

MINUTES OF THE RICHARD HUISH COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Monday 7th July 2025 at 5.30pm
The Redwood Suite, Richard Huish College

Present: **College Governing Body Members:**
Barbara Barratt - Chair
Anna Gabriel – Community Governor
Richard Wood – Community Governor
Richard Hatcher – Community Governor
Johanna Marks – Community Governor
David Snell – Community Governor
Andrew Phillips – Parent Governor
Michael Wilson – Parent Governor
Tom Torjussen – Staff Governor
Hannah Curtis – Staff Governor
May Bloor-Gould - Associate Governor (Student)
Ella Culshaw – Associate Governor (Student)

Senior Leadership Team:
Emma Fielding – Principal
Becky Flower – Vice Principal of Student Experience
Laurie Morgan – Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality)

Clerk:
Hannah Clunie

Apologies: Dave Tomaney, Ian Brown

Not present:

In attendance: Helen Wells, Richard Huish Trust Governance Specialist

*Items marked with * had a paper previously circulated.*

Item marked with + was a verbal update and/or presentation.

SECTION 1 – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies accepted from Dave Tomaney and Ian Brown. The Chair welcomed new parent governor, Michael Wilson.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made in connection with items on the agenda.

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 7th April 2025*

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true and accurate record. The Chair gave consent for electronic signature.

1.4 Matters arising*

The College Governing Body (CGB) agreed that all matters arising were on the agenda or scheduled for future agendas.

- It was discussed and agreed for IT to attend the start of the September CGB to support governors with any IT issues.

SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC REPORTS

2.1 Headline data*

- Y1 mocks

Governors noted the report.

Governors commented that the context alongside the report is helpful and it's clear that leadership continue to utilise the tools available to them.

Q: Do leadership and teachers see the value in using this tool and factor in whether the information is measuring more than teacher assessment and the impact this has on improvements in the classroom?

A: The College has focused on assessment this year and has been working closely with course teams. The data looks slightly more pessimistic in comparison to previous years. Based on our previous experience, individual subjects that have been pessimistic in Year 1 have performed well by the end of the year with the right support in place for students. As a result of this data, course teams will now look at the support and structure that is needed to be in place for students and will pick up on any trends or concerns within the data.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) went on to say that this is not an exact science and as long the College continue to be open with the process, staff should be able to identify the outcomes. The College continue to have in-year monitoring, conversations with students and are offering support where it's needed. This further leads to conversations and analysis of course leaders and how students can be supported and improve grades.

- Attendance/Retention/Leavers

Governors noted the report.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) advised that developers have been working on a new data dashboard and that they were open to governor feedback.

Current retention for the College is 96.26% which is an increase in comparison to previous years.

A governor commented that as the College have set a higher retention rate, it was positive and highly encouraging to see the increase so far.

A governor questioned whether the retention factor could be included in line with the budget reporting to ensure that this continued to be monitored.

ACTION PRINCIPAL

The Principal advised that retention has been a focus for course teams and individual courses have access to this data.

A governor questioned the ratio of students that have or require additional needs/support and asked if this is increasing year on year.

The Principal advised that the level of need and support was increasing each year and the College were working hard on putting additional support in place for students.

A governor questioned the local secondary schools and the number of students who had left the college who had attended these schools.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) advised that the College naturally recruit a lot of these students due to their proximity to the College, however this is not an unusual amount to leave in comparison to previous years.

Governors discussed mental health and wellbeing largely being one of the main reasons students leave the College and agreed that it was important to ensure the right support was in place for students but accepted that some students leave because the College is not the right place for them.

Governors discussed that overall attendance was higher than the previous two years. Governors asked if it would be possible to have a benchmark and/or the previous year's data as a comparison in future.

ACTION Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality)

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC AND COMPLIANCE OVERVIEW

3.1 SEND Review*

Governors noted the report.

The Chair advised that she had attended the feedback session following the visit by David Bartram, which had been hugely positive.

The Principal advised that the Senior Leadership Team have looked at all departments following the review, including assessments of the current year and priorities for next year, as well as identifying any emerging themes. It was likely that one of the key priorities for the College next year would be inclusion.

Governors discussed that it was positive to see such great comments from an external perspective and independent view and congratulated and thanked the College for their continued commitment and hard work. It was discussed that this review had been a good boost for the team and overall constructive and encouraging outcome for the College.

3.2 Health and Safety Report*

Governors noted the report.

The Principal advised that Mel Winsbrow had been appointed as Head of Operations fixed term and as a result would be helping with Health and Safety. The focus at the moment was joining everything together, including how health and safety is reported to the CGB. The Head of Operations and Principal have put together a calendar to ensure that reporting can be given in a timely manner to the CGB.

The Principal advised that following the incredibly sad loss of Roger Neale, the College has now appointed a new Estates Manager.

3.3 Marketing Update*

Governors noted the report.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that a marketing audit had taken place in May. As a result, the College were to continue working with Stephen King alongside the marketing team to work through and implement from suggestions from the report.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that the College would welcome feedback from governors and some time would be set aside at the CGB Strategy Afternoon in November to discuss any ideas. Governors discussed the possibility of Stephen King attending the strategy afternoon to meet with governors.

ACTION VICE PRINCIPAL/CLERK

A governor questioned if students had the opportunity to be involved in the marketing team and could the external person help review the process.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that students are involved with marketing and provide support and give feedback and ideas.

Governors discussed it's largely a case of being smarter with what the College already have rather than the need for additional funds to support with this, but recognised that some financial support was necessary.

The CGB thanked David Snell for recommending Stephen King to carry out the review.

3.4 Oak House Care Standards Review and Action Plan*

Governors noted the report.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that the College have put together a PowerPoint for the Falklands to give them a better idea and feeling of what to expect at the College and boarding house, as they don't get the opportunity to visit and internet connections aren't always strong enough for a virtual tour.

A governor questioned how frequently the medicine is checked at Oak House.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that it is checked every day.

A governor questioned whether the boarding house manager made the judgements in the report on her own or if it is a collective report.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that Kerry Starmer, Boarding House Manager, puts the report together which is then reviewed by the Oak House team as a whole.

The Vice Principal advised that there were now regular meetings with the Oak House Manager, Principal, HR and Finance team to ensure the flow of communication and that any changes and/or issues are brought to everyone's attention.

A governor questioned how outside feedback from other Sixth Forms/education bodies was interpreted.

The Principal advised that the feedback is always positive which is encouraging. The College were back working with an agent to look at a campaign to create links with Hong Kong. Pre-academisation the College had a higher number of overseas students, especially from Hong Kong. The College were considering the possibility of a trip to Hong Kong with students for leadership opportunities and to advertise the College.

3.5 Policies

Governors noted the policy summary.

- **Bursary Policy***

A governor questioned withholding bursary.

The Principal and Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that no student generally has their bursary withheld, and that this was not based on percentages. If there was an issue, this would be raised with the Vice Principal (Student Experience) and Matthew Nolan, Designated Safeguarding Lead, to discuss further.

- **SEND Policy***

- **First Aid Policy***

- **Behaviour Policy***

APPROVED: Governors approved the above policies.

The Principal advised that the Critical Incident Policy was potentially being incorporated into Trust Policy and would be brought to the CGB in September.

- **RHT Business Continuity Policy (to note)**

Governors noted the policy.

SECTION 4 – GOVERNANCE

4.1 Prevent Action Plan*

Governors noted the reports.

A governor questioned campus security and non-college staff tailgating.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that it's likely students who haven't paid for the carpark or are letting friends onto site. Governors discussed students being aware of who was on site and reporting if they did not recognise someone, including any adults without their lanyards.

A governor questioned how the College know who is and isn't on site.

The Vice Principal (Student Experience) advised that it's not possible to know who is on site at any given time as not everyone swipes their ID card. The site is as access controlled as it can be at present, there was potential for gates at the front of the College, but this has not been agreed yet. The College mitigate risks with ID checks, ensuring students need to use their ID for as many as things as possible.

A governor questioned whether Martin's Law has changed anything in terms of safeguarding.

Governors were advised that the Senior Leadership Team carried out an assessment in light of this and most things were already in place. A further assessment had been carried out on one area which was highlighted as a result of the review.

4.2 Safeguarding Update*

Report completed. In person, update to be moved to September CGB.

ACTION CLERK

4.3 Committee Minutes

Governors noted the Quality Committee minutes.

Governors commented that they felt reassured by the minutes.

4.4 Governance Update*

Governors noted the report.

The Principal advised that the strategic plan comes to an end in December 2025, the Senior Leadership Team have been looking at the plan to make it a more useable document. It was agreed to bring this to the Strategy Afternoon in November for further feedback.

The CGB discussed lengthening the time of the strategy afternoon to allow enough time. It was agreed that the meeting would take place from 11-4.30pm.

SECTION 5 – FINANCE

5.1 Governors noted the minutes and draft budget.

RECOMMENDED: The CGB received the budget and with assurances from the Finance Committee recommend the budget to the Richard Huish Trust Board.

A governor questioned the continuation of Oak House when it poses considerable risk.

The Principal advised that prior to the College academising, students paid different fees. Following academisation, students now must receive government funding in order to board. The College also have some flexi-boarders who would not attend the College if they did not have an option to board. With the demographic dipping in coming years, it is another way of sustaining student numbers. The margins continue to be tight, and the College ensure that we would be in a position to exercise the break clauses should this be deemed necessary. Oak House brings diversity to the College which is a positive addition. Governors were reassured that Oak House is continually kept under review and discussed at each finance meeting.

SECTION 6 – OTHER MATTERS

- 6.1 Dates for future meetings:

Governors noted the meeting dates for 2025/26. The Finance Committee dates were currently being agreed and would be shared by the clerk.

Full College Governing Body

Monday 22nd September 2025 at 5.30pm

Monday 12th January 2026 at 5.30pm

Monday 30th March 2026 at 5.30pm

Monday 18th May 2026 at 5.30pm

Monday 6th July 2026 at 5.30pm

Strategy Afternoon

Friday 14th November 2025 11-4.30pm

Quality Committee

Monday 20th October 2025 at 5.30pm

Monday 20th April 2026 at 5.30pm

Meeting end 19.00pm

SECTION 6 – CLOSED SESSION – CONFIDENTIAL

No staff or student governors were present for these items. It was agreed these items would remain confidential.

Closed session end 19.30pm