

St Matthew's Primary School Full Governing Body (FGB)
at 6.00pm at St Matthew's Primary School on Wednesday 9th July 2025

Meeting Minutes

Present: Ricardo Herbane, Katie Hehir, Chris Jagger (Co-Chair), Andrew Grieve, Aditi Vedi (Co-Chair), John Parkin, Linda Jones, Neil Perry, Sonia Ingersent, Kate Spencer-Allen, Elizabeth Steel, Sophie Waring

Online: N/A

Apologies: Ananay Aguilar, Simon Richardson

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 two apologies.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of direct or indirect pecuniary interests.

3. Minutes of the FGB Meeting on 13th February 2025

The meeting minutes were agreed.

AP – Chair to sign and send to the HT.

4&5. Head Teacher's Report and Raising Standards (Outcomes of Statutory Assessments for 2025; Attendance; and Review of the SDP for 2024-2025)

The Headteacher (HT) expressed sadness all round and thanked the governing board for allowing the school to close for a funeral and commented on the amazing community. The HT had shared his report with the FGB prior to the meeting and proceeded to talk through all the items.

Comments and Challenges:

The Co-Chair commented on the excellent situation regarding attendance and decreased numbers of absences compared with the national average and asked what had been done to make it better. Is there a procedure in place for fining parents? Has a push-back from parents been seen? The FGB congratulated the school on the amazing work.

Governors also praised the school and teachers for an amazing set of results. One governor asked if the results would be published to the parents.

Ofsted provides a good point of evaluation for each of the areas highlighted. What is the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) looking like? Is there a bottle-neck of strategic decision-making?

The HT responded the school continuously look at absence data and in particular persistent and severe absence in order to be proactive in catching situations earlier. There is a good policy in place and the school acts within these parameters looking at attendance on a case by case basis. The school has a

clear tracking system (which previously only tracked every half term) which enables them to intervene quicker. The change in government stance means it is not as easy for parents to be entitled to authorized requests for time out of school. The school has 'attendance contracts' in place and parents are beginning to understand the situation and expectation asking for proof to be absent. As well as a whole school push there is a 'trusted adult' in school to help and good connections are being fostered between families and the school. There is a set procedure put in place by the Local Authority (LA) but the school has not had the need to use it this year. The teachers also represent a safe space for the children making it a place they want to come to.

The school is very proud of the achievements made this year. There is a large number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Year One making the percentage of children reaching the expected standard in phonics in that year equal to the national average a particular success. The school as a whole is very good at motivating the children and managing the disparities. It shows the impact that the introduction of Monster Phonics has had. Math is also way above average levels nationally. The school's processes, now so well embedded, and the really good teaching are paramount to the school's success.

The new senior management structure has now been in place for a year and all the staff are enjoying their roles. Processes have all been agreed and will now be settled in to become the norm from next term. Questions concerning the financial systems and the MIS System will be picked up again in the autumn term. The time to analyse PP outcomes will also be in September. The staff meeting schedule has been shared with the governing board. The new academic year will bring publication of the government's review of the curriculum although it is expected to remain very similar. By December the school is likely to have considered a new SDP with a thoughtful approach.

5d. Behaviour Management Policy

Comments and Challenges:

Is there a national policy guideline? What do other schools use? Are new teachers able to use follow it? Is it less bureaucratic and more owned by the staff? Does the policy cover those at high risk of exclusion? Is there a buddy system for new teachers? Are supply teachers given any instruction? Would a new one-page summary be a good idea? The incident of a knife being brought in to another local school was mentioned and it was asked where that would be covered? It was agreed it was a very strong and robust policy.

The school's policy was designed with insights learnt from Cambridge Therapeutic Thinking. This allows the school flexibility. Consideration constantly goes into what are the best systems and routines, highlighting good practice in more details to give more clarity. Clarity gives children a good structure which helps them to know how to behave well, and therefore they do behave well. As Ofsted commented, the children at the school are very well-behaved. What was formerly called a 'hierarchy of sanctions' is now set into a clearer policy with the strategies retained for all teachers to use with some further flexibility on the use of rewards build in.

CTT has been used by the school in the past and is used by other schools. It represents a strong and powerful approach and has resulted in a reduction of exclusions over time. Some tools are very good and others are not needed but the underlying philosophy is essential. New teachers are all introduced to the procedures in their inductions and most will already have a calm and therapeutic approach as this is looked for when recruiting. The school is really good at dealing with those at high-risk of exclusion already. New teachers will be guided by their Unit Lead and by other teachers usually in their year group. There is lots of experience within the school and a lot of discussion and talk in one-

to-one and teams about how best to tackle behaviour. Supply teachers have all been given a workable version of the policy to read and sign off. There is also a copy within the folder of their desk when they arrive. Most teachers will broadly behave along these lines anyway. Issues such as finding a knife on a student in school would be covered by the Safeguarding (SG) and Behaviour Policy and the right to 'stop and search'.

AP: School to check the crib version is up-to-date.

7. Resources for Learning - Financial Update (items re-ordered within the meeting)

The HT talked through the situation and on-going challenges with the financial situation, as per previous updates. The school is roughly running on track having cut spending in every possible way without withdrawing essential support for children with needs but without a completed ECHP.

Comments and Challenges:

What will happen with the EHCPs? What are the next steps and stages? Where will the school be by next April (2026)? Are other schools in the same position? What is our strategy? What is this group meeting? Should the governing board be represented at the meeting?

SEND funding continues to be the caveat. Funding for ECHPs is a desultory amount and not enough to cover the expense however the Local Authority does not have the money or capacity to run the service properly. A complaint can be made where funding is delayed past statutory timeframes but anything subsequently given is not back-dated. There is no way to know what the situation will look like in April next year. The local authority have put together protocols for schools in deficit. Schools will now be invited to a finance improvement group (FIG), recognising the reality of the situation, and that LAs have a statutory duty to offer to help. Many school are already at this stage. The next steps will be to attend the meeting. There is a national funding formula but it is not known what will happen with EHCPs. The LA's offer of help through the FIGs need to be backed up with practical advice about what to do to ameliorate the situation.

6&8. Governance, Training and 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. Governors can attend on 2nd September or use online safeguarding training.

There were more logs of concern this year compared to last. There is a matrix continuum of categories with many levels. Concerns are referred to outside agencies but there is very little or no help available. Social care are rejecting almost every referral. A Referral must be backed up with logs of concern and also evidence. Records must be taken of the child's voice as well as all discussions. The gap between a referral and some action being taken can be as long as six months in some cases. The volume of work is huge but vital it is done.

The Safeguarding Link Governor commented that she had met with the SG Lead and was very impressed with the transparent and positive set up at the school. The SG team were acknowledged and thanked.

Dates of Future Meetings

6th October 2025 – FGB 6-8pm

10th December 2025	–	FGB 6-8pm
4th February 2026	–	FGB 6-8pm
25th March 2026	–	FGB 6-8pm
6th May 2026	–	FGB 6-8pm
8th July 2026	–	FGB 6-8pm

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Close of meeting:

19:52 Meeting ends.