

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Spring (2) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 26th March 2026 at 9.30am
Location: At the academy

Membership

'A' denotes absence

Mr M Bland
Mrs L Bunn
Mrs D Carter
Mr R Collins
Mr G Eden
Mr P Gawthorpe (chair)
Mr R Lilley (principal)
Mrs C Middleton (vice-chair)
Mrs K Phoenix (vice principal)
Mrs M Pimm
Mrs S Sparks
Mrs S Wichmann

In attendance

Miss J Littlewood (clerk to the governors)
Mrs V Dashper (school business manager – SBM)

FGB/19/26 Apologies for absence Action

There were no apologies for absence.

FGB/20/26 Declaration of interest

There were no other declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for items of business on the agenda.

FGB/21/26 Review of membership and terms of office ending in the next 12 months

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the governing body membership list.

The clerk drew attention to the following ends of terms of office:

- Mr P Gawthorpe (partnership governor) – 31 October 2026;
- Mrs K Phoenix (staff governor) – 18 April 2026.

The principal alerted governors that the staff nomination/election process had been undertaken and had elicited one expression of interest. The clerk confirmed that with only one expression of interest for the single vacancy, the candidate could be appointed.

Mrs Phoenix left the meeting at 9.35am

The principal outlined the skills and expertise of Mrs Phoenix and the benefits her continued membership brought to the governing body.

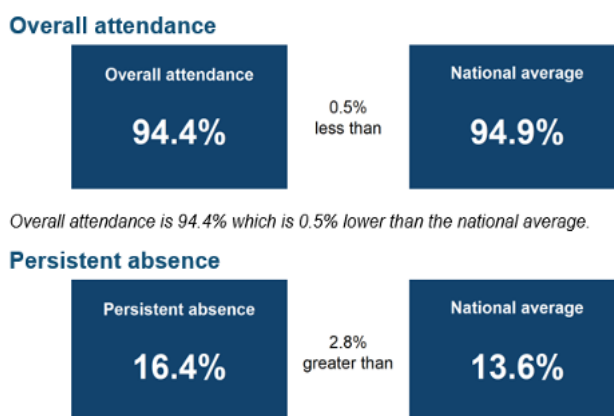
	Governors NOTED the information provided by the principal and it was resolved that governors APPROVED the appointment of Mrs K Phoenix as staff governor.	Action Clerk
	<i>Mrs Phoenix rejoined the meeting at 9.36am</i>	
FGB/22/26	Approval of minutes of spring (1) term meeting and any additional special meetings The minutes of the spring (1) term meeting held on 22nd January 2026 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was AGREED that the minutes of 22 January 2026 were to be signed electronically by the chair. Actions in the minutes were reviewed. It was noted that they had been undertaken, were subject to the following updates or were to be discussed in the meeting: <i>FGB/05/26 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties</i> The school business manager advised that the reserves policy was still pending (see FGB/05/26). <i>FGB/15/26 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governors</i> The principal advised that work to update the SIP was underway and it may be prudent to wait until the summer (1) term meeting to ensure governor monitoring roles were linked to the SIP priorities – governors AGREED.	Chair/ Clerk VD/Clerk All to note RL/VD/ Clerk
FGB/23/26	Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties Governors RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the following meetings: • finance & personnel committee (26 February 2026); • audit committee (26 February 2026). Actions in the minutes had been completed or continued to be in hand within the timescales indicated. a Finance & personnel committee Governors RECEIVED, NOTED and RATIFIED the following matters approved at committee: • 2025/26 budget review and 3-year forecast; • staffing proposals and general staffing matters; • services for schools (NCC buyback); • management accounts (P4 and P5) and cash flow (P5); • school resource management assessment checklist; • write-offs and disposals; • related party transaction register. b Audit committee Governors RECEIVED, NOTED and RATIFIED the 2025/26 autumn term internal audit report approved at committee. c Policies Governors RECEIVED, NOTED and RATIFIED the following policies approved at committees:	

- adoption/fostering policy;
- attendance policy;
- bereavement policy;
- complaints policy (based on DfE revised guidance);
- EAL policy;
- EYFS policy;
- flexi-schooling policy;
- gifts and hospitality policy;
- handwriting policy;
- ICT loan agreement policy;
- lettings policy;
- marking and presentation policy.

FGB/24/26 Holding executive leaders to account: summary of principal's report and governors' question and challenge

The principal presented the principal's report to governors and highlighted the following:

- admissions particularly migration (with reasons) and arrivals;
- DfE communication – **see confidential item**;
- attendance (up to February half-term – Spring 1):



- suspensions/exclusions – **see confidential item**;
- SEND/CLA (children looked after) – **see confidential item**.

Q. Governors asked about the number of EHE moves?

A. The principal explained that most of the moves had been whilst awaiting a school place in the area the families had moved to, however it was becoming a worrying trend.

Q. Governors enquired about schools' response to EHE discussions with parents?

A. The principal reassured governors that the school actively discouraged EHE but some parents believed it to be a better option at the time (for a variety of different reasons), for their child(ren).

Governors **RECOGNISED** the importance of understanding the school position in terms of attendance, behaviour and data outcomes and **DISCUSSED** the impact of attendance on more than one of the Ofsted evaluation areas.

Governors **THANKED** the principal for the comprehensive and informative report and for answering the questions posed.

FGB/25/26 Overseeing financial performance – financial reporting

The SBM provided governors with a summary of the financial picture that included:

- a) budget review 2025/26
- b) minibus update;
- c) early years – **see confidential item**;
- d) air conditioning proposal;
- e) staffing – **see confidential item**;
- f) write offs/disposals.

a Budget review 2025/26

The SBM informed governors that budget review was not yet finalised due to several changes and scenarios to be considered – the aim was for an update to be presented to the next FGB meeting (7 May 2026).

VD/Clerk

b Minibus update

The SBM confirmed that the demo minibus had attended site – the proposal was to delay purchase to access a new model with up-to-date specifications (to be included in a pending revised quote).

All to note

Q. Governors queried affordability?

A. The SBM reminded governors of contingency available from other delayed projects however, a better picture would be available once the budget review had been finalised.

**All to note
VD/Clerk**

Governors **AGREED** to wait until the hard figures were available before deciding about the minibus.

d Air conditioning proposal

The principal alerted governors to the proposal to fit either individual condenser units or install a single VRV/VRF condenser to manage all areas – he detailed the reasons/rationale for the proposal.

Q. Governors questioned the preferred option?

A. The principal identified the single VRV/VRF condenser option.

The SBM clarified that four companies had been approached, three had attended for survey:

- Bradley Refrigeration – known to the academy through previous work;
- SCE Renewables – local provider, 5-star reviews;
- Chill Air Conditioning – family run, based in Mansfield, 5-star reviews.

The SBM presented the pros and cons of each company.

Governors **DISCUSSED** and **CONSIDERED** the wellbeing of the pupils and staff in the affected rooms during extremes of weather.

Q. Governors asked about quotes and potential cost?

A. The SBM apprised governors that the expected cost was between £35k and £50k depending on the preferred system.

Q. Governors enquired whether there was the budget for this work?

A. The SBM reminded governors of the underspend linked to the foundation outdoor project, the principal advised governors that without the underspend the air conditioning would not be considered.

Q. Governors queried the 'lead-in' time for the installation of the condenser(s)?

A. The SBM verified that all the companies had intimated the work needed to be done over the summer holiday period due to the size of the project.

Governors **CONSIDERED** the risk associated with the installation of several units as opposed to one.

Q. Governors questioned whether VAT was included in the quotes?

A. The SBM explained that the quotes excluded VAT, but VAT was recoverable by the school.

Q. Governors asked if the installation extended to the private day care setting?

A. The principal advised that there would need to be a separate system in this area.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** in principle, pending the budget update, preferred supplier and the associated electrical costs.

f Disposals/write-offs

The SBM presented the following fixture and fitting items for disposal/write off which were on the asset register but either held in storage, out of use or no longer fit for purpose:

- 1 x HP laptop;
- 1 x Samsung laptop;
- 1 x Dell server;
- 3 x HP servers;
- 7 x Toshiba laptops;
- 1 x Dell printer;
- 1 x Loxit laptop trolley.

The SBM added that the Loxit trolley was no longer used and was to be disposed of by sale, the rest of the items were at end of life.

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** all the items for disposal/write-off/sale as presented.

Governors **THANKED** the SBM for presentation of the latest financial information and answering questions posed.

FGB/26/26 Management accounts and cash flow (P6)

The chair **CONFIRMED** that he had received the management accounts for period 6, and they had also been uploaded to Governor Hub.

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the cash flow spreadsheet (P6) in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook – **see confidential item**.

FGB/27/26 Update on appraisal process and well-being for principal and staff

The chair **CONFIRMED** that the principal's mid-year review had been undertaken.

The principal notified governors that staff appraisal meetings had been held, and 2025/26 targets set – appraisals were on track.

FGB/28/26 School Improvement Plan

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the SIP discussed under item **FGB/90/25 b).**

In addition, the principal proposed to email the updated (RAG rated) SIP to governors for consideration.

RL

The principal highlighted that:

- the SIP had been organised into Ofsted evaluation areas;
- the biggest element of the SIP was SEND and inclusion;
- provision map had been purchased and implemented;
- **see confidential item.**

Q. Governors requested clarity around provision map?

A. The principal clarified that this was a strategic management tool that outlined all the specialised support and interventions a school provided beyond the standard curriculum to meet needs, particularly for SEND.

Q. Governors enquired how it helped the school?

A. The principal advised that the software mapped resources, staffing and costs to track intervention effectiveness and ensure accountability.

Q. Governors queried whether there were opportunities for staff training?

A. The principal verified that there had been training and the Inset Day tomorrow was around SEND and neurodivergence.

Q. Governors questioned the impact of the provision mapping?

A. The principal shared that the quality of learning plans produced and the ability to review those with parents of a child with SEND had increased enormously – parental involvement was significantly better.

The principal reassured governors that progress against the SIP priorities was going well.

FGB/29/26 Confirm arrangements to review Child Protection and Safeguarding recording and reporting systems (CP safeguarding file audit)

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the comprehensive safeguarding report produced by the principal.

The principal and safeguarding governor reported that:

- a link visit had been undertaken and the confidential file audit completed;
- additional training had been delivered around low-level concerns.

Q. Governors asked about low-level concerns?

A. The principal outlined the processes and procedures for schools to follow when a low-level concern was raised.

Governors **REQUESTED** a summary of the nature of any low-level concerns to the next FGB meeting (7 May 2026).

RL/Clerk

FGB/30/26 Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action

Governors **AGREED** this item had been discussed in detail at the Spring (1) term FGB meeting and actions undertaken.

FGB/31/26 Communication received and updates

From the principal – see confidential item

From clerk – Governor Newsletter

The clerk drew attention to the content of the second 2026 spring term edition of the Nottinghamshire Governor e-newsletter and highlighted the following items:

- safeguarding updates including:
 - advice and guidance re. completion of confidential file audit;
 - governors safeguarding network 2 – update;
- finance updates which comprised of:
 - budget setting 2026/27 and future years;
 - SFVS;
- governance articles related to:
 - why governor training matters;
 - objectivity in governance;
 - the new Ofsted Inspection Framework: re-aligning governors' strategic roles;
 - governor role in the school's complaints process;
 - review of school website compliance;
- strengthening governance through expertise, independence and compliance;
- Nottinghamshire virtual school update: inclusion;
- EM-Ed Service – governor training update;
- NottAlone: mental health support for children and young people;
- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme;
- national updates including:
 - understanding the school Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR);
 - mobile phones in schools – DfE update;
 - DfE update – Restrictive Practices (from April 2026);
 introduction of Ofsted inspection in multi-academy trusts.

The principal added that the school website was being revised and updated to reflect the recent statutory changes – this involved the website being migrated to Juniper – onboarding had commenced.

All to note

FGB/32/26 Estates

a *Education Estates Strategy*

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the new 10-year education estates strategy (released by the government in February 2026) and the associated portal for schools to manage their estate (launched 13 March 2026).

Q. Governors enquired about the purpose of this new strategy?

A. The SBM explained that by 2028 the estates strategy was to replace the CIF (condition improvement funding) and consequently required more data collection and guidance hence the launch of the estates' portal.

b *Building Slab Inspection report*

The SBM notified governors of the inspection report (uploaded to Governor Hub) written by William Saunders Ltd regarding investigative work related to:

- potential movement within one KS2 classroom and corridor;
- slight bulging of electrical floor boxes in classrooms.

Governors **ACKNOWLEDGED** the advice within the report for the site manager to monitor the issue and bring the matter back to governors if the situation changed.

c Boilers

The principal alerted governors that one of the two boilers was failing despite regular maintenance and replacement of parts – he reminded governors of the background and context to the engineering support and associated challenges.

Q. Governors queried action being taken?

A. The principal advised that the academy was operating on one boiler – this was sufficient during the spring, summer months.

The SBM added that the company fitting the heat meter (see **F&P/12/26 c**) had been approached to explore whether they might undertake the servicing.

All to note

Governors **REQUESTED** an update at the next FGB meeting (7 May 2026).

VD/Clerk

FGB/33/26 Report from training co-ordinator including review of governor training audit and requirements for 2026/2027

The training coordinator **THANKED** those governors who had completed all the mandatory training however, she **REMINDED** governors that there were still a few gaps in the effectiveness tool on Governor Hub.

All governors

The training coordinator **ENCOURAGED** all governors to update their training record under their profile on Governor Hub as soon as possible.

All to note

Governors **AGREED** the following training had been scheduled: finance training – all governors.

FGB/34/26 General Data Protection Regulations

Governors **REVIEWED** and **CONFIRMED** the appointment of:

- Mr R Lilley – SIRO;
- The DPO Service – DPO;
- Mr M Bland – IGG (information governance governor).

The SBM highlighted the autumn term DPO report uploaded to Governor Hub which indicated that:

- staff training had been made available via DPOCOMS;
- there had been 1 x Fol request and 1 x data breach;
- the Fol request had been responded to within time scale;
- the data breach had not met the threshold for reporting to the ICO.

Governors were also made aware of a live SAR which is currently being managed through the academy DPO.

FGB/35/26 Policies

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the following policies and documents:

- collective acts of worship policy;
- computing policy;
- equality policy;
- history policy;
- physical restraint policy;
- SEND policy.

Governors also **NOTED** that the GDPR policies had been delayed due to the adoption of the DPO service policies and the cross-referencing process with current and alternative policies to ensure they were accurate and SHA specific.

All to note

FGB/37/26 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governors

Governors **DETERMINED** that the following visits had been undertaken or were planned:

- admissions committee – Mr P Gawthorpe, Mrs M Pimm, Mrs S Wichmann;
- assemblies – Mrs S Wichmann;
- health & safety – Mrs D Carter;
- principal's appraisal – Mr P Gawthorpe, Mrs S Sparks;
- safeguarding (confidential file audit) – Mrs C Middleton;
- safeguarding (SCR) – Mrs C Middleton;
- SEND – Mrs S Sparks.

All to note

Governors **RECOGNISED** the need to review link governor roles given the recent additions to the governing body and updated SIP – these were to be considered over the spring term and finalised at the next FGB meeting (7 May 2026).

All to note
/Clerk

FGB/38/26 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account

Governors identified impact through:

- consideration and discussion regarding governance matters including:
 - membership, training, monitoring and link roles;
- scrutiny and challenge relating to:
 - Ofsted evaluation areas and the updated SIP;
 - progress and clarity around provision mapping;
 - staff training and impact;
- consideration and discussion related to safeguarding, behaviour & GDPR;
- increased awareness and understanding of staffing matters through questions and discussion related to:
 - vacancies and recruitment;
 - staff and principal appraisal processes;
 - flexible working requests and impact;
- questions, consideration and discussion related to:
 - attendance and the use of VYED;
 - the increasing trend re. EHE;
- questions and challenge regarding estates management and finance including:
 - contracts, competitiveness and value for money;
 - consideration of expenditure on projects: aircon and minibus;
 - cash flow and investments;
- consideration and review of policies and the spring (2) term governor newsletter.

Accountability continued to be evidenced in all governing body and committee meetings through regular review of actions, question and investigation.

FGB/39/26 Confirmation of dates for 2025-26

The governing body

agreed

Summer Term 2026

- Thursday 7th May 2026 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 4th June 2026 (4.00pm) – F&P and Audit Committees;
- Thursday 16th July 2026 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting.

All to note

FGB/39/26 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

that there were eight confidential items and that the confidential sections of the following reports:

- Spring (1) term FGB minutes;
- safeguarding documents;
- principal's report and linked documentation;
- financial report and associated documents;

be deemed confidential but that all other papers and reports be made available as required.

The meeting closed at 11.19am



Signed:

(chair)

Date: 7th May 2026