



Aston Rowant C+E Primary School
School Lane, Aston Rowant, Oxon OX49 5SU
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Headteacher: Mrs Helen France

Meeting of the Full Governing Body of Aston Rowant CE Primary School
Wednesday 4 February 2026 at 18.30

In attendance:

- Jacky Barr (JB) Foundation Governor *ex officio*
- Zoe Batt (ZB) LA Governor
- Helen France (HF) Headteacher *ex officio*
- Caroline Isabelle (CI) Foundation Governor
- Alexi Olsen (AO) Staff Governor
- Matt Parker (MP) Foundation Governor
- Tom Sowerby (TS) Foundation Governor (Chair)
- Abi Tindall (AT) Parent Governor
- Gill Tyler, (GT) Foundation Governor
- Ben Wilson (BW) Parent Governor

Apologies: None.

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Prayer</p> <p>TS welcomed everyone and JB opened the meeting with prayer. There were no absences, so the meeting was quorate.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for absence / declarations of interest</p> <p>No declarations of interest noted in relation to items on the agenda. AT and CI had declared their children attend the school and the clerk apologised for not sending a revised summary for the school website. He will do so immediately.</p>	Clerk summary
3.	<p>Minutes of meetings held on 19 November 2025 and matters arising</p> <p>3.1 The minutes were approved and signed.</p> <p>3.2 Matters arising</p> <p>3.2.1 The chair had sent a letter to staff involved in preparations for the very successful Health & Safety audit.</p> <p>3.2.2 TS had confirmed JB's availability before confirming the revised 4 February date.</p> <p>3.3 An additional FGB meeting was held on 15 December 2026 to agree capital spend on the library.</p>	

GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUST HARMONY

'Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him.' Colossians 2:7

<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>The headteacher and governors agreed to interview School Council members by video link on Monday 9 March at 11.30. HF will set it up and share the link with governors.</p> <p>Governor training. Governors noted that although they had all completed safeguarding level 2 training in the past, the FGB’s preference is that all governors have a refresher session annually. HF and TS are both qualified to lead that training. TS will message all governors on GovernorHub and arrange a convenient date.</p> <p>Governors are encouraged to refresh their Prevent training annually by going on www.gov.uk website.</p> <p>Governors noted that Governor Services have arranged Finance training on 25 March and asked governors to enrol.</p> <p>The chair urged governors to take maximum advantage of the school’s subscription to Governor Services training which will expire in July. The school may not afford to continue the subscription next year.</p> <p>Governor monitoring visit reports</p> <p>Health & Safety BW reported on his visits in October and on 4 February and noted: Scaffolding will be erected in May half term to ensure that work can be completed on roof and soffits during the summer holidays. Toilet pumps now judged unsuitable for a school will be replaced at cost to the diocese.</p> <p>SEND CI had uploaded the report of her visit and discussion with SENDCo, Miss Bedwin to the Governor Visits folder. She noted: Huge pressures of numbers with SEND and Finance Committee will need to consider resourcing extra provision in the budget setting process.</p> <p>English GT had uploaded the report of her visit and noted: It would be good if governors could attend parent workshops both to learn about the school’s approach and to be more visible to parents. Workshops are advertised in the school newsletter and governors were encouraged to note these in their diary.</p> <p>CI had uploaded the report of her visit to Music in the Governor visits folder. Governors noted it was very positive.</p> <p>There was some discussion about resourcing subjects. Governors will remind subject leads that they should submit requests for resources to the headteacher.</p>	<p>HF set up video link for School Council</p> <p>TS arrange date for Safeguarding level 2</p> <p>All governors Prevent</p> <p>Governors Finance</p> <p>All governors enrol on free training.</p>
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	<p>She will collate the requests with any relevant comments and bring them to the Finance and Resources committee so that the information is taken into account in their budget deliberations. There may be other sources of funding.</p> <p>GT had looked through visit reports and picked out statements which showed how the values represented in the GROWTH vision are evident across all parts of the school. She had copied the statements into a single document shared on GovernorHub. Governors thanked her for this very helpful analysis.</p> <p>Governors noted that ZB will be making visits to Design Technology and Science later in the term.</p>	
<p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p>	<p>Governors understand that AO’s four-year term as staff governor is coming to an end in April. The clerk explained that the headteacher, as returning officer, will invite any member of staff – including AO - to nominate themselves. If there is more than one nomination staff will be asked to vote.</p> <p>Staff survey</p> <p>TS had placed a summary of the survey in the meetings folder. He was pleased that 9 out of 15 staff completed – better than five responses last year. Everyone said they enjoy working at the school and that it is better managed. Some responses indicated that not all staff were aware of the work being done or plans being made by the school - HF and TS will work to reiterate these messages to staff.</p> <p>Workload is massive despite changes in homework to reduce strain. Staff made suggestions which often reflect Aston Rowant’s values, Ideas for improvement will be discussed with staff later in year.</p> <p>Approval of School Financial Values Statement. SFVS had been shared in the meetings folder. It had been discussed in Finance & Resources Committee and was recommended to the FGB. Governors unanimously approved and agreed that TS should submit it before the deadline.</p>	<p>HF call for staff governor nominations</p> <p>TS submit SFVS</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>Committee reports</p> <p>Finance and Resources 15 October 2025 Minutes had been shared in the committee folder and was copied into the 4 February folder. Governors noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Period 9 budget had been reviewed and three risks were identified: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased staffing costs because of recruitment via a staffing agency – which had produced a very good member of staff. 2. Lack of parent uptake of the Year 5 & 6 residential. Was this a reflection of low parental engagement or cost of living pressures? Governors agreed that TS will draft a governors’ letter extolling the benefits of the residential experience, stating that the cost had been held down so that at £465 it was only £15 more than two years ago and asking parents with worries about affordability to contact the headteacher. Pupil Premium 	<p>TS letter about residential</p>

	<p>families will be supported from PP funds and others may qualify for support from The School House Trust.</p> <p>3. Building maintenance costs – ensuring sufficient funds are put aside for this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question about purchasing ‘reading pens’ which held above words and sentences will read them to the pupil. The advantage of this equipment is that a child is not held up in their work because they cannot read the instruction. Pens cost £300 each of £280 if ten or more are bought. Governors recognise that this is a strategy to promote inclusion and would help to close the gap. This and other ideas will be discussed at meeting on 25 March to discuss budget options. • Energy bills have reduced by 60% as a result of investment in insulation and energy saving lights. • The school purchases licences for helpful software such as Nessy dyslexia support for 10 pupils. The budget setting process will look to identify any licences that are no longer considered good value. <p>5.2 Teaching & Learning Committee met on 19 January. Governors noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn data was discussed and many examples of governor challenge – in red - and headteacher responses are evident. • RE assessment tool is good but involves a lot of work and needs to be adapted. • Writing remains a focus and data shows this is having an impact. • Sports funding mostly spent on sports week and coaches. • The school needs to find ways to measure the impact of Pupil Premium spending when cohorts are too small to be statistically significant. Governors asked numbers of PP students. 17 which is higher than previous years. Some of the funding is spent to support PP pupils to have music lessons. 	<p>Discuss spending options on 25 March Clerk agenda</p>
<p>6. 6.1</p>	<p>Strategic discussion</p> <p>SEF/SDP update</p> <p>The headteacher reported that she had completely re-written the SEF so that it accurately fits into the six new Ofsted headings which are similar but not the same as previous headings. Inclusion is a separate heading but is also a ‘golden thread’ running through everything. She also included SIAMS categories so that a single document would contain information about all the things that staff and governors have been working on.</p> <p>The summary paragraph adds judgements validated by SIAMS or Ofsted.</p> <p>The headteacher shared SDP in the meetings folder. She has kept Intent, Implementation and Impact – including how it contributes to GROW the school. The headteacher wants governors to own the document and asked that they all read it and add comments where they want or have more evidence, or where there could be a better or more detailed expression.</p>	<p>All governors contribute comments and questions</p>

<p>6.2</p>	<p>Ofsted training for governors – preparation for Ofsted.</p> <p>Powerpoint was shared on GovernorHub. Governors noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted will look for evidence of governors meeting their responsibilities, • Ofsted will focus on six areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curriculum and teaching ○ Leadership and management ○ Inclusion ○ Achievement and assessment ○ Attendance and behaviour ○ Development and well-being • For each of these areas HF listed the evidence inspectors will be looking for. And the questions they may be asked. • Governors need to know Aston Rowant’s main strengths and be able to tell the story of the school’s development. <p>HF asked governors how she can best serve governors and improve their understanding. Governors were invited to add comments, questions and evidence.</p> <p>Governors discussed the best way to ensure that they all contribute to these documents. They decided on two parallel approaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each of the six sections worked on by governors – one each week. The GovernorHub noticeboard will remind governors which area to focus on each week and all governors are expected to have made a contribution by the end of the week. The document will be loaded onto One Drive by end of 8/2/26 and TS will send reminder of which area to look at. Governors can add text of evidence. 2. Governors who have time will meet regularly to discuss aspects of the document (as they did in preparation for SIAMS), TS will put suggested dates and times on the G’Hub noticeboard. <p>Governors asked when the school is likely to be inspected. HF said her best guess is that it could be second half of summer term and if not then very likely in the autumn term.</p> <p>Ofsted focus will definitely include SEND, Early Reading and Early Maths.</p> <p>HF offered to prepare crib sheets for governors. She proposes to give every subject leader a day out of class to prepare documentation.</p>	<p>All governors look out for and act on newsletter messages to read and comment on sections</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p>Headteacher’s report</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>HF reported that she has sent letters to parents where there is a pattern of non-attendance, including taking children out of school a few days before a holiday break – for e.g. skiing. Parents do not understand the effect that this has on school and on other children who tell their classmates. Governors and headteacher need to stand together in opposing this practice.</p>	

<p>7.2</p> <p>7.2.1</p> <p>7.2.2</p> <p>7.2.3</p>	<p>HF has been more successful in encouraging parents to send their children into school despite minor ailments and reported improvements in the middle ground – 90-95%. The problem of persistent absence – below 90% attendance – remains. There are two children with 50% attendance and that is of great concern for safeguarding as well as educational reasons.</p> <p>Oral update</p> <p>The headteacher recommended the following INSET days in 2026-7 and they were agreed:</p> <p>1/9/26</p> <p>2/9/26</p> <p>23/10/26 performance management</p> <p>4/1/27 – partnership Inset</p> <p>7/6/27 report writing</p> <p>The headteacher recommended the following INSET days in 2027-8 and they were agreed:</p> <p>3/9/27</p> <p>22/10/27</p> <p>5/1/28</p> <p>5/6/28</p> <p>A fifth date is to be decided later.</p> <p>Personnel issues</p> <p>The headteacher described the circumstances when she had needed to recruit staff and obtain cover for staff having operations. She also mentioned an internal matter but, quite properly, gave no details.</p> <p>HF reported that she was very pleased to find an excellent supply teacher called Rachell Fountain who has been able to release staff for Ofsted preparation. Governors asked whether Rachell could release HF for Ofsted preparation. HF said this would be helpful but at this time was not sure of how much or the best timing. Governors agreed this extra cover in principle and will wait for HF to recommend timing.</p> <p>Pupil numbers</p> <p>Numbers are holding steady at 99. While three children have left to go abroad there are two children whose parents are applying for Year 5 places.</p> <p>There had been very encouraging interest in Reception admissions and high confidence that the 15 places will be filled at National Offer Day on 16 April. With 11 Year 6 pupils moving to secondary school, 15 Reception starters will increase the school roll.</p>	
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<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Governors noted that the ESAT visit is scheduled on 10 March</p> <p>JB report on her safeguarding visit had been uploaded to GovernorHub. She had discussed the safeguarding audit report with HF and a few areas that could be tightened up.</p> <p>JB reported that HF is dealing with some serious safeguarding cases very well. Governors acknowledged that this is an emotional as well as a work strain on her leadership.</p> <p>JB had deliberately ‘forgotten’ to wear her lanyard when delivering an assembly. At the end she had challenged the children about why they had not pointed out this omission. “that’s because we know you,” they had replied. She will organise a friend who is not known to pupils to visit the school without a lanyard to check pupil vigilance.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Website</p> <p>ZB reported on her review of the website which required ‘a few tweaks’. She asked governors to send their brief biographical details to her so that they can be included in the governor page. She intends that each governor will write an update for the school newsletter.</p> <p>HF reported that she has been working to add and update information on the school website to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What subjects look like • What Ofsted headings look like at Aston Rowant. 	<p>Governor biographies to ZB</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Date of next meetings</p> <p>Governors confirmed the date of the next meeting on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday 25th March 2026, 6.30</p> <p>Other meeting dates for the year are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual - 29th April 2026 to formally approve the budget • Strategy long term - 10th June 2026 to discuss a 5 year plan • SDP review - 15th July 2026. <p>All Wednesdays at 6.30pm. All to be held at school except 29/04/26.</p>	

Meeting closed at 8.37

Martin Pounce, 9 February 2026

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