

St Matthew's Primary School Full Governing Body (FGB)
at 6.00pm at St Matthew's Primary School on Wednesday 4th February 2026

Meeting Minutes

Present: Katie Hehir, Ricardo Herbane (Vice-Chair, VC), Chris Jagger (Co-Chair, Ch), Sonia Ingersent, John Parkin, Kate Spencer-Allen, Elizabeth Steel, Aditi Vedi (Co-Chair, Ch), Sophie Waring

Online: Linda Jones, Simon Richardson

Apologies: None

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

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 6pm and all participants were welcomed. There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

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

3. Minutes of the FGB Meeting in December 2025

The meeting minutes were approved.

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

4. Head Teacher's Report

The Headteacher shared his report with the FGB and proceeded to talk through all the items, in particular highlighting key actions for now and the summer; the staff's vision of the curriculum to hand on to the new HT; attendance numbers; exclusions. Many areas were covered and then re-covered in more detail in following items below.

5. Resources for Learning

A number of items were discussed comprehensively, notably including: progress of the HT recruitment drive; an update regarding the current financial position; a financial benchmarking exercise; the schools financial value standard 2025-26; and draft funding for 2026-27.

The on-going concern and discussion regarding the lack of funding for ECHPs, and in particular, historic applications, was continued at length. The school continues to work very hard to stick to a very tight budget constraints and is in a marginally better position at present.

Comments and Challenges:

The board and the HT discussed the level of interest in the HT position and the quality of applicants. All candidates had now been met and were all deemed impressive. Next steps they would all be offered a show round the school before a final decision was made.

How will it be possible to plan the budget not knowing if the ECHP funding gaps would be awarded or not? How might the forthcoming White Paper change the situation? Can parents go to the media to raise awareness of the issue and its severity and impact? How does the school's situation compare with other schools? How is it compared? Are there any different ways to deliver what is required more cheaply?

Does the school have a Disaster Recovery Plan? What is happening regarding the Management Information System (MIS)? Who are the key stake-holders and how is the school capturing the interests of all users? How much is the top band of funding and is the funding specifically designated?

It's challenging to accurately make any budget prediction when the funding is so unclear. It is likely the government will be centralizing ECHP funding back to the Department of Education in the future. Staff continue to press for action on ECHP applications. Some parents have received apologies but also an insulting financial reward as compensation. The deficit would show an extremely different situation if the owed sums of up to £240,000 had been awarded.

Spending per pupil is the best way to compare schools' predicaments and St Matthews remains in the middle or lower end and is therefore considered financially prudent. The school is currently investigating utility costs and if there are any further ways to bring this figure down. There are no other areas with any room to reduce costs in any way. If the school would be receiving back-dated ECHP funding then there would have been a feasible plan to reduce the deficit. The school's financial value standard will be submitted at the end of March.

The school's Critical Incidence Plan was explained and discussed as well as Martyn's Law which is currently in a 24-month implementation period before full enforcement, expected by Spring 2027. Further likely actions were discussed including extra training, adapting the alarm bell and drafting a visitor policy once a model is posted on The Key.

Arbor and SIMs and other options for the school's MIS were discussed as well as what is being used in other schools. It was agreed it would be sensible to let the new HT make the decision. The school has a Steering Group and all users whether executive leadership team, teaching staff, administrators and even midday supervisors are being considered. The Office staff will be those most affected.

SEND Costing maps show the higher need and funds can be used across functions as long as it is clearly demonstrated how the funds are allocated. Top banding is £10,528.20 (although this does not actually cover the cost of a full time Teaching Assistant).

Action Point: Ch and HT to continue to chase delayed EHCP funding.

Action Point: One governor offered to advise on changes being followed in Borough Market regarding threats.

Action Point: HT to delete question 20 on school finance committee paper.

6. Raising Standards

Raising standards was discussed highlighting the Attendance Report; the OFSTED Data Summary Report; and an interim review of the Pupil Premium (PP) Strategy.

Comments and Challenges:

How has attendance compared this term with the same term last year? Could pupils at Parkside Community College be invited to act as mentors for the primary school children? Are there risks to keeping children in school who have been suspended? Is parental engagement improving? Are parents expected and coming to parent consultation evenings? Does the school have any children who are carers and what can be done to support them?

There has been a notable improvement in attendance figures for this Spring Term compared to last year and is now close to national average. There have been some positives from introducing the attendance contracts. Pupils that have left the school continue to remain on the attendance figures. Some key actions include more training for the school; timely tailored interventions; talking to the children directly (and the 'Students' Voice') and looking at positive role models. Mentors from a secondary school or local businesses who work with the children 1-2-1 might work well.

The Ofsted Data Summary Report largely confirmed the report last September. The number of children with PP needs was discussed along with key barriers to learning and many positive markers. Standards of writing for PP students continues to be a particular focus for the school. In terms of enrichment, 98% of PP pupils attend a club which is aspirational. Some very good improvements in academic attainment have been seen from the starting points. Children who have been excluded would not remain in school. Pupils will only ever be excluded in cases where it would be unsafe for them and/or others to remain in the building.

Parental engagement is improving and will be looked at in more detail in the next half term. Parents are expected to attend the consultation evenings. The school does have children who are carers and this is going to be added to the MIS. Training is scheduled for the 26th February to ensure that the school is doing the right thing in the right way.

7. Safeguarding (SG) Update

The Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) is updated annually in September and all staff and the governing board need to be aware of the changes every year. This is mandatory training and is vital that all governors complete this by 20th February for the school to be compliant.

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

8. Governance

Link Governor monitoring visits and reports will be included at the next meeting. More governors to cover the visits following the governor elections will be helpful. An induction document for new governors would also be useful. There is also lots of useful information on The Key. A discussion ensued over whether governors with particular experience in areas where there is a skill shortage or need of additional support could be co-opted if not elected. Candidates with strong financial skills and expertise would be of particular help. The Chair feels strongly that further support on the finance side is essential.

Action Point: Chair to send induction document to SW.

9. Any Other Business

Thanks was extended to the relevant governors who dealt with the recent complaint.

Comments and Challenges

Is there any mapping of complaints? Does anyone or could a governor look at any pattern to be found?

Yes, all escalated complaints are mapped and monitored however with so few official complaints over the last 20 years of the HT's time at the school (perhaps only 3 or 4) no pattern has been seen. Some schools have reported an increase in complaints as a result of artificial intelligence (AI) generating complaints. Some schools have also experienced complaints relating to delayed EHCP processes. Thus far St Matthew's has not had either of these problems.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

25th March 2026 – FGB 6-8pm

6th May 2026 – FGB 6-8pm

8th July 2026 – FGB 6-8pm

Close of meeting:

20:10 Meeting ends.