

St Matthew's Primary School Full Governing Body (FGB)
at 6.00pm at St Matthew's Primary School on Wednesday 6th May 2026

Meeting Minutes

Present: James Anderson, Sarah Barratt, Christina Bates, Andrew Grieve, Katie Hehir, Ricardo Herbane (Vice-Chair, VC), Sonia Ingersent, Chris Jagger (Co-Chair, Ch), Linda Jones, Tiago Mata, Neil Perry, Simon Richardson, Kate Spencer-Allen, Elizabeth Steel, Jayne Steel, Aditi Vedi (Co-Chair, Ch), Sophie Waring

Online: Angharad Walter

Apologies: John Parkin

Attending: Daisy Borrett (Clerk), Anthony Davies (Headteacher, HT)

1. Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 6pm; apologies were accepted.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

There were no specific declarations of direct or indirect pecuniary interests to declare.

3. Minutes of the FGB Meeting in March 2026

The meeting minutes were approved and matters arising would be dealt with throughout the course of the meeting as relevant.

AP – Chair to sign and send to the Headteacher (HT).

18.08 LP arrives.

4. Head Teacher's Report

The Headteacher presented his in-depth report with the FGB which had been shared with and reviewed by the board members prior to the meeting.

Questions and Comments:

Discussions on various items such as the situation regarding exclusions and recruitment were had and would be covered more comprehensively later in the meeting.

5. Resources for Learning

There has been no real change in the current year-end financial position since the last meeting; taking out the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) deficit as discussed previously would basically land the school on target. The HT and board discussed the merits and conditions for keeping the EHCP debt in the Budget or not for the following year. The

three-year forecast has two budget scenarios: the main difference being in relation to the EHCP funding. The lower pupil numbers and minimum income per pupil funding saw a big drop seen in February. There will likely be a final in-year deficit of £46,000. The latest government suggestion is that the Local authority (LA) may give particularly disadvantaged schools 50% of what is owed but this is only suggested and any details are very unclear.

Comments and Challenges:

What is the logic behind presenting a worst-case scenario? Will this show how the school is particularly adversely affected? Will it clearly show how much the school has been disadvantaged by the delayed EHCP applications and lack of response? What is the best strategy? What is the LA's strategy? How would this 50% be predicted? Who would given this funding and how would it be determined? If there is no assessment of the actual provision how would 50% of it be calculated? Would it mean a lower allocation of funds?

Notes on any meetings with the LA should be recorded and monitored and handed on to the in-coming new HT. Are the LA happy with the draft budget? How will the school respond to the change in pupil numbers? Are other schools in this position and what are their strategies? What percentage of the schools entry are in catchment? If the school only offers places to 75% of applications, will catchment pupils have to be schooled further afield? Has the position and budget options been run past the new HT? The board members agreed that the budget option #1 is optimal, if the LA is in agreement, and approved unanimously.

The Director of Education has suggested a number of things which have not materialized in the past so the future path is very unclear at this point. It would be possible that the school would receive, for example, £10,000 per pupil on the roll but in fact it costs circa £27,000 to help this one child. A growing number of schools are falling into the definition. This situation is very bad and it would not be feasible to wait another 12 months for action.

The best strategy would be to show the extent of our deficit and make a clear and transparent argument that we constitute a priority school. The LA's strategic response is, at best, uncommunicated. It was last mooted in October 2025 that back-dated funding would be awarded. The school is still expecting full funding and still owed a staggering amount of funding. It has been suggested that the government will write off any LA deficit and any spending this and next year as long as they have a SEND plan ready for the Department of Education by 18th June 2026. Frustratingly, it seems that the LA are not following this path.

The two draft budget options were debated looking at the possible routes if the school has 75 pupils or if it is reduced to 60. It can not realistically continue to viably work as a three form entry school. Consideration must be made to the remaining pupils not to be allocated to the school and where they will be allocated. The LA is integral to this. The demographic has changed in recent years. Other schools are also facing similar situations and considering options. The Galfrid School for example has reduced its entry from three form to one form. The new HT is aware of the situation and is fully supportive of the plans to address the change in pupil numbers. It is thought that roughly 20% of entry pupils are from out of the catchment area, based on postcodes. This means that those not accepted would likely not be pupils living within the catchment area.

Any change in PAN needs consultation (6 week process) and which can be as much as a two year process but should hopefully not take this long. The school needs to show that it is making reasonable financial decisions which it is. There are many variables still and the position may still change. The school feels it has a strong and viable plan to reduce the deficit and is in a healthy position if EHCP funding starts to come through. The HT will be addressing

the teaching staff tomorrow. It is vital that the staff know where they stand. One position is temporary and therefore there will be no redundancies of permanent staff.

18:58 SB leaves.

6. Raising Standards

Raising standards was discussed highlighting the School Development Programme (SDP) and records, an increased number of visits from link governors, staff meetings and the handover to the new HT.

Comments and Challenges:

The Governing Board (GB)

There was a discussion regarding the distribution of roles and amount of work for each for link governors. It was agreed that the SEND and PP was an increasing area and should no longer be the remit of just one governor. Vulnerable children is also an increasing area. Ofsted are very keen that governors should be allocated roles and be seen to visit the school to monitor regularly. The governing board works differently in every school and there is no specific model driven by the LA. It would be good to focus on different issues of particular importance at relevant times. Recent PREVENT training suggested that governors should be 'intrusive'. The school has always been very welcoming of governor feedback and input as they have always been a very impressive group. The school is very open and welcomes the governing board who know the school and processes so well.

Action Point: the GB to update the governor link list and in September 2026 decide which link governor roles are important and which are needed.

Staff Meetings and HT Handover

The recent Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting was discussed. There will be staff training in September 2026. Safeguarding and evacuation of the school were discussed.

The incoming new Head has met many of the staff now. He also plans to attend the evening for new Reception parents and arrange a final school visit in July or possibly more. His current academy trust is not making it easy to release him from his current commitments and is charging the school for his release dates. The new HT's values align strongly with those of the school. He is keen to take time to learn about the school and not to change what he feels is obviously working well.

7. Safeguarding (SG) Update

There was a presentation and ensuing discussion and questions updating on the situation and issues regarding Young Carers: what constitutes and who is a young carer; identifying young carers; identifying SG risks; pathways for young carers; forthcoming communications to parents about young carers; the school's commitment to support young carers; attendance, attainment and progress of young carers; enrichment activities; the cross-over of young carers and other genres like PP and other important issues.

8. Governance

Priorities for Link governors should be identified for September/October 2026. Volunteers for link governor roles can be confirmed at the start of the academic year.

The HT must submit a declaration form confirming that they invited a board member in to oversee the process . One governor is required to sit in on the SATs assessments.

Action Point: Two governors (AW and RH) volunteered to sit in on the assessments.

9. Any Other Business

There has been a co-opted governor request. The application has been circulated and a small, informal interview process will follow. The GB need to ascertain where there is a gap in the skills set and recruit accordingly. It would be great to have more enthusiastic people on board with pertinent expertise.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

1st July 2026 – FGB 6-8pm

NB This has been moved from 8th July due to clashing commitments.

Close of meeting

19:58 Meeting closes.