

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD REMOTELY VIA TEAMS ON MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2025 AT 6.30PM**

Governors Present: Matthew Reah (Chair), Samuel Appiah, Sophie Cowan, Chris Crawley, Samuel Dwamena, Callum Green, Jamie Kellett, Mark Laws, Jackie Mordaunt, Richa Nair, Rose Odudu, Shannon Parr, Rav Phagura (Headteacher), Helen Sparks, and Rev. Kojo Wood.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Naomi Rose (Deputy Head), Nik Thomas (Business Manager), and Head Boy and Head Girl (for part of the meeting)

(NB: Governor Challenge, Questions and Monitoring are highlighted in bold) Action By:

1.	<p>To receive any apologies for absence and decide whether to consent to the same</p> <p>NOTED: the meeting was quorate. Apologies for absence were received from Claire Sutton.</p> <p>AGREED: to accept apologies for absence received from Claire Sutton. This would have been her last meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: apologies for late arrival were received from Samuel Dwamena, Jackie Mordaunt and Rav Phagura.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair welcomed Rev. Kojo Wood to his last meeting as a governor.</p>	
2.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: no additional urgent business was identified at this stage of the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda</p> <p>NOTED: there were no declarations.</p>	
4.	<p>Action Tracker</p> <p>NOTED: the current version of the Action Tracker as uploaded with the agenda. The Chair commented that governors and school staff were getting better at completing actions in a timely way.</p> <p><i>Naomi Rose left the meeting temporarily at this point.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the meeting reviewed actions marked as outstanding. Progress updates were provided for some actions. A number were confirmed as completed.</p> <p>AGREED: the updated tracker would be uploaded with the provisional minutes for the meeting.</p>	Clerk
5.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meetings - Foundation Committee and Governing Board.</p> <p>NOTED: the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 10 November 2025 as uploaded with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: by a majority of governors present, to receive the minutes and ratify actions taken.</p> <p>NOTED: the provisional minutes of the previous Governing Board meeting held on 13 October 2025 as uploaded with the agenda.</p>	

	<p>AGREED: by a majority of governors present, the minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 13 October 2025 as a true and correct record. They would be signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safe keeping.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Head's Termly Report</p> <p>NOTED: the written reports from the Head as uploaded with the agenda. The Head provided an oral update on issues including staff and parent feedback. Parents were pleased with current levels of pupil behaviour. The staff focus on uniform standards had, anecdotally, resulted in improved behaviour.</p> <p>NOTED: there had been an increase in home schooling locally, not just at The Nobel. Complaints data was provided in the report, but the complaint level, historically, did not match the levels referred to in the Complaints Policy. The Head would resolve this by her next report. There had been no formal complaints referred to governors. The school's strategic priorities were summarised. Governors raised no objections to them.</p> <p>NOTED: the summary of SEND pupil information. The Head would ensure that all information provided in future was completely anonymised.</p> <p>[the following discussions took place after minute 7, but are minuted here for clarity]</p> <p>NOTED: governors commented on the very positive SEND results when compared to other local schools and acknowledged the good work of the school.</p> <p>NOTED: governors asked how 126 pupils in Year 12 compared to previous years, as the report simply said it was lower. The Headteacher would confirm year 12 enrolments in previous years in comparison with 2025 figures. Governors asked why there had been a reduction in pupils staying on into the Sixth Form? The school had ceased to offer Film Studies and the decision to continue to offer German came too late to retain some pupils who had made alternative arrangements. There was competition with nearby sixth form and FE colleges, which offered courses such as Sports Coaching and a Diploma in Art, which the school did not. Naomi Rose highlighted that some pupils who had left to go elsewhere had subsequently asked to come back. A governor asked if the school was documenting their reasons for returning? Staff were interviewing pupils who asked to return.</p>	<p>RP</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Overview of The Oak (agenda item 9)</p> <p><i>Samuel Dwamena joined the meeting at this point. Naomi Rose rejoined the meeting during the following discussions.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the Headteacher provided an oral presentation on the operation of The Oak. With the departure of Danny Camp, the school was terminating the current operation of The Oak for financial and operational reasons. It would be providing alternative provision via Stevenage Education Support Centre (ESC). Consultation with parents had taken place and by September 2026 all activity at the Oak would have ceased. Governors commented this was very sad, given the success of The Oak. The Head agreed, but pointed out that Danny Camp filled a very niche role and would be very difficult to replace. The operation of The Oak had not been fully costed prior to its opening and the school could not continue to subsidise it. The long term plan had been to grow The Oak and sell additional places, but this was not feasible with the departure of Danny.</p> <p>Governors asked how much the school would save by closing The Oak? Danny Camp's salary, other than costs for drama teaching, would be saved. Other staff time spent at The Oak would be absorbed back into mainstream activities. Governors asked</p>	

	<p>how many hours teaching would be saved? Approximately 9 hours for Danny and assorted curriculum hours for other staff.</p> <p>NOTED: Naomi Rose pointed out that SLT had been providing cover hours at The Oak, but with the departure and non-replacement of Charlotte Harnetty, those hours were needed elsewhere in the school. She hoped The Oak would be mothballed rather than closed for good. Governors queried other alternative provision available to pupils. There were a variety of providers including local FE Colleges and ESC, and activities such as MMA. There were currently only seven pupils at The Oak. A governor commented that, anecdotally, The Oak had resulted in improved pupil behaviour and that the situation as it closed would need to be monitored. Governors were disappointed the school had not undertaken costings prior to the opening of the Oak and commented that they believed they had been undertaken. The lack of succession planning was also commented on. Governors noted this was no reflection on the current Head as The Oak pre-dated her. A governor queried if the Oak's closure would have an impact on the PP budget. The school advised that it shouldn't.</p> <p>NOTED: a governor asked what the financial shortfall would be if the school retained The Oak? The Head was unable to provide a precise figure, but pointed out there would be a saving on salaries, though alternative provision would need to be sourced elsewhere. The decision to close The Oak, while it had a financial element, also related to a different strategy for providing alternative provision and the difficulty of replacing Danny Camp without longer term succession planning, as the success of The Oak had been heavily reliant on him. Governors asked when it might be possible to consider re-opening The Oak? The school's finances would need to be more stable and the school would need to be able to afford remodelling of the physical location, which had a number of operational weaknesses.</p> <p><i>Nik Thomas joined the meeting during the above discussions</i></p> <p>NOTED: a governor commented that The Oak sounded like beneficial provision, but provision that was no longer financially viable or a strategic priority. Arrangements sounded like closure rather than mothballing. The Chair commented on the lack of strategic planning by the school in the first place. A governor asked if ESC provision had expanded? The Head confirmed it had. ESC was opening new provision early to accommodate pupils from The Oak. Governors noted the Head's hard work to ensure suitable provision was arranged for the pupils.</p>	
8.	<p>Safeguarding Report (agenda item 7)</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda. Naomi Rose identified some inconsistencies in CPOMS reporting, which she hoped to address in future reports. Mark Laws, as the Safeguarding Link Governor apologised that he had not been able to meet up with Naomi Rose or add his comments to the report, but he had recently taken on a new job role. He hoped to visit shortly. Naomi Rose had provided the number of students separately to the number of incidents recorded, which was a long standing governor request. The Chair thanked her for providing this. In response to a prior question from a Governor, Naomi Rose explained why the numbers were likely to be different.</p> <p>NOTED: Governors commented favourably on the good progress being reported for CLA pupils.</p>	
9.	<p>Student Voice (agenda item 8)</p>	

	<p><i>The Head Girl and Head Boy joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the Head Girl and Boy reported on highlights of the Autumn Term, which included well received speeches at the school open evening, participation in the local Remembrance Day Service, involvement in the Youth Parliament and a meeting with the local MP. They had welcomed the opportunity to engage with younger years and hear their views and wants. A governor highlighted their speeches and confirmed praise was well deserved. The Chair asked if they had any messages for governors? Neither wanted to see any significant changes at the school, but highlighted noise in the open classrooms and at lesson changeover as an issue to be addressed. Governors asked if they had observed any changes in pupil behaviour compared to previous years? Pupils seemed more respectful this year and were going direct to classes without delays or confrontations with staff. There were swifter consequences for poor behaviour and clearer behaviour boundaries. Staff seemed more consistent in their approach towards behaviour. The Head Girl suggested that greater pupil involvement in the selection of Head Boy and Girl might make pupils more involved in the process and the roles. The Chair thanked the Head Boy and Girl for taking the time to attend the Board meeting and for their input, and invited them to email him with any further thoughts about the school, as the Governing Board was committed to making the school as good as it could be.</p> <p><i>The Head Girl and Head Boy left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
10.	<p>School Development Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the section in the Head's report on the School Development Plan. Work had begun on all areas. Some tightening of the plan and finalising of governor monitoring activities had still to take place. The school was focusing on aligning priorities with the new Ofsted framework, strengthening implementation outcomes and adding to suggested monitoring activities for governors.</p>	
11.	<p>School Finances</p> <p>NOTED: the multiple reports uploaded with the agenda. The school had revised its budget in line with forecasts at the half-way point in the school financial year. Nik Thomas summarised the changes made in relation to staff changes and pay increases. An estimated underspend in these areas had been allocated to unplanned maintenance and energy costs in anticipation of winter demands. The school was still on track for achieving a balanced budget. A governor thanked Nik Thomas for the inclusion of the cashflow forecast and the re-assessment of accruals. It had made matters clearer. The Chair commented favourably on the financial improvements since the previous year.</p> <p>AGREED: by a majority of governors present, the revised 25/26 school budget.</p> <p>NOTED: the four year forecast predicted a deficit in future years. Nik Thomas believed this could be avoided as the forecasting model made assumptions which did not reflect the reality of school operations. The school felt able to create a balanced budget for future years. Nik Thomas would check if the full four-year forecast figures were available to governors with the uploaded reports and would provide them if they were not accessible.</p> <p>NOTED: the current cashflow position. HCC had not reclaimed a payment of £200k as expected. Nik Thomas was looking into the reasons for this and the Council's future intentions. He expected to be able to produce a fully accurate cashflow just before the end of the financial year when expenditure had slowed. This would clarify the school's</p>	NT

	<p>position prior to the receipt of the first tranche of 26/27 funding. The Chair summarised the current situation as the school being on track for a break even budget, but with uncertainties in cashflow at year end for reasons identified. The school concurred with his summary.</p> <p>NOTED: training in the new procurement regulations had commenced. The Financial Procedures Handbook would be reviewed and updated in light of the new procurement regulations. Changes to the Schedule of Financial Delegation were not anticipated.</p> <p>NOTED: the DfE benchmarking data. While some areas such as expenditure on catering staff and supplies were well above the national average, like was not always being compared to like. Income was not taken into account and many schools contracted-out their catering operations. Similarly, expenditure on premises staff included benchmarking against PFI schools who did not employ premises staff, as costs were covered in PFI repayments.</p> <p><i>Samuel Dwamena left the meeting because of technical difficulties during the following part of the meeting.</i></p> <p>NOTED: the meeting explored other comparisons within the benchmarking data. Nik Thomas was not minded to change the school's financial plans in light of the figures.</p> <p>NOTED: in responses to questions from governors, Nik Thomas explored how the £200k due to be repaid to HCC would appear in the accounts. He assured the meeting that the school's assumptions were increasingly prudent and he would be reformatting the school's financial opportunities report. The Chair requested that savings made so far should be retained within the report to evidence the financial journey travelled.</p> <p>NOTED: at the recent SLT strategy day, the school's financial position had been shared with all staff present. They had been receptive of the need to improve the school's financial position.</p> <p>NOTED: the benefit of HCC's £200k to the school's cashflow position was highlighted, along with queries concerning the impact of staff savings on the future cashflow position.</p> <p>AGREED: Chris Crawley and Nik Thomas would discuss the detail of future cashflow outside of the meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: the Chair commented that the school was currently headed in the right direction financially but could not be complacent, and thanked everyone for their hard work.</p>	CC/ NT
12.	<p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>NOTED: the policies listed on the agenda in keeping with the agreed agenda schedule, and the policies uploaded for approval.</p> <p>12.1 Behaviour and Learning Policy - to be carried over to next meeting.</p> <p>AGREED: the current Behaviour and Learning Policy would be submitted to the next Governing Board meeting and the revised version, when complete, would be brought forward for approval.</p>	RP

	<p>12.2 PAR - had been discussed online with questions asked and requests for the authorising officer to be updated in the document. Over half the governors had approved the document online. There were no further questions or any challenges to the document.</p> <p>AGREED: the PAR document as uploaded with the agenda subject to the authorising officer being updated</p> <p>NOTED: governors commented on the number of outstanding policies on the Policy Tracker and asked what was being done about it? The school advised that policies and procedures were being reviewed, citing the example of the Behaviour Policy.</p>	
13.	<p>Health and Safety Update</p> <p>NOTED: the report uploaded with the agenda. Two accidents had unusually involved staff. A third accident to a pupil had been because of the pupil's chosen behaviour.</p> <p>NOTED: the school was looking into recommendations from recent Fire Risk Assessments to better understand them and decide on appropriate courses of action. One issue raised appeared to relate to the original design of the building. Professional advice was being sought.</p> <p>NOTED: the Health and Safety Link Governor had recently undertaken a Health and Safety Inspection. She concurred with the school's approach to the Fire Risk Assessments. She thanked Jenny Covell, the Premises Manager, for her hard work in maintaining the building. The Chair echoed her comments in relation to the Premises Manager.</p>	
14.	<p>School Business Plan</p> <p>NOTED: the current School Business Plan as considered by the Foundation Committee at its last meeting. A governor raised the issue of the high cost of updating school IT kit and asked if professional advice was required? Nik Thomas stated that the school, and in particular Mark Smith, the Network Manager, was reviewing the situation. Money for partial upgrades had been set aside in the budget. He and Mark Smith were considering viable steps forward to be discussed with the Head and, if appropriate, the Foundation Committee.</p> <p><i>Jackie Mordaunt joined the meeting at this point</i></p>	
15.	<p>General Careers and PP Updates</p> <p>NOTED: in terms of Careers, Jamie Kellett, as the link Governor, had spoken to Services for Young People. He had been surprised at the number of companies withdrawing from providing work experience placements. He would be speaking to Nick Brown, Corrina Reeder and Jackie Mordaunt about 6th Form needs.</p> <p>NOTED: Samuel Appiah, as the Link Governor, had visited the school to monitor PP. His report formed part of item 17. He highlighted the Progress 8 score for PP pupils and its significant improvement. He felt Nick Brown and the team were doing a good job in relation to PP support and raising standards. Governors asked for their thanks to be passed onto the team. The PP progress 8 score appeared to be the best in both Stevenage and the wider local area. There was more work to be done, but there had been a considerable improvement.</p>	

16.	<p>Governance Administration</p> <p>16.1 Succession Planning</p> <p>NOTED: the Governor Effectiveness Working Group provided an oral update on their early stage work into replacing the Clerk when she stood down from her post at the end of the 25/26 academic year. They were waiting on costings from Nik Thomas as to how much of a handover between the current clerk and her replacement, if appointed direct by the school, might be affordable, as opposed to the cost of retaining clerking services via HfL. Governors asked the Clerk if she had a preferred option? She stressed there were pros and cons to both approaches and it really depended on the type of support and service the Governing Board and the school required. Governors asked if preferential rates could be obtained from HfL. Nik Thomas was investigating possibilities.</p> <p>16.2 Governor Departures and Appointments</p> <p>NOTED: two Co-opted Governors were standing down as listed on the agenda.</p> <p>NOTED: Claire Sutton was resigning at the end of the calendar year as of 31/12/25. She had a new job that prevented her from attending meetings on a regular basis. The Chair commented that she had been an asset as a governor, bringing valuable commercial experience and integrity to the role.</p> <p>NOTED: Rev. Kojo Wood was standing down at the end of term as of 20/12/25. He had served the school as a governor for 12 years. The Chair invited him to say a few words. Rev. Wood said he had enjoyed serving as a governor and had not wanted to resign, but his extended national and international role for his Church was not compatible with the regular commitment of being a school governor. He was willing to continue to support the school in any way possible subject to diary commitments and was happy to attend assemblies and other events as an outside speaker. The Chair thanked him for his long and valuable service. He would be sorely missed at meetings and in terms of all the additional work he did behind the scenes and in relation to adhoc hearings. It was reassuring to know he would still be supporting the school in terms of assemblies and events. The Board thanked Rev. Wood for his service.</p>	
17.	<p>Governance Effectiveness</p> <p>17.1 Governor Monitoring and Visits 25/26</p> <p>NOTED: the governor visit reports and visit record uploaded with the agenda. This was the first term that visits were being co-ordinated by Suzanne Crow, the Head's PA. Uploaded visit reports covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND - laptop provision had still to be resolved by the school • The Oak - changes had been discussed under minute 7 • PP - see also minute 15 <p>Other visits had been undertaken but reports were not yet available, including Health and Safety and Responsive Teaching.</p> <p>17.2 Governor Training/ Annual Review of Governor Training 24/25</p> <p>NOTED: the current training record as uploaded with the agenda. The Training Link Governor, Shannon Parr, encouraged all governors to complete the emerging training activities listed by the start of the Spring Term. Training certificates should be uploaded to the Certificates To Be Added Folder. Shannon Parr would</p>	

	<p>then process them and add them to individual governor folders. Safeguarding training for those who had not undertaken it recently was being planned. The Chair stressed the value of having a full and up-to-date training record.</p> <p>17.3 Annual Review of Governor Effectiveness 24/25</p> <p>NOTED: the governor effectiveness working group was working on the governance review for 24/25 and future arrangements for 25/26. They were hoping to meet with the Head in either January or February.</p> <p>17.4 Strategic Plan</p> <p>NOTED: The Head was focusing on operational issues following her appointment in September. She and the Governing Board would be refreshing the Strategic Plan in the new academic year.</p> <p>17.5 Federation</p> <p>NOTED: discussions had paused in the light of leadership changes at both schools. Rav Phagura had spoken to the Lodge Farm Head on the telephone and hoped to meet them in person when both their diaries permitted.</p>	
18.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NOTED: Jamie Kellett highlighted that a governor was needed for a forthcoming PEX hearing.</p> <p>AGREED: Shannon Parr would join the Governor Disciplinary Panel.</p>	
19.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>NOTED: the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors was Monday, 19 January 2026 at 6.30pm via TEAMS. Given the forthcoming Christmas holiday period, there would be few school days between the current meeting and preparation of papers for the scheduled January meeting.</p> <p>AGREED: the Chair and Clerk would review the annual meeting and agenda schedule to determine if the meeting could be cancelled. The Clerk would advise governors of their decision in due course.</p> <p>[After the meeting it was agreed the Governing Board Meeting on 19 January 2026 would be cancelled. Governors were notified by email that next scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors was Monday, 23 March 2026 at 6.30pm via TEAMS.]</p> <p>NOTED: The Chair concluded the meeting by wishing everyone the best for the winter holidays and repeating his thanks to Rev. Kojo Wood, whom he would miss as a fellow governor.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting ended at approximately 20:27</i></p>	MR/ Clerk

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
16-17 December 2025

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date: ...23rd March 2026....

Signature (Chair):