

GENERAL MINUTES GOVERNING BOARD

Tues 17 March 2026

Hybrid – Woodberry Down Community Primary School / Google Meet

GOVERNORS PRESENT		
INITIALS	NAME	ROLE
CH	Mr C Howard	<i>Chair of the Governing Board</i>
EHT	Ms N Reid	<i>Executive Headteacher</i>
DY	Mr D Young	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>
GE	Mr G Evans	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>
CB	Mr C Beard	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>
GJB	Ms G Johnson-Brandy	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>
GD	Mr G Davies	<i>Co-opted Governor</i>
KD	Mr K David	<i>Parent Governor</i>
DC	Ms D Costa	<i>Parent Governor</i>
AO	Ms A Oteng	<i>LA Governor</i>

OTHER ATTENDEES PRESENT		
INITIALS	NAME	ROLE
DML	Mr D M Laird	<i>Governance Professional</i>
DH	Mr D Hewie	<i>Headteacher, Woodberry Down</i>
RM	Mr R McGrath	<i>Headteacher, Shacklewell</i>
KB	Ms K Beecroft	<i>Headteacher, Grazebrook</i>
MT	Mr M Trahair	<i>Headteacher, Thomas Fairchild</i>

APOLOGIES		

ACTION WORKSHEET

17 MARCH 2026

NO	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	Responsible PERSON	STATUS
GB1	3	Circulate the most recent Key Stage 2 assessment data post-Easter break.	Exec Head	OPEN
GB2	3	Provide updates on Thomas Fairchild's provision changes following discussions with the local authority.	Exec Head	
GB3	3	Establish Working Party to address inconsistencies and issues with Hackney HR	Exec Head G Davies	OPEN
GB4	3	Review the "wish list" of enhancements from Headteachers, specifically looking into the feasibility and cost of initiatives such as school therapists and playground redesigns, balancing these with the Federation's healthy financial surplus.	ResCom	OPEN
GB5	3	Consider the Shacklewell office reorganisation item.		
GB6		Provide feedback on the new Headteacher's Report format	Govs	OPEN
GB7	4.4	- Share the SFVS report in the shared folder for all governors. - Circulate information on new NGA training courses and a DfE White Paper drop-in session. - Schedule board-level safeguarding training (NSPCC recommended).	Chair of Govs	OPEN

LEGEND

- Green** – Completed
- Red** – Pending (URGENT)
- Black** – Pending (NOT URGENT)
- Blue** – OPEN

RECORD OF MEETING

1. Opening Formalities

1.1 Welcome

The Chair of the Governing Board convened the spring term (2025/26) meeting of the New Wave Federation Governing Board. The meeting started at 5:30pm.

1.2 Apologies & Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Mr M Sharman (Vice Chair of Govs). The Board noted the absence of Mr K Ezeagu.

1.3 Declarations of Interests

No declarations recorded and no changes to existing written declarations.

1.4 Notification of any other Business not on Agenda

None tabled

2. Reporting Overview

The Board was informed of the new reporting format, noting that it was designed to enhance value for both govts and Federation Senior Leaders by focusing on specific topics each meeting. Govs further noted the aim was to make reports more accessible, facilitate deeper understanding, and enable more effective challenge from govts.

3. Executive Headteacher's Report & Headteachers' Reports

(Incorporating the Headteachers' Reports)

The Governing Board received and accepted an update from the Executive Headteacher, as outlined in [the accompanying](#) report. *The Board accepted the reports accompanying her update as read, to include:*

Executive Headteacher's Report (Mar 2026)
Headteachers' Report to Govs (Mar 2026)
SATs Tests Timetable (May 2026)
DfE Attendance Report
SIP Report

The Executive Headteacher apprised of the Board of the following:

- **Government's Education Priorities:** The Department for Education's white paper outlines three key areas:
 - **SEND Reforms:** Consultation launched in February, closing in May, aiming for more inclusive mainstream schools, clear accountability for local authorities, and redirecting existing funding directly to schools for children with complex needs.
 - **Academy Trusts:** A new direction for Labour, encouraging schools to join "high-quality trusts" and expanding the diversity of trust types, including allowing local authorities to set up MATs. Emphasis on MATs being community-centric and working with local partnerships.
 - **School Improvement:** A push for improvement driven by "RISE advisors" (strong leaders/CEOs) working directly with schools to address underachievement and national priorities like attendance. This shifts away from solely Ofsted-driven improvement to intensive support.

- **Concerns about New Inspection Regime:**

- The new OFSTED regime will be tougher, with a strong focus on pupil outcomes regardless of school context, challenging the previous culture where high "good or better" ratings were common.
- ***The Executive Headteacher expressed concern that this rigid focus might not acknowledge diverse ways children flourish beyond exam results***, potentially leading to lower inspection outcomes for some schools despite holistic success.
- Thomas Fairchild was due for inspection within two years, and Grazebrook within three. Systemic changes were not deemed necessary as current practices were child-focused and were yielding high outcomes.

- **Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs):**

- The Federation, being relatively small, may need to join an existing MAT or Hackney could create its own. Historically, Hackney opposed MATs, championing federations, but policy was changing.
- A Governor's Forum on the white paper will offer further insights into these changes.

- **Local Authority MATs:** The government was changing its stance on local authorities forming MATs, aiming to address local needs more effectively rather than imposing national models. There were concerns about funding implications for local authorities as money shifts to MATs.

Data Overview (Pupil Numbers & Admissions)

- **Key Stage 2 Predictions:** Current predictions for end-of-Key Stage 2 assessments **were positive**, with efforts focused on improving maths standards.
- **Reception Applications (2026):** Hackney faced a significant decline in pupil numbers, with 31% of reception places projected to be empty in September. Thomas Fairchild had very low first preference applications (18), raising concerns about future funding and potential school closures, though Woodberry Down benefited more from late applications.
- **Implications:** Declining numbers posed a significant challenge for funding and planning, with vigilance required regarding potential school closures.

Premises Report

- **Asbestos Surveys:** Surveys completed or scheduled for Grazebrook (recommendation to remove/repair under kitchen sink – scheduled for Easter), Shacklewell (scheduled for Easter), and Woodberry Down (due later in the year). Thomas Fairchild had none due to being a new build.
- **Health & Safety:** 12 outstanding actions from Woodberry Down's health and safety inspection had been addressed and closed.
- **Grazebrook Projects:** 2-year-old provision almost complete (focus now on outdoor learning space); reception area adapted.
- **Shacklewell:** Final installation of North lights scheduled for Easter.

Govs were informed that the local authority would be funding Grazebrook's emergency light and fire upgrade, which was scheduled for summer break.

- **Woodberry Down Kitchen Renovation:** Scheduled for summer, requiring contingency plans for packed lunches due to no temporary kitchen.

Staffing Update

- **Resignations/Returns:** One class teacher leaving, one returning from maternity leave to Shacklewell. Two teaching assistants retiring at Grazebrook (recruitment underway but challenging).
- **Restructuring:** Proposed office reorganisation at Shacklewell; Thomas Fairchild undergoing positive restructuring of TA roles.

- **Disciplinary:** A staff disciplinary panel decision was appealed and overturned, resulting in the staff member returning to work (administrative, not gross misconduct).

Catering Provision: Halal Meat Discussion

- **Parental Concern:** A parent raised concerns about halal meat provision, preferring that their child not consume meat blessed under another religion. They want a non-halal meat option, not just vegetarian.
- **Current Provision:** Schools were offering halal meat and vegetarian/vegan/fish options.

Governing Board Decision:

The Board discussed the issue and concluded that the current provision (offering vegetarian/non-meat options) was sufficient. It was noted that changing the policy to provide non-halal meat would be complex and open further issues, and there was no obligation to provide non-halal meat given existing alternatives.

The Board agreed to maintain the current offering.

Safeguarding in Local Authority (HR Inconsistencies)

- **Problem:** Governors and staff reported ongoing inconsistency in guidance and advice from Hackney HR, exacerbated by frequent changes in personnel.
- **Proposed Solution:** A working group would be established to take these concerns directly to Hackney HR to seek a unified approach and address difficulties.
- **Alternative:** The option of moving to a private HR provider was discussed, but noted that this could be risky, as the Federation's policies and procedures are aligned with Hackney's.
- **Internal Efforts:** The Federation was investing in ACAS training for Headteachers and staff to improve internal knowledge and preparedness for HR issues.

Additionally, it was noted that there had been a wider call to action from Hackney by Federation leaders on HR issues.

Headteachers' Report (Behaviour and Pupil Attendance)

The Headteachers provided an update to the Board on:

Attendance

- DfE was heavily focused on improving national attendance, which was still below pre-pandemic levels.
- Schools were using new DfE portals (VYED) and comparison reports to monitor and improve attendance. **Woodberry Down was highlighted for the school's excellent management of persistent absence.**
- **Challenges:** Term-time holidays, parents keeping children home for minor ailments due to remote work or anxiety, and the complexity of children's additional needs.
- **Addressing Challenges:** Schools offer support like reduced-cost/free breakfast clubs, adapted start times, walking buses, and close work with school nursing for medication administration. They were also changing messaging to encourage children with minor ailments to return to school if they perk up.

Behaviour

- The report uses "home contacts" (requiring communication with home after interventions) as a key metric, noting the context-dependent application of policy (e.g., Year 6 vs. Reception).
- Numbers for home contacts and exclusions were not expected to be linear; fluctuations can indicate effective policy application during incidents (e.g., online harms).
- Schools were using internal exclusions and external suspensions when necessary, and individual children can account for a large percentage of these figures.

- **Support & Interventions:** Schools were employing a holistic approach, using external services (PRUs, educational psychologists, specialist teachers) and internal interventions (re-engagement units, parent workshops, assemblies, digital leader for online safety).

Increased senior leader presence on playgrounds had also led to more reported incidents and effective policy application.

- **Educational Psychologists & Speech & Language:** The Educational Psychologist service was paused for in-school work (Sept-Dec) to address a backlog but had since resumed. The Federation's internal specialist speech and language provision, coordinated by a SENCo, was proving highly impactful.

[SIP Visits](#)

The Board reviewed the reports for [SIP Visits \(2\)](#).

[Future Investments](#)

- Headteachers presented ideas for potential investments if funding were less constrained, including additional staff (for emotional regulation support), school therapists, and redevelopment of physical spaces (e.g., playgrounds).
- **Financial Discussion:** The Federation had a substantial budget surplus (nearly £1 million this year, projected £2 million total), and managed effectively despite challenges.

There was a discussion on balancing prudence with investing in identified needs, particularly with future uncertainties around pupil numbers and high agency staff costs for SEND. External income from the English Hub also contributed significantly.

- **Therapeutic Provision:** It was noted that whilst a therapeutic provision existed in two schools, expanding it could be challenging due to high demand, long-term needs of some children, and potential for social care to offload responsibilities onto the school.

Govs thanked the Executive Headteacher and Headteachers for their reports.

4. Governing Board Business

[4.1 Clerk's Statutory & Governance Updates](#)

The Board noted the summary update provided on the [Schools White Paper \(2026\)](#).

[4.2 Membership & Recruitment](#)

No new membership or recruitment issues.

[4.3 Report from Resources Committee](#)

The Board an update on the considerations during the recent meeting of the [Resources Committee held on 28 Jan 2026](#).

Govs noted the [published mins from this meeting](#).

The Board encouraged exploring opportunities to invest the surplus in beneficial initiatives, such as therapists or liaison officers, rather than solely accumulating it.

Governing Board Decision:

The Board approved the School Financial Value Standards (SFVS).

[4.4 Chair's Actions & Correspondence](#)

The Chair issued a reminder for safeguarding training for Govs and agreement on follow-up actions for the HR working group and finance discussions.

5. Minutes – Governing Board Meeting (09 Dec 2025)

5.1 Corrections

None recorded

5.2 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 09 Dec 2025 were approved as the true and accurate record of the meeting.

5.3 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Gov Board Meeting held on 09 Dec 2025

All items reported as completed or marked as c/f for future meetings. No other matters arising from previous minutes.

GB1	2	Present a report on staff actions and strengths <i>(linked to the appraisal system)</i> to the Resources Committee	<u>CLOSED</u>
GB2	2	Update Board on the development of a sustainable Curriculum Model for SEND Students	OPEN

6. Any other Business

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7:40pm.

Approved for (and on behalf of) the
GOVERNING BOARD



Chair of Full Governing Board
(or Chair of Meeting)

____06/07/2026_____
Date

Next meeting

Mon 06 July 2026 (5:30pm) – Grazebrook