



MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF ABBEY COURT SCHOOL

MINUTES

Date: 7 July 2026 (Meeting 6)

Time: 11.00 am

Location: Abbey Court School Cliffe Road Site

Clerk: Cathy Poole

Attendees: Jon Carthy – JC (Chair)
Jane Hayes (Vice Chair)
Vicky Aspin – VA (Headteacher)
David Field - (DF) (via Zoom)
Claire Richards – (CR)
Chloe Knight - (CK)
David Lane - (DL)

Apologies: Matt Powell (MP)
Barry Kemp (BK)

Absent: Tim Muggridge - (TM)

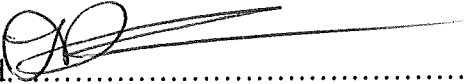
Attendance not requested: Jean Kerr – Associate Member
Karen Joy – Associate Member
Tim Walker – Associate Member

In attendance: Cathy Poole (CP) – Clerk

A	STANDARD ITEMS	ACTION
A1	Apologies: Matt Powell (MP), Tim Muggridge (TM) Absent: Tim Muggridge Associate Members Jean Kerr, Karen Joy, & Tim Walker whose presence was not requested. Apologies noted and approved	
A2	Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest relevant to this meeting.	

Signed:  Date: 13.10.2026
Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body

A3	Quorate Confirmed that the meeting was Quorate	
A4	AOB Notified to Chair Observation re Fire Alarm (DF) Update on Benedicts Law (VA)	
A5	Minutes of the last meeting Minutes from the last meeting held on 19 May 2026 were verified for accuracy and confirmed as approved and signed by the Chair.	
A6	Matters arising: Health & Safety Review – DL to submit notes and complete NGA Course – outstanding. Presentation in the next academic year from Estate Manager. Fire Drills – early morning/late afternoon included on rotation in the new academic year. Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation to be included on Governors' Section of the website. SEND Governor – Clerk to follow up with MP. Ofsted questions for Governors – TM to send	DL VA Clerk Clerk TM
B	Leadership Matters	
B1	Headteacher Update New Pupils 9 new pupils joining in September 2026 – pre-induction sessions taking place. This leaves six places in Primary. Class lists still to be confirmed. Huge rate of referrals – 259 this year. This is a huge draw on resources and time. Estimated the Assistant Head spends 1 – 1.5 days per week and the Headteacher 0.5 – 1 day per week. VA stated that they are currently compiling a flow chart for who sees what documents related to referrals, the EHCP Officer tracks this. Consider trying to identify the costs associated with referrals. Suggested Governors write to Lauren Edwards, Constituency MP about inappropriate referrals. VA confirmed that she is due to visit soon and would raise	

Signed:  Date: 13.10.2026
Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body

the matter at that time. Agreed to establish a dialogue with the MP and then write to the Secretary of State. Staffing Noted that sickness has increased quite significantly recently with a few long term absences who are reviewed every two months. Staff Turnover – whole school 11% (last year 10%); Teachers 3%; Teaching Assistants 8%; Other support staff 27%. Nothing unexpected. New PA to Headteacher commenced duties. Current vacancies – Farm cleaner; Cleaner; 6 Teaching Assistants; 1 teacher. This is significantly lower than previous years and interviews will be held before the end of term and during the holidays. Parental Engagement Parents Evenings – 55% primary; 61% secondary; 33% FE. 88 Parents have attended events of some kind – increase. Safeguarding 125 CHIN (Child in Need) Plans in place 4 Child Protection Noted JC as Safeguarding Governor has a catch up meeting with the Deputy Head on Thursday. Lights Local authority support requested with lighting issues in Phase 1. Quotes being sought. Transport Issues in terms of capacity. 40 vehicles on/off site. Local authority seeking quotations to dig out more space. Changing over the Entry/Exit to the Staff carpark would improve traffic flow. MCH (Medway Community Healthcare) This has been retendered under Kent's model which will involve changes. Tim Walker, Associate Governor is involved in the discussions. Councillor Visits The FGB discussed the visits of local councilors to the school. Details of this discussion are recorded under confidential minutes.	VA
---	------------------

Signed:  Date: 13.10.2016
Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body

	Procurement VA presented a brief overview of the procurement process. Presentation to be circulated to Governors and any questions brought to the next meeting. Health & Safety Fire alarm activated this morning resulting in an evacuation which took 12 minutes. Governors commented on seeing the relationships between some of the staff and children and how they sought to keep them actively engaged until the all clear was given. <i>DF commented that the front doors of the school were wide open.</i> Noted that this is a default when the alarm is activated. Suggested a Fire Warden be placed on duty at the door to prevent access and prevent any pupils leaving. <i>JC asked for clarification on the process for checking names of who has evacuated.</i> VA clarified the process. Update on Benedicts Law Due to be in full operation in September. This relates to Allergy awareness, Allergy Policy, EpiPen's, Anaphylaxis and Training. An Allergy Awareness Governor is required – DL agreed to take on this role. Pupil Attendance Remains positive – above the national average for special schools. 1349 medical appointments since the start of the academic year. End of Year Celebration – video to be circulated to Governors.	All Governors DL Clerk
C	POLICIES	
	The following policies were presented: Pay Policy Approved at Pay Committee subject to update of latest salary figures. Disciplinary Policy Approved. Healthcare Policy Approved Careers Education & Guidance Guidance remains in place	VA

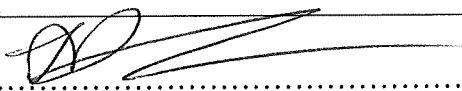
Signed:

Date:

13.10.2026

Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body

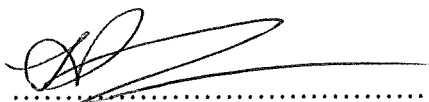
	Relationships & Sex Education To be brought to October meeting	VA
D	Finance	
	Finance Committee Noted that the three year outstanding payment had now been received. The timing of the backpay means that there is no time to arrange any works for summer 2026 so the school will be well over the allowable 8% rollover by year end. VA advised that a meeting has been arranged with MB/CB to discuss the school's financial position and to seek assurances that the school will not have this money clawed back to allow time for projects to be decided upon, quotes completed and works arranged working within the SDP and best value. Pay Committee Headteacher's Performance Management Meeting will be conducted on 9 July 2026.	
E	GOVERNING BODY MATTERS & STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES	
E1	Associate Members - Review The current three Associate Members had all provided valuable assistance to the school during the year. Agreed that JH would write to the three individuals requesting them to continue for a further academic year.	JH
E2	Committee Membership A draft Committee Membership for 2026/2027 will be circulated. All Governors to respond to the Clerk to confirm membership and request any changes and register interest in joining a particular committee.	All Governors Clerk
E3	Training 2025/2026 Agreed Clerk would follow up Training with individuals and update record.	Clerk
E4	Monitoring and Tasks 2025-2026 To be updated and revised for 2026/2027.	Clerk
E5	Reflection on Board Effectiveness • NGA Skills audit to be circulated with September deadline. • Building a sustainable Board • Safeguarding in a specialist School • Arts & Creativity - ? presentation next year or Governors to attend a lesson • Ofsted Preparation	
E6	Improvement Plan JH to update current and prepare for 2026/2027.	JH

Signed:  Date: 13.10.2026

Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body

E7	Safeguarding Update on KCSIE expected. NSPCC Trainer will update staff at the beginning of the new academic year. VA to arrange to record this session for circulation to Governors.	VA
E8	Governance Review Completed and all recommendations implemented.	
G	CONCLUDING MATTERS	
	JC thanked Governors for their time given this year. He also thanked Vicky Aspin, Zoe Silvester and Jacqui Rudden for their assistance with training for Westbrook Trust. DL stated that the school had been well represented at the Kent County Show with 3 Supreme Champions in the Young Farmers Club. DL will attend a Club meeting to say thank you and JH will write to the Farm Manager. Meeting concluded at 1.10pm	DL JH
	Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 13th October (Mtng 1) Rede Court, 11.00am	

CP:12/07/2026

Signed:  Date: 13.10.2026
Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body