

St Matthew's Primary School Full Governing Body (FGB)
at 6.00pm at St Matthew's Primary School on Wednesday 25th March 2026

Meeting Minutes

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

Online: Angharad Walter

Apologies: Sonia Ingersent, John Parkin, Elizabeth Steel

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

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

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

3. Welcome to the New Governors

All participants, in particular the two new governors, were welcomed. Introductions were made.

4. Minutes of the FGB Meeting in December 2025 and February 2026

The meeting minutes were approved with one minor amendment.

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

5. Head Teacher's Report

The Headteacher shared his report with the FGB and proceeded to talk through all the items, mentioning many areas that were covered in more detail later in following items below.

The Early Careers Framework visit was very positive and a tribute was made to the ECT teachers.

Questions and Comments:

How is attendance compared to previous years? Are numbers similar across all year groups? What is the school doing to market to new people moving to the area?

There are some spaces for new students in the younger years. Predictions may be inaccurate. There is also a waiting list for other years out of catchment applicants. Year 5 is the biggest demand and the class size currently stands at 31 or 32. Attendance is similar to last year. There are now tours for individual parents as well as the group tours and a New Parents Evening on 18th June.

6. Resources for Learning

There were in-dept reports and discussions on a number of items including: an update on the current financial position; and update on the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHP) delays and costs; the SEND White Paper; the budget-setting process over coming months; and the lettings updated policy and rates.

The on-going concern and discussion regarding the lack of funding for ECHPs, and in particular, historic applications, remains a major challenge and the significant caveat. The deficit is £179,000 broadly in line with the prediction from last year. Funding provided (over the past 13 years) has not equalled the costs of provision.

Comments and Challenges:

Has there been a consistent policy followed for awarding funding for ECHPs? How might the forthcoming White Paper change the situation? Could the school document conversations had with the LA financial adviser? Is there any way of hitting back? Will governors be invited to work with the HT on the financial situation and budget? What has been the impact on staff well-being? The updated Lettings Policy looks good. How do the rates compare with other locations?

ECHP applications are considered on a case by case basis. There is a schools' Forum in March where the situation will be discussed. The White Paper has not yet been published but it is widely thought that 90% of the debt of the Local Authority (LA) will be written off by the government as there is no alternative except to declare the LA as bankrupt. There is general recognition that the SEND system is 'broken'. It is thought that there Individual Support Plans (ISPs) may be brought in to effect. Previously suggested was that the LAs would be able to form their own academy chains. It was thought this would not be beneficial for primary schools as the secondaries would take the main focus. The Governing Boards of academies also have no power to help guide or make decisions and are purely advisory. The school would lose its autonomy.

There is another meeting with the financial adviser on 21st April and it was agreed it would be a good idea to document what was said in the meeting. Two governors will be invited to attend the final half hour. If it appears it will be a more complex situation then a resources meeting could be put together. The financial link governor and the Co-Chair will attend, probably remotely. It remains extremely difficult to accurately make any budget prediction when the funding situation is so unclear. The draft budget will be set on 6th May.

The staff continue to work tirelessly. The base funding per child is not enough. The reduced time available from Teaching Assistants has a negative effect on all resources. There is some frustration and feelings of being patronised; the teachers know how to do their jobs very well but without the required resources to do so, it is a struggle to cover. The school is the only central Cambridge spot to offer an all-weather pitch with flood-lighting. Rates vary across locations dependent on location and offering and if term-time or holidays/

Action Point: HT to check rates align with the market.

7. Raising Standards

Raising standards was discussed highlighting the School Development Programme (SDP); some proposed actions for curriculum development; the staff meeting schedule for the rest of the year; and the Phonics Link Governor Report.

Comments and Challenges:

There is some incredible potential for using AI in training and curriculum development and lesson planning, particularly for lower learners. Should a subscription to a paid application be purchased? Data security would need some consideration. What is the 'Green impact'?

Can volunteers be used to read with the children to help with phonics in light of the lack of TAs?

One of the teachers is particularly knowledgeable and has improved his teaching and processes by harnessing the benefits of AI. He may be able to help others to become more technologically and AI literate. Staff are already able to access Microsoft Pilot and there are a number of free AI apps that can be used without risking data protection concerns. This is an area of extreme fast movement and needs extreme care with very clear parameters. There is a safer use of AI policy in place. A separate meeting could be held to discuss the best way forward, ideally developed in school by the teachers and senior leadership team and brought to the governing board for review.

The Phonics system is working very well. There is fidelity to the system and plenty of books for the children to take home and practise. Reception classes are slightly weaker but outcomes have been good. There is some concern about the lack of TAs to help with phonics groups and one-to-ones in Year 1. Most in Year 2 have passed the Phonics check and there is only some small group work. It's difficult to find good, committed volunteers to train up and come in regularly to read at a set time with set students.

8. Safeguarding (SG) Update

There will be a presentation and discussion surrounding an update on Young Carers in the next meeting.

Action point: Link Governor to speak on Safe-guarding at future meeting.

Action Point: All members of the LGB to check they have completed the statutory SG training.

9. Governance

Link Governor Roles

Link Governor roles were discussed, especially in light of the new governors joining the board. There will be a handover of SEND and PP to one of the new governors. There was also a volunteer for the Finance role.

Action Point: The Chair to email details of roles.

10. Any Other Business

It was noted that there was very little time for many of the staff to be able to meet the new Head. There were very few TAs at the staff meeting attended by the candidates. The LA was consulted over the appropriate amount of time and feedback from staff was requested. The time was limited to one day by the LA. There is always a balance of compliance and available time. The staff input was very useful and it was thought that capturing staff feedback was essential and was included. There will be another opportunity to meet the new Head on 22nd April.

A Parent Group is being set up to look at a sustainability action plan. There is a big list of possibly actions to consider and a grant for the Department for Education. The plan will be colour-coded and will be used to plan the way forward in this area. It would be good to have a Link Governor for sustainability.

AV announced that they would be stepping down as Co-Chair but would be remaining on the board. An enormous thank you to the governor was extended for all their work. The other Co-Chair offered to step down also if anyone had the inclination to take on the role or to continue.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

6th May 2026 – FGB 6-8pm

8th July 2026 – FGB 6-8pm

Close of meeting:

20:10 Meeting ends.