

St Matthew's Primary School

Full Governing Body Meeting, Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 6:00pm, in School

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Elizabeth Douglas, formerly Steel; John Parkin

Present: Chris Jagger (Co-chair and in the chair), Aditi Vedi (Co-chair), Simon Richardson, Katie Hehir, Linda Jones, Simon Richardson, Kate Spencer-Allen, Sophie Waring, Sonia Ingersent (left at 19:00), Ricardo Herbane (arrived 19:30)

Apologies: Daisy Borrett (Clerk)

Minutes: Ananay Aguilar

2. Declaration of direct or indirect pecuniary interests in any of the following items

None declared.

3. Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 8th October 2025

- Matters arising and agreed actions update

Minutes not yet available; approval deferred.

No outstanding actions.

HT departure to be discussed later in the meeting.

The co-Chair took this opportunity to thank Ananay and Neil for their excellent service as governors as this was their last governing body meeting, and to wish them well for the future.

4. Head Teacher's Report

Pupil numbers

- Overall numbers have not fully recovered this will have continuing financial implications. Year 1 has nine vacancies, which is educationally manageable but leads to reduced funding.
- A Year 5 appeal was upheld due to potential prejudice to the family; numbers above 91–92 per year group come with challenges.
- Declining birth rates and high mobility are main drivers affecting admissions.
- There were several questions from governors to establish the process of appeal and whether there was any action we should take, to which the answer was basically that no action was needed.

National SEND report

- Outcomes and implications remain unclear; concerns about formula-based allocations not matching actual needs and the potential for deficits being absorbed into school budgets. (More detail in item 6.)

5. Raising Standards

School Development Plan Update

- Existing action plans are concluding and a transitional period is expected until a new HT is appointed, although the HT said he didn't want things just to stand still at the moment.
- HT recruitment planned to conclude by Easter; summer term arrangements will depend on the incoming HT's preference.
- Spring term focus will be on self-evaluation and early priority-setting by curriculum leaders.
- Management information system replacement required.

- National curriculum review may allow greater flexibility, providing timely scope for a new strategic direction.

Attendance

- Attendance has dipped; persistent absence remains a concern but is dropping.
- Work with several families is ongoing and beginning to show progress.
- Figures include pupils with high absence records who have since left may be skewing data. Unclear why they remain on the DfE figures.

Report from the SEND and Pupil Premium Link Governor Visit

- Recent restructuring has strengthened practice and improved accuracy of the PP register.
- Greater staff collaboration orchestrated by SENCo CB is improving support provision.
- CB to take over PP leadership alongside SEN due to substantial overlap.
- Administrative support may be required; enrichment activities for PP to remain with SB.
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6. Resources for Learning

November 2025 Financial Month End

- Figures depend on the school receiving EHCP funding originally budgeted for; significant backlog remains.
- If backdated allocations are confirmed, the school will be broadly on budget.
- Cutting SEN provision without the funding owed would risk preventing some pupils from attending.

Four Year Budget Forecast and Deficit Reduction Plan

- Submission delayed pending clarity on EHCP funding and staffing; governors noted this was appropriate.
- Current financial position reflects that the school spends at a mid-to-lower level per pupil compared with peers; major pressure continues to be energy costs, which are driven by wider market conditions rather than inefficiency.
- Discussion held on minimum per-pupil funding levels and the implications of an effective annual uplift of 1.47% that remains significantly below inflation.
- EHCP funding remains a major unresolved issue. The HT has written to the LA regarding criteria for “exceptional circumstances” for backdating.
- Governors approved submitting the budget as required.

Head Teacher Recruitment

- Recruitment panel confirmed: CJ, AV, SW, RH, SR.
- Interviews scheduled for 4–5 March; advertising to begin in January.
- Staff to be informed on Monday 5 January; parents and pupils the following day.
- Governors felt financial challenges were unlikely to deter strong candidates; many schools face similar pressures.
- Understanding of school finance highlighted as essential.

7. Safeguarding

Updates and future training

- Staff training is up to date; a few policies require completion.
- Governor training and induction require strengthening.
- A structured onboarding package to be created (SW to lead), including key reading, safeguarding requirements, access to documents, acronyms list, and training expectations. This should be in place by the time we get the new governors.

8. Governance

Parent Governor Election

- To be launched in January. Two parents have expressed early interest.
- A fundraising meeting to be arranged to explore potential targeted fundraising projects.
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Proposal for additional associate governor

- CB to be appointed as an associate governor (PP/SEN).

Link Governor Visits

- Outstanding areas: online safety; literacy and phonics.
- Roles for finance and PP/SEN to be reviewed following governor departures.

- New recruitment advert to highlight need for financial expertise.

Governor Communication

- Discussion regarding careful written communication given FOI and SAR requirements.
- Distinction between FOI and SAR clarified.
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9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Dates of future meetings

In the diary already.

Meeting ends.

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