Conduct

Concerns were raised that the Code of Conduct referred to an anti-bullying policy and anti-racism policy, neither of which had been presented or approved by governors. Following discussion, it was understood that the anti-bullying policy was currently being worked on by the Heads of School; as such would be presented to governors soon. No anti-racism policy is established.

A question was also raised (in section 5), about the 'line manager', and that in practice staff have a different colleague to contact if reporting their sickness absence; duly named 'absence line manager'. Governors expressed concern that this was happening, which governors sought confirmation would be reviewed. The EHT acknowledged that it would be reviewed.

Following discussion concerning the practicalities of ensuring staff have signed and read the Code of Conduct, it was proposed that a statement be included in the Staff Handbook along the lines that it is the staff's responsibility to read and adhere to the Code of Conduct. In addition, it was also agreed that all employees have a duty (in accordance with Working Time Regulations) to report to their line manager if they have a second job. This also needs to be included in the Code of Conduct.

In conclusion, the following amendments are required to the Code of Conduct:

- Section 5; 'absence' to precede 'line manager'.
- Remove reference to 'anti-racism policy'.
- Removal of last sentence ... 'It is our expectation ...'
- Addition of the need to inform the school about any other employment.

Governors were complimentary about the style and presentation of the Code of Conduct.

**ACTION: EHT/EHT's PA to amend Code of Conduct and include statement in Staff Handbook by next meeting.**

**EHT**

**5. GOVERNING BODY MATTERS**

<p>i. <u>Set/Agree Term of Office of Chair of Governors</u>  The Chair referred to his appointment through the Local Authority, and the proposal to be in post no longer than the time to make a difference and delivery of a succession plan, thus an anticipated period of two years with a review annually.  <b>Governors approved the term of office for the Chair of Governors will be two years with an annual review.</b></p> <p>ii. <u>Transfer AP to LA Governor Position</u>  Governors approved Alasdair’s transfer from Co-opted Governor to LA Governor. His term of office continuous. Appropriate confirmation from the LA had been received, through communication with the Clerk.</p> <p>iii. <u>Future Governor Recruitment</u>  Following John Dyson’s resignation, the Clerk now needs to undertake a Parent Governor election at JRJ with an appointment sought this term. The Clerk reminded governors that although it was possible to outline skills being sought, governors could not set their own eligibility criteria. Financial skills were highlighted as key skills being sought currently.  The Clerk also advised that she had placed an advert for two vacancies in SGOSS (School Governors’ One Stop Shop), and would report any applications to the Chair and Vice Chair to follow-up. The Chair advised he would have discussions with colleagues in the LA for support, and Katie Makant knew an individual with financial experience who may be interested. Further suggestions included; mailings to specific companies targeting skills being sought; Chamber of Trade and Commerce; Institute of Directors and the Volunteer Bureau. Governors acknowledged that, with the exception of the Parent Governor election, the existing vacancies must filled with non-school parents, as currently the GB has a higher weighting of governors who are parents of children at the John Rankin Schools.  <b>ACTION: Clerk to undertake parent governor election at JRJ this half-term.</b>  <b>ACTION: Katie Makant to discuss governor role with individual with finance background by 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.</b>  <b>ACTION: Chair to discuss recruitment support with LA by 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.</b>  <b>ACTION: Chair and Clerk to prepare mailing as determined by other applications received.</b>  <b>ACTION: Clerk to update the document previously issued about the role of our GB and discuss with KM for final amendments by 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.</b></p> <p>iv. <u>WBC Conduct</u>  The ‘West Berkshire Code of Conduct for School Governors’ was adopted by governors. All governors present signed the form and returned to the Clerk.</p> <p>v. <u>Business Interest Form</u>  All members of the GB completed the forms detailing any business interests. The Clerk reminded governors that as from September 2015, a record needs to be published on the school website of governors’ interests.  <b>ACTION: Clerk to complete summary and publish on school websites by 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.</b></p> <p>vi. <u>Declaration Form</u>  Governors present completed the forms and return to the Clerk for filing.</p> <p>vii. <u>Monitoring Pairs/Link Governor Roles</u>  Governors discussed and volunteered to take on the following roles:  <b>Safeguarding:</b> Caroline Hearn and Alasdair Pearson  <b>Literacy:</b> Katie Makant  <b>Numeracy:</b> [Vacant]</p>	<p>Clerk  K Makant</p> <p>Chair  Chair/Clerk  Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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<p><b>Governor Training and Development:</b> Tessa Roots  <b>Assessment/Data:</b> Karen Babbage  <b>SEND (including LAC, Inclusion and AGT):</b> Amber Roots and Tessa Roots  <b>Pupil and Sport Premium:</b> Karen Babbage and Katie Makant  <b>IT, School Website and computing:</b> Simon Butler  <b>EYFS, Nursery and Out-of-hours Childcare provision:</b> Amber Roots and Caroline Hearn  <b>Premises and H&amp;S:</b> Rachel Evans  <b>Finance:</b> Karen Babbage and Alasdair Pearson  <b>PHSE and Science:</b> Simon Butler and Rachel Evans</p> <p>It was suggested that the new Parent Governor JRJ may have an interest in filling the data (as a pair) and/or numeracy link role.</p> <p>viii. <u>Pay Committee Members/Terms of Reference (ToR)</u>  The Clerk advised that any governor was eligible to be a member of the Pay Committee, however, those present considered that it was not best practice for that committee to include a Staff Governor. The membership of the Pay Committee was agreed as follows:      Alasdair Pearson (Chair)      Caroline Hearn (Vice Chair)      Katie Makant</p> <p>Governors discussed in the unlikely event of an appeal, it would be possible to consider support from another GB, however the Clerk advised that there would need to be a formal collaborative arrangement in place for this to happen.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the Pay Committee Terms of Reference needs to be reviewed alongside the Pay and Appraisal policies, as such will be represented at the November FGB meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Clerk to add 'Approval of Pay Committee ToR' to November FGB agenda.</b>  <b>ACTION: Chair to review Pay Committee ToR and provide revised version for approval to the Clerk by 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.</b></p>	<p>Clerk Chair</p>
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**6. FINANCE/SFVS**

<p>i. <u>Staff Financial Skills Audits</u>  Completed financial audit skills forms had been completed by staff with financial responsibility. Governors questioned, the EHT responded:  <b>Q:</b> Some of the skills are low – are there plans in place to address this?  <b>A:</b> Yes.</p> <p>ii. <u>Audited School/ House Fund Audited Accounts to end August 2014</u>  These again were unavailable. For the benefit of the new Chair, governors explained the history; and essentially the accounts had been presented to auditors but they had not officially been audited as per requirements. Governors were made aware that the SBM would be asking a parent (who has previously audited 'Friends of the School' accounts) whether she would audit the School and House Fund accounts going forward. It was acknowledged that this was unlikely to be resolved by the October FGB meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Chair recognising the GB's responsibility for accounts, to meet with EHT to understand figures, by 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.</b>  (Previously documented - SFVS Action Q22: Chair of Resources to continue to chase SBM for evidence of outstanding audited School/House accounts. Will now be addressed by the Chair).</p>	<p>Chair</p>
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**7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

<p><u>16<sup>th</sup> July 2015</u></p>	
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The draft minutes of the FGB meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015 were reviewed, and the following amendments made:

- Page 1: Add 'Simon Butler' to governors present.
- Page 4: Reword highlighted sentence to; 'Governors were advised that from Period 4 there will be an automated process to payroll each month (for salaries which inform PPG) rather than a manual process as is currently the case, hence avoiding delays in showing actual spend in the PPG budget code'.
- Page 5: Action to be inserted in benchmarking section 'ACTION: Following one governors' request, SBM to send Karen Babbage a copy of the LA benchmarking report showing John Rankin's expenditure against other schools in the authority'.

Following which, governors approved the minutes as a true and accurate record, which were duly signed by the Chair. Minutes were proposed by Katie Makant and seconded by Rachel Evans.

Matters Arising

**Maintenance:** The Chair questioned the action taken to address the upkeep of the building, to which the EHT advised that a loan had been taken out to cover priority maintenance. Work to-date completed included work in Foundation Stage and classroom lighting. The intention is to upgrade classrooms on a year-on-year basis, so will be part of a strategic plan.

One priority highlighted is the need to develop a storage facility and office for the Site Controller. Although a donation had been received, it was unfortunately not fit for purpose. The Chair and Site Controller are currently investigating options. Governors recognised that this will affect spend.

**Able Children:** The Chair asked the EHT whether, as a school, we subscribe to NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education), which is proving good results in other schools. The EHT responded that we currently don't, but that it may be beneficial.

**'Governor Cup':** The outgoing Chair of Governors had been asked for suggestions but there was no further update at this time.

**ACTION:** Clerk to arrange collection for outgoing Chair of Governors, amongst staff and governors by 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.

Clerk

**8. REVIEW LIST OF OUTSTANDING GB ACTIONS**

Governors went through the list of outstanding action points, noting updates. An updated version from this meeting is attached (attachment 7).

An update on the actions from the July FGB meeting were given as follows:

- **Federated Budget presentation from July FGB Meeting:** This had been circulated by the Clerk.
- **Breakfast Club and Sunshine Club:** Governors were advised that the current spend is 42% and non-budget spend is below.
- **SDP:** This is in progress. Thanks were given to Katie Makant for her input so far, and also Karen Babbage for input to come. **Action carried forward: EHT to work with KM/KB to further develop the SDP to present to FGB for approval at a future FGB meeting.**
- **Tabled documents from July FGB meeting:** These had been circulated via email by the EHT.
- **Internal reports showing PPG and gender split data:** These had been circulated via email by the EHT.
- **Update from LA meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015:** It had since been agreed that notes from the meeting should be issued by the LA. **ACTION: Chair to follow-up with Elaine Ricks-Neale for a summary for governors.**
- **Appraisal Policy:** In progress (see section 4).
- **Appraisal, Teachers' Pay, Charging and Remissions and Financial Management policies:** These had all been added to the agenda for this meeting (see section 4).
- **Approved policies from June FGB meeting:** The Clerk had dated, circulated and filed the Equality Information and Objectives policy, which was now also published on the website. **Action carried forward: Clerk to date, circulate and file Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs in School and**

EHT/KB/  
KM

Chair

Clerk

<p><b>Sunshine Club policies.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Actions from SSR, Annual Report and Self-evaluation:</b> <b>Action carried forward: Clerk to combine into one document to track all the actions by next meeting.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Clerk's Performance Review:</b> The review and objectives had been completed. The outgoing Chair of Governors had met with the Clerk to discuss performance over the last year, whilst a follow-up meeting took place with the new Chair of Governors to discuss objectives for the forthcoming year. The second part of the review needs to be typed up and signed. <b>Action: Clerk/Chair to complete paperwork for Clerk's performance review, and completion confirmed at next FGB meeting.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>JRJ costed staff structure (to show split of TAs funded by MSB and SEN):</b> The EHT had been given these by the SBM and brought to the meeting.</li> <li>▪ <b>SEN report:</b> The SEN Governor reported that this was to follow.</li> <li>▪ <b>Safeguarding Report:</b> The Safeguarding Governor (Caroline Hearn) advised that following some concerns in the previous audit layout, the Safeguarding Governor had written a new one covering current more recent issues (including the PREVENT guidance). Governors were also made aware that this document was now being used within West Berkshire as an exemplar.</li> <li>▪ <b>H&amp;S and Lettings policies:</b> These had been amended, dated, circulated and filed by the Clerk.</li> <li>▪ <b>LA Benchmarking report:</b> <b>Action carried forward: SBM to forward a copy of the LA benchmarking report (referred to at July FGB meeting) showing JR expenditure against other schools in the authority by next meeting.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk/ Chair</p> <p>EHT/SBM</p>
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**9. PART II**

<p>Before moving to part II the Clerk referred to the two items not on the agenda though scheduled in the year planner for this meeting as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Standing Order:</b> This will be reviewed in December 2015 as it links with the GB's discussion scheduled regarding the structure of the GB.</li> <li>- <b>Set and approve GB objectives:</b> These will be presented at the next FGB meeting. <b>ACTION: Chair and Clerk to prepare GB objectives for presentation at next FGB meeting.</b></li> </ul> <p>Governors moved to part II, confidential matters.</p>	<p>Chair/ Clerk</p>
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**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

<p>The next FGB meeting is scheduled for Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 6.30pm.</p>	
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<p>Attendees were thanked for their attendance and contribution. The meeting closed at 9.00pm.</p>	
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**Post meeting note:**  
*Although on the GB's year planner, the following items were deferred:*

- *Review/approve Standing Order: This will be done following the GB's decision on structure, in December 2015.*
- *Set/approve GB objectives for the forthcoming year: In progress.*



**FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING: 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015 - Documents presented to Governors**

**On time** = 7 days in advance of the meeting      **Late** = Less than 7 days in advance of the meeting

Document No.	Agenda No.	Attach No.	Document	Presented	Action
1		0	Agenda	On Time	Received
2	3	1ia	EHT Report September 2015	Late	Discussed
3		1ib	Monitoring Activities Plan for Governors	Late	Discussed
4		1ic	KPIs 2015-16	Late	Discussed
5	4	2i	Appraisal Policy	Not presented	Discussed progress, deferred
6		2ii	Teachers' Pay Policy	Not presented	Discussed progress, deferred
7		2iia	Charging and Remissions Policy	On Time	Approved, actioned
8		2iib	Financial Management Policy	Late	Approved, actioned
9		2iv	Child Protection Policy	Late	Discussed progress, deferred
10		2v	Leave of Absence policy	Not presented	Discussed, deferred
11		2vi	Code of Conduct for All Staff	On Time	Amended, approved
12	5	3	Clerk's Briefing Paper	On Time	Received
13		3i	WBC Code of Conduct	On Time	Adopted, signed
14		3ii	Governor Business Interest Form	On Time	Completed, signed
15		3iii	Governor Declaration Form	On Time	Completed, signed
16		3iv	Link Governors/Monitoring Pairs	On Time	Volunteers agreed
17		3v	Pay Committee Terms of Reference	On Time	Discussed, deferred
18	6	4ia	Financial Management Skills – A Rae	Late	Receipt noted
19		4ib	Financial Management Skills – A Watkins	Late	Receipt noted
20		4ic	Financial Management Skills – C North	Late	Receipt noted
21		4id	Financial Management Skills – K Pitman	Late	Receipt noted
22		4ie	Financial Management Skills – S North	Late	Receipt noted
23		4if	Financial Management Skills – S Stearn	Late	Receipt noted
24		4ig	Financial Management Skills – S Wheable	Late	Receipt noted
25		4ii	Audited School/House Fund Accounts to end Aug 14	Not presented	Deferred
26	7	5	Draft FGB Minutes, 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2015 V2	On Time	Amended, approved
27	8	6	GB Action List updated at 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	On Time	Updated
28		7	Updated GB Action List at 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2015		