

Minutes of Collyer's Spring Term Local Governing Body Meeting

Wednesday, 18 March 2026 at 10:45

Mercers' Hall, London

Present	
King Abeyie - Local Parent Governor	
Chris Daniel - Local Governor	
George Dummer - Local Governor	
Paul Mittendorfer - Chair of the Local Governing Body	
Clare Ruaux - Local Staff Governor	
Lauren Smith - Local Governor and Deputy Chair	
Bev Valley - Local Parent Governor	
In attendance	
Rob Hussey - VP (Curriculum)	
Andrea John - VP (Pastoral)	
Stacey Kearns - HLA CFOO	
Dan Lodge - Executive Principal & CEO	
Steve Martell - Deputy Principal	
Sam Seely - RCU Student Governance Officer	
Jane Tang - RCU Student Governance Officer	
Russha Sellings - Director of Governance (GD)	
Apologies	
Teddy Bridges – Mercer Local Governor	
Lindsay Markham – Local Governor	
Julian Rooney - Local Governor	

1.	Welcome and Apologies
DISCUSSION	
Apologies were received and accepted from three Local Governors.	

2.	Declarations of Interest
None declared with respect of items on the agenda.	

3.1	Minutes/Matters Arising - Minutes of meeting 18 Nov 25 inc Part II
There were no comments or matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2025, including Part II.	

3.2	Minutes/Matters Arising - Matters Arising (not already covered by the agenda)
There were no matters arising that were not already covered on the agenda.	

4.1	SLT Report - Schools white paper
The Executive Principal introduced the Schools White Paper, describing it as a seismic and long-awaited document from the new Government. The paper focused on addressing disadvantage, improving inclusivity, and lifting educational outcomes for all. A key ambition is for all children born now to achieve a GCSE average score of five or better by the time they sit their exams in 16 years' time. The paper also outlines significant reforms to the SEND landscape, including replacing many EHCPs with Individual Support Plans (ISPs) and allocating £1.6 billion to the state sector to address funding gaps. The Executive Principal highlighted the paper's emphasis on MATs as the future of state education, signaling that all schools should eventually join MATs, though the timeline and mechanisms for this remain unclear. This aligns with the College's strategic decision, taken four years prior, to position itself within this framework. The paper also reflects cross-party consensus on the role of trusts, including those formed by local authorities, in shaping the future of state schools. A Local Parent Governor noted that the White Paper includes provisions for engaging Parent Governors and amplifying the voice of parents in the education system, describing this as a positive direction of travel.	
SUPPORT	
The Executive Principal expressed gratitude to the Governors for their contributions at the recent Learning Walk and their ongoing support, particularly in the context of a newly constituted LGB. The historical significance of the meeting location at Mercers' Hall, and its connection to the College's heritage was acknowledged.	

4.2	SLT Report - Funding & Budget
The Executive Principal reported that the College's finances are in 'extremely good health', with a forecasted surplus of just over £1 million before depreciation on a £15 million income. This is attributed to growth of 170 learners this year, with a further 200 expected next year, which should trigger in-year growth funding from the Government, although confirmation is not expected until May. The Executive Principal noted future financial challenges, as the Government's funding rate increase of 0.55% did not cover the anticipated pay award of 2.5-3% or current inflation. However, there is a possibility that the Government may choose to fund growth in expanding colleges, which would be advantageous. The Executive Principal outlined the complexity of the capital funding application for the new Tech Centre, due by mid-April. A key challenge was aligning the College's strategic desire for a high-quality, permanent building with the Government's stated preference for temporary, modular solutions. A Local Governor advised that the application should address this which was partly driven by a desire for quick project delivery. Although the College's project is a permanent build, it is well-developed to RIBA Stage 2/3 and has a deliverable programme for September 2028, which he hopes will be seen as a viable proposition. The Executive Principal spoke of the need to secure supporting evidence from HDC regarding significant local house building, and from WSCC to demonstrate the expansion will not negatively impact other local providers. A Local Governor highlighted that thousands of new homes are planned for the Horsham area, which strongly supports the case for expansion. The Executive Principal agreed, adding that issues delaying development, such as the Local Plan and water neutrality requirements, are now close to being resolved. Student Governance Officers confirmed that space at the College is limited and that more social and enrichment spaces were extremely important for the student experience. The Executive Principal concurred, noting that despite recent improvements, the campus is crowded due to a 50% increase in student numbers since 2020, and the lecture theatre is being converted into a classroom over the summer to create more teaching space.	

The Executive Principal concluded that if the capital funding bid is unsuccessful, a strategic discussion will be required at a future meeting to determine the college's path forward, which could involve revisiting student recruitment strategies or marketing efforts.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE	
Clarification was sought on the reported £1 million surplus, which seemed unusually high compared to previous years.	The £1 million surplus is a pre-depreciation figure that includes interest, making it a strong but not literal cash position. After depreciation, the surplus is expected to be between £200,000 and £400,000, which aligns more closely with historical performance. The difference in reporting reflects the transition to Academy accounting standards.
A question was raised about the potential impact of a demographic decline on the proposed new buildings, and whether there were concrete projections for this.	Government data shows a 5% growth peak from 2024 to 2026, followed by a return to 2024 levels. However, this does not account for significant local housing developments, which are expected to sustain growth. The Trust will counter government projections with local data. If demographics did decline, the College would prioritise the new, higher-quality facilities and could reutilise older spaces. The additional capacity would also improve the student experience by providing more social and enrichment spaces.
It was suggested that the funding bid could be strengthened by linking the additional space to provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).	While a new specialist SEND provision is not planned, the College expects the number of students with EHCPs to nearly double to between 70 and 80 next year. As these students often require more space, this growth can be used to strengthen the argument for increased capacity. Collaborative work with nearby SEND schools is also being considered.
An inquiry was made as to whether it was possible to get an initial assessment or feedback on the application from an official before formal submission.	This is not possible. The only mechanism for feedback is a public question and answer forum where all questions and answers are visible to all potential applicants. The college will rely on its experienced project management team to position the bid as strongly as possible.

4.3	SLT Report - Estates, H&S, Admissions
The Deputy Principal reported that all RAAC had been removed from Duckering Hall. The hall, which had been closed for six weeks, was due to reopen after renovations. The project was on schedule for completion by 1st July, allowing the Art department to move back into a space redesigned with their input. A Local Parent Governor, recalling a visit to the temporary art facilities, commented that it was very good to hear that the department would be returning to a properly utilised space, which would improve teaching and storage, particularly for large-scale textiles work.	
The Deputy Principal outlined progress on the Tech Centre project, which is divided into two phases: Phase One (Maths and Physics) and Phase Two (DT and Engineering). Following four meetings with academic teams to tailor the spaces, progress was being made on discussions with HDC regarding the building's exterior. Cost consultants were expected to finalise as the project progressed, and the project's viability heavily depended on securing funding.	
The Deputy Principal highlighted the success of a previous CIF-funded boiler replacement project, which had been operational since September and delivered significant energy savings. Other ongoing projects included	

converting the lecture theatre into a multi-use classroom, renovating staff office spaces, and ordering two new Portakabin classrooms to accommodate student growth by September.

The Deputy Principal reported no major health and safety issues, noting the successful management of construction projects to ensure site safety, including hermetically sealing work areas. Successful fire and lockdown drills had been conducted. Future plans included enhancing campus safety by developing a new gate to separate pedestrian and vehicle access.

The Deputy Principal provided an update on admissions, noting a 10% increase in applications compared to the previous year, outperforming demographic trends. An online applicants' presentation was scheduled for 30th April, with welcome days and an open evening in June and July. The College's 2026 course offer was unaffected by recent Government changes at this stage.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Clarification was sought on whether the Art and Music departments, displaced by the RAAC issue, would return to their original locations.	The Deputy Principal confirmed that the Art department will return to the refurbished Duckering Hall, but the Music department is happy in its current location. A long-term plan may involve relocating Music to a new space created by moving DT and engineering to the Tech Centre, which would also address noise issues.
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SUPPORT

A Local Governor expressed appreciation that the art department would be returning to their refurbished space, noting from a previous visit how much they needed it for teaching and storage.

Thanks were recorded to the estates, reception, and security teams for their hard work facilitating the building works, which often involved out of hours work.

4.4	SLT Report - Pastoral & Safeguarding
The VP (Pastoral) reported on two strong grant applications to the Mercers' Company for a three-year funding cycle. One application is for mental health and wellbeing support, and the other is for enrichment through the Collyer's 360° programme, focusing on progression. The applications align with recent Government white papers and the Ofsted EI, and the funding would expand leadership capacity. Cross-trust work with Forest School on careers, progression and smoothing the transition from Year 11 has already commenced, with a vision to expand this to other secondary schools.	
The VP (Pastoral) presented the termly safeguarding dashboard (tabled), clarifying that the figures for the current year were year-to-date (up to March), while the comparison column represented the entire previous academic year. She highlighted a significant increase in online filtering and monitoring actionable alerts (160 year-to-date compared to 172 for the whole of the previous year), attributing this to the new Smoothwall system which monitors keystrokes. To manage the increased workload, the safeguarding team had been expanded with plans for further expansion.	
The VP (Pastoral) also noted increases in students being monitored with links to CAMHS, the Early Help team, and MASH referrals. She clarified that the number of students with a police involvement tag on their file could relate to incidents from before their time at the college, and confirmed the situation was manageable.	
The Safeguarding Link Governor confirmed she had conducted her termly meeting and completed all necessary checks. She provided assurance that safeguarding practices were compliant with guidance and the overall situation was good, noting that while there were risks related to capacity, clear mitigations were in place.	
A slight increase in low-level concerns about staff conduct was noted, with three incidents this year compared to one or two last year. These concerns were low-level and did not indicate a risk of harm to students.	
A Local Governor noted a significant drop in suicide attempts and ideation. The VP (Pastoral) responded that this area had stabilised, although there had been an upward trend since November.	

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Clarification was sought on whether online filtering and monitoring actionable alerts were duplicated in the main safeguarding risk numbers.	It was clarified that an alert only becomes a logged safeguarding risk if an investigation confirms it. Many alerts are for non-safeguarding issues like pranks or low-level behaviour issues and are recorded separately. The figure primarily demonstrates the team's workload.
A question was asked about whether pranks were recorded in the figures for actionable alerts.	It was explained that the figure represents the raw number of actionable alerts (levels 3-5) that require staff intervention, but do not necessarily become a formal safeguarding risk. The number highlights the volume of work.
A question was asked about the number of low-level concerns about staff conduct (three), how this compared to previous years, and if it indicated any training needs.	It was confirmed that the number is slightly higher than the one or two in previous years. However, the incidents were separate, involved different staff, and were low-level, not reaching the threshold for risk of harm to students. The number was considered small for an institution of this size, but it may warrant reflection on whether additional training or support is needed.

SUPPORT

The Safeguarding Link Governor commented that everything looked good from a safeguarding perspective with valuable work continuing.

The Chair noted that it was good to see that suicide attempts and ideation seemed to significantly declined.

4.5 SLT Report - DfE Performance data

The VP (Curriculum) presented DfE performance data, explaining the three key metrics used: Alps, Sixth Sense, and L3 Value Added (L3VA). He identified L3VA as the most important as it is publicly available for parents and students to compare colleges on the DfE website. The VP (Curriculum) reported that Collyer's currently ranked 13th nationally amongst sixth form colleges with a value-added score of 0.17 and noted a forecast of 0.24 for the upcoming summer, which could potentially move the College into the top ten. He also highlighted the importance of raw A-level points for student progression opportunities, such as university admissions and apprenticeships.

The VP (Curriculum) compared Collyer's performance with other providers in West Sussex, noting that the College ranks second in value added to a small academy sixth form. However, he pointed out the substantial difference in A-level entries and points between the two institutions, arguing that Collyer's should be considered the 'top state A-level provider in West Sussex' due to its higher overall performance in raw grades and student numbers.

The VP (Curriculum) further compared Collyer's with similar colleges in the S7 group.

SUPPORT

Well done to the entire team for achieving strong DfE Performance data results, particularly the 0.17 value added score and the potential to reach 0.24 this summer.

5.1 Review of Level 2 Provision - Proposal (Part II) Recorded Under Part IIb (Information that is considered commercially sensitive)

5.2	Review of L2 Provision - Draft Admissions Policy 2027	
The Deputy Principal presented the draft Admissions Policy 2027 for information and invited questions. The Executive Principal clarified that the policy does not include preferential treatment for any specific schools.		
CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE		
A query was raised as to whether the policy statement should include a reference to the Equalities Act to provide a legal anchor.		The suggestion would be proposed to the Board.
A question was asked whether students from The Forest School receive any advantageous treatment in the admissions process.		It was confirmed that no advantageous treatment is given, nor are there any future plans to do so. It was stressed that there is no through-school arrangement from The Forest School to Collyer's.

6.1	College Quality Assurance - QIP updates
The Vice Principal (Curriculum) presented updates on the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which was separated from the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for clarity. A colour-coded system indicated progress: red (not started), amber (at risk), light green (on track), and dark green (completed). Key updates included: - Quality of Education (QoE) 1 (Underachieving subjects): 10 of the 13 subjects with negative value-added in summer 2025 had shown significant improvement, moving into positive value-added by PR3, attributed to the college's quality improvement approaches. - QoE 2 (Underachieving students from other ethnic backgrounds): The previous year's underachievement was now reported as a one-year anomaly, with this cohort achieving above the College average at PR2 and PR3. - QoE 4 (A-Level borderline students): Students around the C/B and B/A borders were performing very well at PR2, indicating effective intervention. - QoE 5 (BTEC value added inversion): An ongoing issue was noted where BTEC students with higher prior GCSE attainment were not being stretched to achieve the highest grades (e.g., Distinction*). PR2 data indicated this had not yet been resolved and was a target that may not be achieved this year. - Teaching and Learning Focus (Metacognition): Significant activity was underway, including INSET sessions and peer observations. The Director of Teaching and Learning was praised for her work in this area. - QoE 7 (Progress Review Days): The Vice Principal (Pastoral) reported that the restructured days had received largely positive feedback from staff and students, though some technical issues required refinement. - Behaviour and Attitudes: Following Ofsted feedback, low-level misconduct were being addressed early to prevent escalation, with staff training and new procedures progressing well. - Personal Development (PD): - PD 1 (Careers Programme): The three-yearly refresh was on target, with strong liaison with the careers hub. - PD 2 (Personal Guidance): Work was underway to expand capacity for 1:1 careers guidance to meet Gatsby Benchmark 8. This included a bid for Mercers' funding to appoint an additional careers advisor and administrator. - PD 3 (Tutorial Programmes): The 12 Personal Development Tutors had taken over planning and delivery, leading to real improvements in content and delivery. - New Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF): Key changes had been presented to various committees and all staff. A mapping exercise was underway to align QA processes with the new EIF, and an Ofsted consultant (a former HMI) would support staff and governor training. - Curriculum Reform: The transition from BTECs to V-Levels will be complete by September 2030, with the first V-Level introduced in September 2027. It appeared the college's current vocational offer has a clear	

path to equivalent V-Level qualifications.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum) concluded that the QIP showed good, realistic, and honest progress.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

How will the changes to vocational qualifications, such as the transition from BTECs to V-Levels, be communicated to parents and students?	Currently, the prospectus includes a caveat stating that L3 vocational courses are undergoing reform. Now that the path forward is clearer, communications, including the prospectus and outreach sessions led by the Deputy Principal, will be updated with more specific information. The first V-Level will be introduced in September 2027, with the full conversion from BTECs completed by 2030.
A query was raised about whether there were plans for an additional careers advisor to manage student volume.	The strategy incorporates growth, with a funding bid to the Mercers' Company including an administrator to increase advisor capacity. The use of expandable part-time roles is also part of the plan to expand personal guidance capacity.

SUPPORT

Staff were commended for their exceptional work in advancing metacognition and teaching and learning practices.

Progress on the QIP was described as realistic and honest, with rge RAG rating reflecting genuine progress rather than over-optimism.

6.2 College Quality Assurance - Education KPIs (PR2)

The VP (Curriculum) presented the Education KPIs for Progress Review 2 (PR2), along with provisional PR3 data (tabled). He noted the ambitious targets for high grades: 65% for A-level and 70% for vocational. A-level high grades were strong at 61%, projected to reach 62-63% for the year. Vocational, Technical, and Foundation provision were also performing strongly, and GCSE results from the November exams were similarly strong.

The VP (Curriculum) introduced a new table analysing EDI categories, developed as an early response to a government white paper. He explained that red indicators for disadvantaged student groups showed they were below target, which is expected, and highlighted the need for continued support. He noted that while the 'other ethnic background' group had dipped at PR3, it was still a 27% improvement on the previous year's anomaly.

The VP (Curriculum) reported strong value-added (VA) scores: 0.28 for A-level (projected to finish at 0.24) and 0.23 for vocational. He expressed concern that while black students still had positive VA, their achievement was substantially lower than the previous year. He also noted a dip in performance for EHCP students, though the overall SEND category value-added was exceptionally good at 0.28.

The VP (Pastoral) reported on attendance and retention. Overall average attendance was 0.5% below the previous year but remained above the 92% target. Attendance for students receiving free college meals or a bursary was 2-4% below the college average, and second-year attendance was over 1% lower than the previous year, indicating a need for intervention. Student retention was reported as excellent, with a small drop for EHCP students (three from 41) considered normal for the cohort size.

The VP (Pastoral) outlined plans to develop an inclusion strategy to address intersectionality and identify students who may be falling through gaps in support, despite existing provisions.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Interest in understanding how students who fall into multiple EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) categories, such as black female students, are	The VP (Curriculum) confirmed that students are counted in each separate category they belong to, but specific intersectional analysis had not yet been
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performing and whether their intersectionality is being considered in the data.	conducted, although it was a point for future consideration. The VP (Pastoral) added that this data would inform a future inclusion strategy to examine intersectionality and support students who might be falling through gaps.
Request for a brief explanation of the interventions being applied to subjects with lower performance in value-added metrics.	The VP (Curriculum) explained that all relevant subjects were receiving one of five intervention strategies. He cited examples: the Arts area had undergone an External Quality Review (EQR), the English department was using an Enhanced Subject Support (ESS) scheme, and the Dance department was supporting a new teacher who was getting accustomed to A-Level teaching standards.
SUPPORT	
Positive feedback on the inclusion of EDI data in KPIs and the strong value-added performance across most categories.	
Acknowledgment of the strong retention rates and the overall positive performance in value-added metrics.	

6.3	College Quality Assurance - Learning Walk feedback
Learning Walk feedback was received. There were no further comments.	

6.4	College Quality Assurance - Governor visit reports
The Executive Principal acknowledged the Governor visit reports as part of the College Quality Assurance agenda item. He expressed gratitude to all Governors involved in the visits. A report received after the papers were dispatched would be added to SharePoint after the meeting.	

7.0	Student Voice Report
The Chair introduced the Student Voice Report thanking the authors for its preparation. The LGB were invited to ask questions, but none were raised.	

8.0	Training & Development
GD encouraged everyone to sign up to CST for its valuable educational resources. There would be a transition to a MAT-wide service for The Key, and further information would be circulated. The GD expressed gratitude to the three Local Governors and SLT members who attended a finance training session held earlier in the week, noting its relevance to the Trust Board. A future training event would be delivered in person, with the next session focusing on performance data across the key stages.	

9.0	AOB
The Deputy Principal proposed thanking the students for their work over the past year.	
CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE	
A suggestion was made to provide more support for students using the 'My Progress' system, such as tutorials, walkthroughs in tutor sessions, and instructional videos accessible on SharePoint, as many students are unfamiliar with such portals.	The VP (Pastoral) welcomed the feedback, confirmed that creating video tutorials would be feasible, and noted that responsibility would likely be shared between the pastoral and My Progress teams. The Executive Principal added that the Trust is considering

implementing a single, consistent system across all its schools, which would help students and parents become familiar with it from an early age.

SUPPORT

Support was expressed for the idea of implementing a single, consistent system across the entire Trust.

10.0	Next LGB Meeting (Weds 24 June 2026, 16.30)
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The LGB would next meet on Wednesday, 24 June 2026 at 16:30 at Collyer's.

The meeting closed at 12.49

Signed.....

Date.....