Meeting of Sir William Stanier School (SWS)
Local Governing Board (LGB)
Date: Thursday 26th June 2025 at 4:30pm in person at SWS

Governors in Attendance:	Mary Massey	(MM)	Chair of Governors
	Sean Houlston	(SH)	Vice Chair of Governors
	Sam Kay	(SK)	Parent Governor
	Pam Simpson	(PS)	Appointed Governor
Others in attendance:	Liz Robinson	(LR)	Headteacher
	Jon Ducker	(JD)	Deputy Headteacher
	Otto Warman	(OW)	Deputy Headteacher
	Sarah Lomas		Clerk
	Sara Randle	(SR)	Curriculum Lead for Food (left the meeting at 4:48pm)
Apologies:	Lisa Hodgkison	(LH)	Appointed Governor
	Sharon Yates	(SY)	Appointed Governor

Part 1 – Non-Confidential Business

The meeting commenced at 4:30pm.

ITEM NO.		ACTION
	GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	
1.	**Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations** The meeting was opened by Chair Mary Massey, who welcomed all attendees and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received from LH and SY. No new declarations of interest were made.	
2.	**Presentation from Sara Randle (SWS Food Department** Sara Randle (SR), Curriculum Lead for Food, was invited to present an update on the school's food strategy. Governors warmly congratulated her on receiving the Jamie Oliver Food Educator of the Year award, a significant national recognition that reflects the school's work in food education. SR outlined the school's recent achievement of the Food for Life accreditation, noting that this is particularly rare for a secondary school. It was explained that the school is now working toward the Bronze award, which involves meeting criteria in four key areas. It was emphasised that this work extends beyond food technology lessons to include the whole school food culture, such as the canteen provision and packed lunch policies. The criteria within the four areas requiring governor support were highlighted as follows: <u>BLC4 – Governors are well briefed on their responsibility for school food</u> SR had circulated guidance in advance, and governors confirmed they had reviewed the materials. **ACTION:** Include the food strategy link in the induction pack for all new governors. SR raised a concern about the gap between eligibility and uptake of FSM. While two-thirds of students are eligible, only 212 out of 303 are accessing the meals. The importance of ensuring that families not only register but also take up the provision was emphasised, as this directly impacts funding and student nutrition.	**Clerk**

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	Governors expressed concern that a significant number of eligible students might be missing out on a vital entitlement. They discussed the need for better communication with families and possibly more proactive outreach. **ACTION:** Provide a termly update on FSM uptake to governors. SR reported that a recent internal audit showed the school was meeting all but two of the national food standards: the absence of crackers or breadsticks with every meal and the lack of three portions of oily fish across the menu cycle. **ACTION:** Share the food audit annually with governors. **ACTION:** Add the school lunch checklist to the summer term agenda. <u>BFQ2 – Review the checklist for school lunches annually</u> **ACTION:** Circulate the packed lunch checklist to governors annually in the summer term for review. <u>BFQ4 – Ensure a packed lunch policy is in place</u> A discussion followed about the absence of a formal packed lunch policy. Governors were surprised that no formal policy was in place, particularly given the school's demographic and the importance of promoting healthy eating habits. SR confirmed that a draft policy had been included in the meeting papers. MM suggested that a governor take on the food link role to support this work. **ACTION:** PS appointed as food link governor and to arrange a link visit with pupil voice. **ACTION:** Circulate the draft packed lunch policy for governor approval. SR also shared that an external audit by an artisan food company had been conducted and was very positive, with feedback from both students and staff. **ACTION:** Share the external audit report with governors. **Student Engagement and Enrichment** Governors were keen to understand how the school was encouraging students to explore new foods and broaden their culinary experiences. **Q: How are students encouraged to experiment with food?** **A:** Through initiatives like the Fish Heroes programme, which selected SWS as one of ten schools nationally, and themed events such as Chinese New Year with guest chefs. **Q: Are these initiatives having an impact on student outcomes?** **A:** Yes, particularly among disadvantaged students. Engagement is high, and the school has seen improvements in confidence and outcomes in food-related subjects. **ACTION:** Report food-related awards to the Trust as a good news story. **ACTION:** Conduct a pupil voice survey on food in autumn term. ***SR concluded her presentation and left the meeting at 4:48 PM.***	**SR** **SR** **Clerk** **SR** **PS** **SR** **SR** **LR** **SR**
3.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising** a) The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th March 2025 were reviewed and approved without amendment.	

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	b) The action log from the previous meeting was reviewed and the following items were noted: **Student Voice** LR explained that while the school had not repeated the formal student survey, they had instead conducted a series of student panels. These had provided richer, more nuanced feedback and were generally more positive. Governors welcomed this approach, noting that it allowed for deeper engagement and more actionable insights. **Q: Panels seem a more personal and effective way to hear from students—are we planning to continue this model?** **A:** The school will continue to use panels alongside surveys to ensure a balanced view. **Parental Engagement** Governors asked about the success of recent parental engagement events, including the "Parent Bingo" evening. **Q: Was the Parent Bingo event successful?** **A:** Yes, it was well attended with around 50 parents. It is part of a broader effort to build relationships. The school also held an afternoon tea for Hope House during Year 9 charity week and a drop-in session at the Year 7 parents' evening. Governors were pleased to hear about these efforts and encouraged the school to continue building community links. **Library and Reading Strategy** Discussion turned to the school library. LR explained that due to budget constraints, a librarian had not been appointed. Instead, the school planned to use a TLR3 or additional payment to a non-teaching staff member. Volunteers would help organise resources over the summer, with the aim of launching in September. **Q: Will the library include a range of reading material like magazines or newspapers and not only books?** **A:** Yes, the school is exploring subscriptions, including audiobooks and texts in other languages such as Polish. The intention is that the library is inclusive and accessible. Governors discussed creative ideas to promote reading, including displaying sports match reviews to engage boys and even developing podcasts with professionals from various industries. **ACTION:** PS to meet with OW to discuss curriculum standards. Governors highlighted potential industry contacts in construction for example who might be willing to record professional reading podcast. The school agreed that this could a positive potential project and noted the importance of showcasing diverse, high-quality texts to inspire students. **Behaviour and Systems** LR updated governors on the transition from SIMS to Arbor. While historical data remained in SIMS, Arbor was now the primary system. From September, the school aimed to log not just sanctions but the full context of behaviour incidents through Arbor.	**PS/OW**

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	Q: Are there still two systems in place? **A:** No, but the school is still referencing historical data from SIMS. Arbor is now the main platform. Governors requested more visual data on sanctions to support oversight. **ACTION:** Present graphed data for suspensions and exclusions going forward. **Mobile Phone Policy** A robust discussion followed on the school's mobile phone policy. LR shared that the school was considering a stricter "no phones" approach from September, acknowledging that this would be a significant cultural shift. **Q: Do staff currently encourage phone use in lessons?** **A:** Yes, some use them for quizzes and interactive activities. Governors highlighted that the use of phones in class contradicts the "see it, take it" rule. The school agreed and noted that this issue was part of the challenge faced but that it is essential that consistency is applied throughout the school. Governors recognised the complexity of the issue and encouraged the school to use pupil voice to support any policy changes which could also support conversations with parents. LR noted that the school could not afford alternative solutions like school-wide devices, but governors referenced a model at another school where parents contributed £1 per week for Chromebooks and encouraged the school to explore other options. **ACTION:** Circulate revised behaviour policy to governors by 18th July	**LR** **JD**
	Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities	
4.	a) Accelerated Improvement Board (AIB) Overview MM introduced this section by providing context on the Accelerated Improvement Board (AIB), which had been established to provide operational oversight of the school's improvement journey. The AIB, chaired independently, meets once per half term and is aligned with the Education Standards and Performance Committee (ESPC) of the Trust. MM acts as the liaison between the LGB and ESPC, ensuring that strategic insights and challenges are shared across governance layers. Liz Robinson (LR) explained that the AIB's role is to monitor the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) in detail, allowing the LGB to focus on broader strategic oversight. The first AIB meeting had reviewed the AIP under the key Areas for Improvement (AFIs), and the committee had taken a broad view, with meeting used to deepen member's understanding of the school's context which will enable meaningful challenge. Governors welcomed this structure, noting that it provided a clear framework for accountability and allowed the LGB to maintain a strategic lens. b) Accelerated Improvement Plan An update on staffing in relation to the AIP work was provided under Part 2 of this meeting.	
	EDUCATION	
5.	**Pupil Numbers**	

ITEM NO.		ACTION
	Governors received an update on current and projected pupil numbers. LR explained that the projected intake for September stood at 119 students, though this figure was subject to change. Governors acknowledged the importance of accurate numbers for funding allocations and strategic planning. A discussion followed regarding the difference between Pupil Premium (PP) and Free School Meals (FSM) figures. LR clarified that PP includes students who have been eligible for FSM at any point in the last six years (Ever 6), as well as children from service families. Governors reflected on the school's demographic profile, noting that national comparison data, though slightly out of date, highlighted the significant challenges faced by the school community. Governors noted the importance of the data provided, which helped contextualise the school's performance and priorities.	
6.	**Attendance** Governors were presented with the latest attendance data, including graphical representations. While the data showed some improvement, persistent absence remained high, and the impact of suspensions was clearly visible in the figures. **Comment (Governor):** Without the suspension figures, the attendance data would look much better. It is important that Ofsted sees this context clearly. LR shared that shadow data indicated that students affected by E or C2 codes (linked to exclusions) accounted for a 3.1% drop in overall attendance. While this couldn't be officially added to the figures, it was a significant factor. **Q: Why was there a dip in Term 3?** **A:** That coincided with a spike in suspensions, which have since decreased. Governors were informed that 2,400 sessions had been lost this year—double the number from the previous year. LR explained that the school's attendance strategy had only been fully implemented from January, following Trust support. The aim was to start the new academic year with clear systems, defined roles, and consistent interventions. **Q: What's the legal position on part-time timetables?** **A:** Part time timetables are permitted a maximum of six weeks and must be reviewed regularly. The school log any part time timetables with the LA and these are reviewed after six weeks but there is confusion about the messages received from the LA who encourage the use of these at exclusion panels but the guidance to schools is that thes should not be in place for longer than six weeks. **ACTION:** Raise the issue of mixed messages around part-time timetables with the LA and Trust for clarity. Governors asked about external factors influencing attendance. LR acknowledged that community trauma, such as the death of a local young person, and weather-related absences had played a role. Additionally, some parents had condoned absences, which the school was working to address through clearer expectations and communication. **Q: How are form tutors supporting attendance?**	**LR**

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	A: This is an area for development as it has been identified that attendance monitoring may not always be prioritised. **Comment:** Attendance will not improve if students are not in school—form time needs to be purposeful. Governors explored creative solutions to improve attendance, particularly on Fridays, which had been identified as a weak point. **Q: Could the Friday timetable be made more engaging to motivate students?** **A:** The school is considering a "quiz of the week" and an extracurricular "extravaganza" in Period 5, where students choose an activity. The challenge is funding, but the school is exploring options. **Q: Could Pupil Premium funding be used?** **A:** Most PP funding is allocated to staffing, so flexibility is limited.	
7.	**Rewards and Behaviour** **a)** The governing board received a detailed update on behaviour trends and the impact of recent interventions. LR began by expressing her appreciation for the governors' support during a challenging period, particularly around permanent exclusions (PEx). She noted that the school had seen a marked improvement in behaviour, which was attributed to a combination of clear expectations, consistent consequences, and a cultural shift in how staff and students interact. **Q: It is encouraging to hear that behaviour is improving. Are students recognising the change and adjusting their behaviour accordingly?** **A:** Yes, staff are seeing that students are more aware of expectations. There is a noticeable shift in how students are engaging with staff. LR explained that the removal of the E code from the records of permanently excluded students had helped clarify the data. It was noted that eight students who had been permanently excluded accounted for 20–30% of all suspensions, highlighting the disproportionate impact of a small number of individuals. The school had also introduced a "pause and reflect" approach when considering exclusions, allowing time to explore alternative strategies and de-escalation techniques. **Q: Are staff receiving training in de-escalation and restorative practices?** **A:** Yes, the school have introduced "repair and recover" training. Of most significant impact is the way SLT are modelling calm, respectful interactions with students. This is now being mirrored by students themselves. **Q: Is this modelling consistent across SLT?** **A:** Mostly, though there is still work to do. Stress levels can affect consistency, but overall, there are fewer incidents and more positive interactions. LR emphasised the importance of celebrating success and shifting the narrative from punishment to achievement. Governors were briefed on the need for a "relentless positivity" and a hard reset on values and community. Staff were beginning to buy into this vision, and green shoots of change were being seen.	

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	Governor Comment: Celebrating in public and reprimanding in private is a powerful principle. It is good to hear that this is being embedded. Governors were thanked for their involvement in exclusion panels and for supporting the school through difficult decisions. LR acknowledged that while the process had been emotionally and administratively demanding, it had been necessary to restore order and safety. **ACTION:** Send the permanent exclusions deliberations checklist to LR. **ACTION:** MM and Allan to meet separately to clarify governor responsibilities versus Trust expectations regarding exclusions. **ACTION:** Review the purpose and structure of reintegration and suspension review meetings. Governors were asked whether they had noticed improvements in the information packs provided for panels. The consensus was positive, with MM offering to review the packs further to ensure they continued to meet governors' needs.	**Clerk** **MM/AH** **LR**
8.	**To receive an update on progress and attainment for Year 11 including groups (pupil premium, SEND, disadvantaged, gender)** Governors noted that due to the GCSE examinations being underway, there was no progress update to receive at this meeting in terms of data. However, the school informed governors that the prediction was that results will not be as high as 2023-24. Governor cautioned the impact of percentages and pupil numbers and the importance of clarifying these to provide context. Governors queried the number of PP students in the current Year 11 cohort. The school confirmed that there were 59 out of 129 students who are PP. **ACTION:** Ensure clarity in reporting by including both percentages and actual numbers in all attainment data. Otto Warman (OW) was invited to provide an update on the progress and attainment of Year 11 students, with a particular focus on key groups including Pupil Premium (PP), SEND, disadvantaged, and gender-based cohorts. OW began by acknowledging that this year's outcomes were expected to be lower than in 2024, a reality that had already been communicated to the Trust. He emphasised that this was not due to a lack of effort or ambition, but rather a reflection of the weaker starting points of the current cohort and the significant disruption they had experienced throughout their school journey. Governors appreciated the transparency and asked for clarity on how the data was being presented. OW noted that while the data was still being finalised, the school was already identifying gaps and trends that would inform future planning. He stressed the importance of not rushing to conclusions until the full picture was available post-results. **Quality of Education (QoE) Framework** OW then introduced a new pedagogical model that had been developed to underpin teaching and learning across the school. He described it as a "zoomed-out view" that starts with whole-school foundations and works inward to classroom practice.	**LR**

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	Governors noted that while the approach is established, it is new to the school but will provide a shared language and structure for what makes a good lesson. The model includes: • Clear lesson objectives • A range of pedagogical strategies • A dynamic approach to lesson planning and delivery OW explained that the model would be soft-launched in the summer term and fully embedded from September. It would also align with the school calendar, ensuring that data points, book trawls, and training were all strategically timed. **ACTION:** Share the finalised pedagogical plan with governors once complete. **Comment (MM):** The work on this new initiative is really positive. There is a lot of listening, watching, and thoughtful planning going on. It feels like a genuine shift in culture. Governors welcomed the clarity and ambition of the new model and agreed that it provided a strong foundation for improving teaching quality and student outcomes.	**LR/OW**
9.	**Link Governor Monitoring** Mary Massey (MM) opened the discussion by confirming that safeguarding monitoring was up to date and that she had held recent conversations with the Trust regarding expectations of governors. She reminded all governors to complete a visit form following any school engagement to ensure transparency and consistency in reporting. LH was acknowledged for her regular involvement in SEND monitoring, having made several visits to support the school's inclusion work. <u>RISE Strategy</u> Governors were also provided with a briefing on the RISE strategy which is a DfE project for RI schools. Liz Robinson (LR) provided an update on the school's involvement in the RISE programme, a Department for Education initiative designed to support schools requiring improvement. It was explained that the school had been paired with the Laurus Trust, which would receive £120,000 to support SWS through targeted interventions. LR shared that she, MM, and Helen Holland (SENCO at The Oaks) had met with the RISE advisor and David Wooley from Laurus to discuss how the funding would be allocated. The Laurus Trust will work closely with Otto Warmen (OW) to identify areas of greatest need and ensure the funding is used effectively. **Q: Can any of the RISE funding be used for culture-building or rewards?** **A:** Unfortunately, no. The funding is restricted to training and systems. The school have been creative in how funding is used, but it cannot be spent on incentives or enrichment. Governors expressed concern about the limitations but appreciated the strategic use of the funds. LR confirmed that the school had already been able to invest in systems that were previously unaffordable. **Q: How does the RISE team's involvement affect Ofsted?**	

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	A: The RISE team reports to the DfE, not directly to Ofsted. However, because the school is now being monitored by both RISE and the AIB, the DfE will no longer monitor us separately. Governors discussed the risk of impact fatigue, acknowledging that the pace of change had been intense. LR reassured the board that staff were committed and that the changes were being made for the right reasons. **Governor Comment:** It is reassuring to hear that the school is confident in its direction. The partnership with Laurus is promising.	
10.	**Pupil Premium** The board turned its attention to the use and impact of Pupil Premium (PP) funding, a key area of scrutiny given that approximately 50% of the school's cohort qualifies for this support. The Headteacher began by outlining the current allocation of PP funding, explaining that the majority of it is used to fund teaching and support staff salaries. **Q: When speaking to the Trust, is it correct to say that effectively £279,000 of PP funding is being used to cover staffing costs that would otherwise be funded from the core budget?** **A:** This is a fair challenge. Further conversations with the Trust are needed about how allocations are justified and evidenced. Governors **challenged** that while they understood the rationale, it was important to be clear about what the funding is achieving. **Governor Comment:** If there were fewer PP students, the staffing would still need to be funded. Therefore, there is a question about whether the funding is really supporting disadvantaged pupils, or if it is subsidising the core offer. Governors agreed that while they supported the use of PP for interventions, pastoral support, and teaching assistants, they wanted to ensure that the school was getting value for money and that the impact on pupil outcomes was being clearly measured. **Q: What is the "top slice" taken from the PP budget, and how is it used?** **A:** The school acknowledged that this was another area that required greater clarity and committed to reviewing the breakdown with the Trust. **Governor Comment:** It is surprising to learn that the Director of SEND role had been removed, especially given the school's focus on inclusion. This feels like a step backwards. Governors agreed to follow up with the Trust on this issue separately. **ACTION:** MM to follow up on the removal of the Director of SEND role and its implications for inclusion. Governors concluded that while the school's intentions were sound, there was a need for greater transparency and clearer reporting on how PP funding was being used and what impact it was having on student progress and wellbeing.	**MM**
	WELFARE	
11.	**Safeguarding**	

ITEM NO.		ACTION
	JD provided a safeguarding update, beginning with a summary of the current caseload. Governors were initially surprised by the relatively low number of active cases, given the school's context. JD explained that while the number of open cases was manageable, there remained a significant concern about the lack of external support from Cheshire East (CE) social care services. Many children who had previously been referred had since been closed to social care, despite the school's belief that they continued to require support. **Governor Comment:** That is very concerning. This is one of the most deprived areas in the region and the children need to be adequately supported. JD shared that he had recently met with Sally Ashworth from Cheshire East to discuss the situation and had highlighted the disparities in provision across different areas of the local authority. He stressed that the school was doing everything it could internally, but the external system was under strain. Governors acknowledged the school's efforts and expressed their support for continued advocacy on behalf of vulnerable students.	
12.	**Welfare and Wellbeing – Students** LR reported that the majority of students were showing more positive attitudes, with many expressing that they felt listened to and valued. There had been a noticeable increase in staff-student interactions, and students were becoming more involved in shaping school life. Governors were encouraged by this shift and asked whether the school planned to capture this progress formally. **ACTION:** Run another student survey before the end of term to gather feedback and measure impact. LR added that sharing the results of the survey would also serve to **boost staff morale**, reinforcing the positive impact of their work.	**LR**
13.	**Confidential Staffing Update** The staffing update was provided under Part 2 of this meeting.	
	LOCAL MATTERS	
14.	**Policy Approval** Governors noted that several key policies including Behaviour, SEND, and Attendance were due to be finalised and circulated before the end of term. **ACTION:** Circulate Behaviour, SEND, and Attendance policies to governors before the end of term for review and approval.	**JD**
15.	**AOB** It was confirmed that the next LGB meeting would take place after the AIB meeting, allowing for more informed reporting and alignment between operational and strategic oversight. Governors were also invited to attend the INSET day on July 11th at 8:30 AM in Room G42, where they would have the opportunity to meet staff and further strengthen relationships across the school community.	

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	Finally, the board took a moment to formally thank Sean Houlston (SH), who would be stepping down from his role as Vice Chair. MM and others expressed their deep appreciation for his dedicated service, particularly his work in engaging both pupils and staff.	

The meeting moved to Part 2.