

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 16 September 2025

Present:	Mr. K. Balfe	Mrs. M. King
	Mr. J. Crowther (Headteacher)	Mr. S. Lucas
	Mr. K. Down	Mr. S. Mills
	Mr. G. Edwards	Mrs. D. Mistry
	Mr. C. Hall	Mrs. S. Reeve
	Mr. F. Hon	Mr. D. Roberts
	Mr. K Jenkins	Mrs. K. Rowe
	Mrs. N. Job (Chair)	Mrs. A. Thornber
In attendance:	Mr. T. Hankin	Clerk
	Mr. A. Jones	Deputy Headteacher
	Mrs. J. Shaw	Director of Finance & Resources
	Mrs. L. Cole (Items 1-9)	Assistant Headteacher & SENCO

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Mrs. Job welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Mistry and Mr. Hon were introduced as newly appointed Trustees. Apologies were received and accepted from Dr. S. Eisenhandler, Mr. T. Fitzakerly & Mr. T. Scott.

2. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

The Clerk invited nominations for Chair for this year. Mr. Lucas proposed Mrs. Job and this was seconded by Mr. Down. There were no other nominations and Trustees approved the appointment of Mrs. Job as Chair.

Mrs. Job thanked the Trustees for their support and said that this year she would like to have two Vice -Chairs to help share the workload. She nominated Mr. Lucas as one and this was seconded by Mr. Hall. Mrs. Job then nominated Mrs. Thornber as a second Vice Chair and this was seconded by Mrs. Rowe. There were no other nominations and Mr. Lucas and Mrs. Thornber were appointed.

3. Notification of items to be raised under Any Other Business

Open Mornings
MIS System
Sixth Form numbers

4. Declarations of interest

Trustees were reminded of the need to declare any pecuniary or other interest in the items for discussion. There were none.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

5.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5.2 Matters arising.
There were none.

6. Examination results summary

Mr. Jones provided an overview of results from the summer examinations. He advised that the 2025 results can be seen as a return to normality after Covid. However, there will be no P8 figure for two years.

The school is very pleased with the results which recognise the hard work of students and staff.

At A Level, the average grade remained B- and the Average Points Score increased from 37.04 to 38.16. There were lots of very good individual performances. 110 students (73% of the cohort) achieved at least one top grade.

At GCSE, there are 114 reviews of marking submitted for English and Maths and results may change. 23% of all grades were 8 or 9 and 37.5% were 7+. Again, lots of exceptional results and very happy students. One achieved 10 grade 9s.

Attendance remains the single most important factor affecting how a student performs.

Detailed information and analysis of the results will be shared at the next Curriculum & Performance committee to which all Trustees are welcome to attend.

On behalf of the Trustees, the Chair expressed thanks to all the staff for the work and support they gave students to help them achieve so well.

7. Headteacher's update

Mr. Crowther began by thanking Mr. Jones for his work throughout the year on data and to all staff for the very strong results. He also thanked the exams team. There was a new exams officer in place this year and everything ran very smoothly.

He then gave updates on various other items at the start of term:

- The site is looking fantastic; the new fire doors in the main building are a real success and look great. The new outdoor canopy providing a covered space next to the Woodside building is very popular. Thanks to the HGS Charitable Trust for their donation to this project.
- Lots of IT work has been undertaken including the installation of a further 11 BenQ boards.
- Two successful INSET days were held at the start of term.
- Unusually for September, recruitment has been busier than normal with a number of non-teaching roles to be filled
- There have also been a number of challenges including two formal Stage 2 complaints, two Permanent Exclusions, two Subject Access Requests and overrunning gas works outside the school which delayed the start of term by one day. He expressed thanks to Trustees for their support with all of these.
- There has also been lots to celebrate. Year 7 have had a great Induction Week, the Year 7 expectations evening went well and included reminders about the dangers of social media and online safety. Students have mainly returned to school in a very positive way.
- Open Mornings will take place next week.

8. Safeguarding updated for Trustees

Mrs. Cole provided an update for Trustees. She advised that there have been minor tweaks to Keeping Children safe in Education (KCSiE) which have been shared with staff. Trustees are also

asked to review this document. The new RSHE policy requirements become statutory from September 2026. KCSiE also includes reference to conspiracy theories, misinformation and disinformation. The school will build this into the Learning for Life curriculum.

9. Cottage project update

Mrs. Cole reviewed the document circulated in advance of the meeting setting out proposals for the cottage to become an Interventions Hub. She explained the rationale for this and also how use of the existing Pastoral & LSA base could change. The potential cost for this work is considerably higher than the original quotes received and a new tender process will be required.

Trustees asked about capacity for the future and she replied that the change should support some further increase in need. Trustees also asked whether the intention is to fund the work from reserves and Mrs. Shaw confirmed that would be the case. The new tender process will begin shortly and costs should be known by the November Finance Committee meeting when the matter can be considered.

Trustees agreed that this would seem a good use of the building but final costs will be needed before a decision is made.

10. Governance & financial oversight

10.1 Committee membership and appointment of chairs

Mrs. Job asked Trustees if anyone wished to change committees. Mrs. Mistry & Mr. Hon will try to attend all initially, to gain an understanding of their work before making his decision.

The following changes were agreed:

- Mr. Lucas to join Admissions
- Mrs. Reeve to join Curriculum & Performance
- Mrs. Mistry to join Personnel.

Chairs of committees for the year were approved as follows:

- Admissions – Mrs. King
- Curriculum & Performance – Mr. Scott
- Finance & Resources – Mr. Edwards
- Audit & Risk – Mr. Down
- Personnel – Mr. Lucas

10.2 Scheme of delegation

Trustees reviewed these and agreed that no changes are required. The scheme was approved

10.3 Trustee training

Mrs. King informed Trustees that training is up to date, but some Trustees will need to renew safeguarding during the year. She encouraged Trustees to undertake exclusions and complaints training if they haven't done so or renew this by the relevant date if they have already completed it, to help provide a larger pool to draw from in case of need. She also promoted Prevent training.

10.4 Trustee link departments

There are no changes to link Trustees. There are three vacancies which will be filled once new Trustees are in place.

11. Audit arrangements

11.1 Audit planning letter

Mrs. Shaw explained the audit process and timescale for this year which is similar to last. This was noted by Trustees.

11.2 Related party questionnaire

Mrs. Shaw asked Trustees to review this and advise of any changes to declarations.

11.3 Board assessment of fraud risk

The questionnaire was reviewed and Trustees approved the responses.

11.4 Board assessment of business risk

The questionnaire was reviewed and Trustees approved the responses.

11.5 Checklist of ESFA 'musts'

This summarises the requirements set out in the Academy Trust Handbook. There are only minor updates from last year. The responses were reviewed and approved.

11.6 Letter from the ESFA

This advises Trustees of the main changes in the handbook and was noted. Trustees asked whether there is any impact for the school. Mrs. Shaw advised that the school is compliant, but there may be further work in future regarding digital and technology standards.

11.7 Risk Register

The register was reviewed. There has been a minor update regarding the holding of a debit card for cash withdrawals. Trustees suggested that the risk rating for the likelihood of a cyber attack should be looked at as it may need changing. Mrs. Shaw agreed to review this.

12. Policies

12.1 Schedule of policies

Mrs. Shaw advised that this lists all the policies held by the school and is cross checked against DfE requirements. The schedule was noted. She asked that Committees consider the review frequency of policies as they fall due.

12.2 Curriculum & Performance committee July 2025

The minutes from the additional meeting held in July were received. Approval of the AI Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour for Learning Policy and Uniform Policy ready for the start of the new year were noted.

12.3 Child Protection Policy

Minor changes have been made for this year. The policy was reviewed and approved.

12.4 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy

Minor changes have been made for this year. The policy was reviewed and approved.

13. Any other Business

- Open Mornings – Mr. Jones referred to the upcoming Open Mornings and asked if any Trustees are available to help.
- MIS System – Mr. Jones informed Trustees that progress on a new MIS system is going well. A decision to use Arbor has been made and a purchase agreement via the HfL framework has been agreed by the Finance Committee. However, HfL has advised that the framework has now expired and they are working on a new one. Waiting for this to complete would delay the implementation of the system and potentially incur further cost in extending

the agreement for SIMS. The option to purchase directly from Arbor is available at no difference in cost. This would also not affect any future support arrangements. Trustees approved the purchase of the new MIS directly from Arbor.

- Sixth Form numbers. Trustees asked whether there are increased numbers for Year 12 this year. Mr. Crowther confirmed that they are higher than last year and in line with budget, although final numbers won't be known for another week or two.

14. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 2 December 2025