



East Reading Federation

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board

Tuesday 15th July 2025. 4pm

Present: Dave Dymond (Chair); Robert Howell (EHT); Laura Kerr (HoS); Aaron Hatherley; Francis Jakeman; Kris Jones; Steph Mitchell; Chris Robinson; Zoe Watling.

Apologies: Simon Higgs; Andrew Burrell; Katherine Fowler; Victoria Maskell.

In Attendance: Alice de Croos; Liz Newton; Christian Lim; Richard Watson; Rowena Perry.

Clerk: Deborah Savage

Agenda Item	
1.	Welcome and Apologies. All were welcomed to our last FGB meeting of this academic year, especially Rowena Perry who will be the Clerk to Governors from September 2025. Those present introduced themselves. Apologies in advance has been received from Simon Higgs, Andrew Burrell, Katherine Fowler and Victoria Maskell and these were accepted. Vincent Onuchi, David Colwill and Adedayo Benson did not attend.
2.	Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Parts 1 & 2 minutes of the meeting held 20th May 2025. The Part 1 and 2 minutes of the meeting held on 20 th May had been circulated in advance and the actions were reviewed. All actions had been completed except the SEND link governor was not present at this meeting to update if she had had a chance to meet with staff. This action will be carried over to the next meeting. Part 1 & 2 minutes were accepted as a true record and ACTION: were approved. They will be signed by the COG and Part 1 uploaded to the school websites. A governor asked if the minutes from the EFGB held on 6 th May to address the DDT outcome should not also be approved. These had been circulated to governors via Governor hub and those present confirmed that they had read them. DECISION: Governors accepted these minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 6th May 2025 and they were approved. These confidential minutes will not be made public.
4.	Chairs Report. The CoG thanked all staff and governors who were involved in the recent Ofsted Inspection for their work and offered congratulations to Redlands school on the outcome of the Inspection – which is still confidential. A draft inspection report had

	<p>been received by the school today, but the final report will not be ready to be made public until September.</p> <p>The CoG thanked two governors who are leaving the GB for their work to support the school and Federation. Governors who are leaving are Zoe Watling and Vincent Onuchi. The CoG also expressed the wish to return to a Subcommittee structure for the coming academic year and informed the GB that he would be circulating a discussion document on meeting format and days/times so that a decision could be made in September. The new Clerk would be included in this consultation.</p> <p>Governor Question: Why do you think subcommittees are needed and is this already a done deal? Subcommittees, such as for Finance and Curriculum allow better focus on an issue and greater participation opportunities for governors. It also allows governors to develop specialisms and interests and to play to their individual strengths. We hope committees will better engage all governors in meetings. No final decision has been made – ACTION: CoG to circulate a consultation document so that this can be discussed at the first FGB meeting in September.</p>
5.	<p>Ofsted Inspection of Redlands.</p> <p>Notes made by the HoS at the feedback meeting given by inspectors had been circulated in advance to governors who were reminded that these remain confidential. The meeting was informed that staff have been briefed on the inspection outcome and also reminded that this remains confidential. The school was pleased that their own assessment of where the Redlands school is was backed up by the Ofsted outcome and also pleased that Ofsted recognised the hard work that has gone into reaching this outcome. Recommendations made by inspectors for next steps were also inline with development plans already in place. The school shone during the inspection and the report captures this. The meeting was informed that the Inspectors wanted to look for the good in the school and to celebrate achievements. Inspectors had done their background research in advance and were well prepared. They worked with staff to capture the personal nature of Redlands school. Inspectors recognised positive relationships and happy children who felt secure in school.</p> <p>Governor Question: Can we do something special for the staff? Even though results are still confidential, staff have been given a personal level of feedback on their work and contribution to Redlands success. All staff are shattered – as is the case at the end of the academic year but more so with the added pressure of an Ofsted inspection. We are having a shared lunch but there is no appetite for anything further at the moment.</p> <p>Governor Question: Did Ofsted comment on the governance aspect of Leadership and Management? Not specifically – we think they took the view that if everything in school is good then L&M must be good too. They very quickly got a sense of the school and recognised that the actions we are taking are grounded on need. They did praise the journey that governors had taken and recognised Federation as a strength.</p> <p>Governor Comment: It is important to hear about L&M from a Governors perspective and we congratulate the school as the outcome was a strong good with elements of</p>

	<p>outstanding. We expect the report in the second week of September and once again, offer the GB's congratulations to Redlands school.</p>
6.	<p>EHT & HoS reports.</p> <p>Due to the pressures of an Ofsted inspection alongside the usual end of the academic pressures, SLT gave verbal updates to governors.</p> <p>ASPS</p> <p>The meeting was informed that both the increase in the numbers of SEND children and the increases in the levels of need amongst the children continues to pose great challenges. At ASPS, the numbers of children with EHCPs has risen from 14 to 19 with 3 more applications ready to submit. Two additional EHCP children will join the school in September. It is expected that 10 additional EHCPs will be applied for during the 2025/6 academic year. These are all for children in mainstream classes, not the ARP.</p> <p>Governor Question: So the trend is rising, but the complexity of need is also rising – is that correct? Yes – and schools have been informed that the EHCP banding will stay static for the next 2 years – so no financial increases to EHCP funding for at least the next 2 years.</p> <p>Governor Statement: And it is correct to say that ARP funding is a real mess? Yes – bursars had an update on RISE at our last briefing, but the financial aspects of ARPs were avoided by BFFC. We have been told there will be no funding for ARPs next year – there is much uncertainty.</p> <p>Governor Question: With these significant financial pressures to SEND funding, along with the known loss of some therapeutic providers, can we start to think about how we fund SEND provision in the future? It is staffing that remains our biggest concern here – where we do we source good staff to work with SEND children without adequate funding levels. Support staff banding at RBC remains exactly the same as it was 25 years ago – and yet the job of an LSA has changed beyond all recognition in that time. The unions are actively recruiting members and also encouraging any staff injured by a special needs child to make a claim against their school's insurance. We have had a number of staff injured in such a way. Staffing and funding are real concerns for us – but they are national issues.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is there to be no national consultation on funding changes? The RBC finance team tell us that they have no idea of what will happen.</p> <p>Governor Question: It is my understanding that EHCPs are hard to get? They require a lot of effort and there is no doubt the funding system is broken – RBC's SEND funding alone will be £100 million in debt by the end of the financial year. BFFC is moving back in house to RBC with some restructuring.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is it right that SEND banding is frozen? Yes – the amount paid per pupil will not rise but staffing costs will rise with a 4% teachers pay rise to fund in school.</p>

Governor Comment: Funding for the ARP (or lack of future funding) is a separate issue and comments have been fed back to the Director of Education.

The EHT informed governors that ASPS has 695 children on roll (with one place available) but are over subscribed in September with one year group of 91 children. In child protection matters, there is one child at ASPS with a Child Protection plan, 3 more designated In Need and 5 children receiving early help.

The EHT gave governors a summary of behaviour incidents:

There are 80 recorded incidents on CPOMS:

- 1 x cyber bullying
- 2 x home related incidents
- 34 x playground incidents
- 2 x homophobic incidents
- 6 x racist incidents
- 27 incidents of inappropriate language

It was good to see at Redlands that Ofsted praised the Safeguarding data and logging of incidents there and analysing the data at granular level shows no patterns. The DHTs work closely with children and families to address any incidences of inappropriate behaviour.

Governor Question: The playground is more confined at the moment due to the building works – has this led to an increase in playground incidents? No.

The EHT went on the discuss attendance – Figures for attendance of children of statutory school age are 94.3% slightly up on the figure from this time last year which was 94%. Three persistent absentees in year 5 have now left. Some children with medical conditions have been absent due to illness. Our trend is actually stable – but one or two children with persistent absence can have quite a negative effect on figures.

Governor Question: Have you had any suspensions? No.

Governors heard that club provision at ASPS is wide and varied and well attended.

Governor Question: Tell us about the recent trips children have made? Trips are continuing – year 6 have had a number of trips since SATs finished. We ensure all children can participate and assist some financially if required. We do monitor low income families to ensure that their children can and do participate in clubs and trips.

Governor Question: Where do the funds to support these children come from – the PTA? No – mostly the school budget. We cost trips based on 90 children taking part and some trips can be assisted by the PP budget. Coach costs in particular are high - £1K for a coach.

Redlands.

The HoS also gave a verbal update to governors. She informed them that a new EYFS teacher is joining in September who has a strong SEND background. Some children in Redlands have complex medical needs and so require close and constant supervision to keep them safe. This has impacted staffing levels. It is a fine balance to get the ratios right to keep children safe but also not to over staff.

Redlands attendance is positive at 94.7% and the attendance of vulnerable groups is roughly in line with the overall figure – although some children are on a part time timetable. Ofsted looked at these part time children and were happy that they are being tracked and recorded correctly.

On child protection, Redlands has 2 children receiving early help and 1 child on a child in need plan. Redlands is proud to work on a relationship first basis with families – helping them as much as possible with informal monitoring and support. We have managed to close some cases, which is a real positive.

Governor Question: I raised this prior to the meeting – but some reports were uploaded to govhub with children's names attached – and governors do not need this information as they are operational reports and names should be redacted for governors. Yes – we have corrected this and redacted reports are now in govhub. Staff will be doing GDPR training in September.

Governor Question: In the EYFS data given in the report, the GLD figures are better at ASPS than at Redlands – is this a gender (boys) issue do you think? When we look at wider data in the SE Region, boys are underperforming in our region but we really need to look at the starting point data for these children which will show that they have all made strong progress from their starting points. We are aware of national issues and trends and monitor our children for these.

Governor Comment: We can see that staff react quickly to meet developing needs and recognise that this situation is not helped by pupil turnover – turbulence remains an issue at Redlands.

Governor Question: Looking at the KS1 report I would like to say well done on the coaching of staff at Redlands which has been happening for a few years now with great success. However, in the data sets, the individual schools are not identified – can we label the individual schools' data in the future please?

Governor Question: Looking at the KS2 report, I would just like to say that this is really well written and we appreciate getting all these reports as we understand that they take a considerable amount of work for staff. Maths is doing well with an upwards trajectory but writing is lower – why is this please? Writing is not a linear skill and good phonics and good level of reading is needed as a precursor to writing. Reading is a very different skill to writing – children need not only to be able to read but also to absorb and fully understand what they are reading. The skills needed for writing really begin in the EYFS where children need to be able to build the stamina for

	<p>listening and paying attention along with fine motor skills. These basics need to be secured first as so many components are needed for skilled writing. Writing is undoubtedly harder for boys – this is a national picture. Children go home and read for pleasure but they rarely write for pleasure and the opportunities for practising writing that were common decades ago (such as thank you letters for gifts) are no longer part of society's routines. Some children read too fast – and this hinders comprehension which is a skill needed and is tested in SATs tests. Redlands SATs data this year is in the 60's-70's which is lower than previous years. Where we can we have looked at papers (SPAG) to see if there is an opportunity to ask for a remark.</p> <p>Staff were thanked for taking the time to write such detailed reports for governors.</p> <p>Governor Question: Do you plan to standardise reports from the two schools in the future? Ones with a free text opportunity so staff can provide detail would be great. Yes – we've been looking at a few different HT report formats.</p> <p>Governor Question: Do we have SATs result yet? No – schools can ask for some papers to be re-marked and schools can also request that some children be removed from the data. This takes time so final SATs results will not be known until September.</p> <p>The CoG offered congratulations to the ASPS Year 6 team and children on their SATs results in what had been a disrupted year.</p> <p>Governor Question: Looking at Year 6 in Redlands and the "home-grown" pupils – those that have been with the school from the start of their schooling – do we have any idea of how they have done? Not really yet – many hit GD but there are also some children new to English in Year 5 who reached expected in at least 1 subject, so asking for these children to be removed from the data would not help us! We think the results give an honest reflection of this year 6 cohort. We will look into mobility – individual stories are masked by data.</p> <p>Governor Comment: The graphs are interesting and show that ASPS year 6 has very done well compared to both Reading and National figures.</p>
7.	<p>Preliminary SATs results.</p> <p>These had been discussed during Item 6.</p>
8.	<p>Leadership structure 2025/6 for approval.</p> <p>A document containing the leadership structure for 2025/6 had been shared in advance of this meeting. It had been discussed at the meeting on 20th May, but many governors were not in attendance at this earlier meeting. DECISION: the leadership structure for 2025/6 was approved by governors.</p>
9.	<p>Staff wellbeing.</p> <p>Staff present updated governors on staff wellbeing and reported that all staff are exhausted as we approach the end of the academic year. Long term staff absences have impacted the office team especially. There have been some safeguarding</p>

incidents with staff and some staff are concerned over changes – the unknown is always concerning for some. There is no longer a staff wellbeing committee but staff do not hesitate to approach the DHTs with any issues that are causing them concerns. Building staff resilience so that they can adapt and grow to meet additional pressures is challenging. We are working with some staff to help them cope with their home pressures so that these do not impact on their work. Bespoke staff training is needed. There has been massive change over the last few years and it is hard to collate that.

Governor Question: Is this replicated in many schools do you think? Yes – schools all over the country are experiencing an increase in the time and resources spent on handling HR issues amongst staff. It is undoubtedly much harder to work in a school now and staff resilience is low.

Governor Question: How can the GB help with this – can we source help or plan to mitigate the effects? We have given this much thought but in the case of staff absences (especially with support staff) it is easier to do the job yourself than take the time to explain and guide someone else – even if we could find a temp. Teachers are much easier to replace when they are off on sick leave. Schools are constantly fire-fighting. Staff at Redlands are being supported to build resilience with CPD sessions planned to give staff the tools they need to manage and cope better with challenges.

Governor Question: When did we last do a staff survey? Redlands did a second wellbeing staff survey at Christmas but it had very few returns from staff – which in itself tells a story.

Governor Comment: Surveys get a better response from people if they understand what you intend to do with the data obtained. It also helps to have a baseline to begin with but this is hard to do properly, especially at this time of year when staff are “running on empty”.

Governors were assured that the staff do not hold back if they have any issues that cause them concern, so SLT do have a picture of how staff are. Ofsted noted from their confidential meeting with Redlands staff (that SLT did not attend) that staff were balanced in their discussions with inspectors and felt well managed and supported. Having the DHT team has definitely helped. Ofsted noted that there was a significant management structure for a one form entry school but we were able to provide a narrative as to why this was and how it has impacted the federation as a whole. Ofsted noted that management does not merely make “nods” towards staff well being but that they make genuine efforts to reduce workload and support staff. Governors were informed that the unions do not help the staffing issues in school with the enormous disparity in pay between teaching and support staff.

Governors were informed that having appointed LN to the post of bursar at Redlands has had a positive impact although supporting her in her new role has been challenging

	as time to do this has been very limited due to staffing shortages whilst other support staff have been on long term sickness absence.
10.	<p>ASPS PE & Sports Premium Report.</p> <p>This report had been circulated in advance and requires governor approval. It was noted that this is a government form and offers no opportunity to allow detailed figures of the breakdown in spending. Governors noted that they would like to know what proportion of the £24K grant was spent on CPD v equipment v support for individual children, for example. DECISION: The report was approved by governors.</p>
11.	<p>Music Action Plan.</p> <p>This had been circulated in advance and governors were informed that a member of the Berkshire Music Trust visited Redlands to help complete this form. The highlighted areas indicate where the school currently is in its music provision. This exercise was like performing a mini deep-dive into Redlands music provision. It is planned to carry out the same exercise at ASPS in the autumn term. It is a new government requirement that schools have a music action plan that is available on their website.</p> <p>Governor Question: This is not a budget bid? No – there is no money attached. Currently, Berkshire Music Trust support is free to schools and they have delivered two CPD sessions for staff.</p> <p>Governor Comment: It is really good to see this as music has in the past been a “Cinderella” subject that has been squeezed as far as curriculum time. What musical activities do children take part in? Our children have participated in school choir events at the Hexagon and have also been to the O2. There is the chance to take part in Rock Steady and peripatetic music teachers visit both schools. Access to music opportunities in both schools is good.</p> <p>DECISION: The music report was approved by governors and it will be uploaded to the school website.</p>
12.	<p>Policies for approval.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>ASPS Behaviour Policy.</u> Governors were informed that this is a LA Policy and that a draft Behaviour Statement had been written by the CoG to work alongside this. DECISION: Governors approved the policy for adoption. 2. <u>ASPS Relationship and Health Education Policy.</u> Governors were informed that the two schools currently use different schemes to deliver health education to the children so one policy to cover both schools is not currently possible. Governors were told that there has been no feedback from teachers or parents withdrawing their children from these lessons. It was noted that this policy states that the GB has delegated responsibility for the approval of this policy to the HT, so this policy was not approved at this meeting.
13.	<p>Matters Arising.</p> <p>A governor involved in the recent event at the University of Reading entitled “Decolonise, Innovate, Transform” was given the floor to tell governors about this event which also has free lesson plans available to schools. This was a collaborative event involving BFFC and some of the presentations will be given again at future Directors Briefings. This governor later shared links to resources with all governors via Governorhub.</p>

14.	Safeguarding training. Governors were informed that the annual autumn safeguarding training for governors will take place on 7 th October. This will be online from 6-8pm and is always very good. Governors are asked to book onto this training via Alice who will make a booking on their behalf. Anyone not able to make this session can do an online module on updated safeguarding training in the autumn term.
15.	Autumn Term training programme. The schedule of planned training events had been circulated to all governors prior to the meeting and governors were reminded to record any training or CPD they do on their individual Governorhub records under the training tab.
16.	Issues for Parents/Confidentiality. There were no issues to be communicated to parents and nothing requiring part 2 minutes.
17.	Any Other Business. A governor involved in a recent week-long visit by residents of Dusseldorf thanked the HoS and the DHTs for allowing a visit to Redlands and making the visiting delegates so welcome. The delegates said that they especially enjoyed being shown around the school by the children and it was a highlight of their trip. The CoG thanked Zoe and Vincent for their contribution to the GB during their time as governors and also thanked the clerk for her work over the last 7 years.
18.	Date of Next meeting: TBC (early September 2025).

Meeting Closed: 5.35pm

Actions:

Action:	Responsibility:	Timescale:
SEND link Gov and both SENCOs to meet	KF/SENCOs	TBC
Part 1 minutes of 20 th May upload to school website	Clerk/AdC	ASAP
CoG to sign minutes from 20 th May and 6 th May EFGB	DD	ASAP
CoG to circulate a consultation document on future GB meeting structure and days/times for discussion and decision in September.	DD/ALL	ASAP

Attendance at FGB meetings Jan-July 25 (6 meetings to date)

Dave Dymond	6 of 6 meetings
Robert Howell	6 of 6 meetings
Laura Kerr	6 of 6 meetings
Adedayo Benson	1 of 6 meetings
Vincent Onuchi	3 of 6 meetings
David Colwill	1 of 6 meetings

Zoe Watling	3 of 6 meetings
Chris Robinson	6 of 6 meetings
Katherine Fowler	4 of 6 meetings
Francis Jakeman	5 of 6 meetings
Aaron Hatherley	6 of 6 meetings
Kris Jones	3 of 6 meetings
Andrew Burrell	4 of 5 possible meetings
Stephanie Mitchell	3 of 5 possible meetings
Simon Higgs	2 of 4 possible meetings

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