



MINUTES
GILLESPIE PRIMARY SCHOOL
FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON
Wednesday 26 February 2025, 5.50pm

Membership

Name

Mark Owen (MO), Headteacher
Dan Hamilton (DH), Chair, Co-opted
Alicia Jumman (AJ), Co-opted
Ashley Smith (AS), Vice-Chair, Co-opted
Shelley Wragg (SW), Staff
Michael Padfield (MP), Parent

In Attendance

Mandy Leatham (ML), Observer
Bhavini Doyle (BD), Observer
Jenny Connolly (Clerk), Clerk

Absent

Fin Craig (FC), LA

Absent

Jodie Reed (JR), Observer
Katrina Moss (KM), Dep Head (Observer)

The meeting was quorate.

1 Apologies/consent for absence

Apologies for absence received from FC and KM (observer) and accepted by governors. JR's absence was noted and accepted by governors.

2 Governance

2.1 Compliance

Governors' Register of Business Interests

Governors were reminded to ensure business interests have been declared on GovernorHub.

MP confirmed an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check was underway. AJ will bring the documents into the school for the SBM to start the DBS process.

Action: AJ to bring in documents for SBM for the DBS process.

KCSiE

Governors were reminded to ensure they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024 and confirm this on GovernorHub.

Action: FC, KM, MO, MP, JR to confirm they have read KCSiE 2024 on GovernorHub.

Section 128

Section 128 checks will be carried out by the School Business Manager (SBM) on new governors.

MO advised that the Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually.

2.2 Membership of Governing Board

2.2.1 Term ends

Parent – governors noted the term ends of Parent governors BD, ML and JR (22 February 2025).

DH thanked governors for their input and support to Gillespie Primary School FGB. A Parent governor election will take place in school.

Action: DH to have discussions with JR regarding the parent governor vacancy or possible appointment as an Associate member (Learning Committee).

2.2.2 Election of Parent governor

Governors noted the election of MP as a Parent governor, for a four-year period, until 06 February 2029.

2.2.3 Co-opted governor appointment

Governors considered the appointment of AJ as a Co-opted governor and unanimously agreed she has the necessary skills and experience required. AJ was appointed as a Co-opted governor for a four-year period ending 25 February 2029.

2.2.4 Associate Member

Governors agreed the appointment of BD as an Associate member, until the end of the summer term 2025, in order to hand over the Safeguarding governor role.

Committee Chairs

The Committee Chairs will be confirmed when all governor roles are filled.

2.2.5 Vacancies

Governors noted the governor vacancies - one co-opted and three parent.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2024 were **agreed** as an accurate reflection of discussions and signed by the chair.

4 Matters arising from the minutes of 23 October 2024

See Action Log.

5 Minutes/reports from committees

Finance Committee

AS provided an update and highlighted:

The SBM prepared the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and the Finance Committee commented. The document was circulated to governors and will be submitted to Finance at the Local Authority (LA) by 03 March 2025.

The SFVS was **agreed** and **approved** by governors.

Q: In terms of premises in the SFVS are there no concerns to flag?

A: MO confirmed this is not the document to raise issues. Procedures are appropriate, there is scrutiny and health and safety (H&S) takes place. However, resources are inadequate.

In December 2024, an in-year deficit of £33,000 was reported and an outturn of £107,000; an accumulative deficit.

MO explained that the deficit prediction outcome is going to be high at around £150,000. The main reason for this is the in-year deficit. This year one of the biggest contributors is the cost of supporting pupils with complex needs. On average, £9,000 is attached to each Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and £6,000 per pupil is expected from the nominal school budget.

The annual cost of Teaching Assistants (TAs) to provide 121 support is around £29,000, resulting in a shortfall. There are unbudgeted increases in 121 support which were not anticipated at the start of the year. This is a problem across the authority and the country. For this school, the estimated in-year deficit, specifically in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils, is around £67,000. Further discussions are required next week.

Action: AS, MO and DH to look at in-year deficit, specifically in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils.

Q: Has the termly Finance meeting with Local Authority (LA) taken place? A: MO explained that normally by the FGB, a Finance Committee Meeting would have taken place, but the last meeting was cancelled at short notice.

At the last Finance Meeting with the LA, the progress on deficit reduction attempts was discussed, it was not a contentious conversation, but the LA are aware that this is the predicted outcome for the end of year. Discussions have also taken place about how to make savings and find additional income. The LA have been made aware that, in relation to SEND funding, the school cannot compromise, as it is about supporting individual pupils and the safety of other children in the school.

Savings have been made this year (supply teachers). However, staffing cannot be reduced any further; this has reduced by 36% in the last 10 years.

MO explained the strategy in reducing staffing costs; if and when teaching staff leave, the policy is to recruit an Early Career Teacher (ECT) at the beginning of careers, which has been done for the last decade. There are expensive teaching staff in terms of careers in the school.

Comment: There is an awareness of the initiative of Friends of Gillespie (FOG), but this is not intended to pay the deficit. The Foundation Committee can provide support and there will be overlap. A: DH confirmed a useful meeting took place with the Foundation Committee. Claire Bolderson (previous Gillespie Primary School governor) has agreed to be Chair. DH added it would be useful to have a governor sit on the Committee.

Action: Posts for the Foundation Committee to be allocated when everyone is in place on the FGB (DH/MO).

The meeting was constructive, the aim is to start raising money so the school can continue to give the benefits to pupils.

MO explained that the LA look at where the school is at the end of the year, resulting in a higher or lower deficit. If there is a deficit, the requirement is to have a plan in place to recover this within a three-year period. Sometimes additional monies will come in at the end of the financial year.

The intention will be to draw funds from FOG to help (for eg) with a music teacher and enrichment for pupils, which will help with the budget.

FOG have an increased income and there is a surplus of £40,000. In conversations, FOG are keen (before year end) for the school to identify specific spending for pupils, from the surplus, to reduce the large deficit.

In an ideal world a realistic balanced budget would be set for the year and look at staffing costs etc. Income for pupils is fairly fixed; expenses are largely fixed so there is little room for movement. What will need to be done is to set a balanced budget, without reference to the FOG contribution. The FOG contribution will be for various enrichment activities.

Q: When asked to take on pupils and over numbers, at what point can you say no? A: MO explained that he has always said no if a class is already full, but recently the school has been overruled by the LA. Parents can also appeal.

There is an active look at grants and Capital grants. However, it is difficult to get grants for salaries and computer hardware.

Comment: AJ commented that in the locality, computer and IT equipment is compelling for businesses to give away tax free.

Learning Committee

The Learning Committee minutes are available in GovernorHub. ML provided an update and highlighted:

Discussions were had about the Creation Station. Thought has gone into what could have just been a set of toys and has been deployed in a good way. It is an area where FOG are providing funding. There has been thought in terms of different ways it can be used. The cross-curriculum learning is underpinning how Early Years (EY) children can get access to toys and play.

Comment: It would be useful to share thoughts process in the Newsletter about the Creation Station.

There is ongoing funding from FOG. A case study is to be done to find out benefits. However, there is no bandwidth to do this right now, although governors have offered to help.

Reporting for the school achieving Healthy School Status bronze award was discussed, led by two of the teaching staff. Evidence needs to be shown of what the school is providing (for mental and physical health). There is also a plan to work towards silver and gold award and analysis is being undertaken.

Discussion took place on digital well-being (Parent Voice). See Agenda Item 7.

The meeting was well-informed, interesting and staff across the board are doing an excellent and considerate job.

Safeguarding Committee

SW provided an update and highlighted:

No safeguarding incidents have been reported.

The meeting was about deciding what needs to be prioritised in the budget and what needs to be fixed such as the nursery steps, girls' toilet, and dinner tables.

Asbestos has been found in a classroom but is now boxed up and safe.

Action: SW to circulate the Safeguarding Meeting minutes.

6 Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report was circulated to governors prior to the meeting. The following questions and issues were highlighted:

- **Pupil Information**

Down to 27 pupils in Y6; a pupil has left, as the family moved back home (abroad). This means funding has been lost. However, there are more children in other classes. There is a growing list for the nursery from September 2025, but this might not turn into actual nursery pupils if last year is a guide. The main issue is the school cannot offer all year wrap around care. Everything is being considered, but nursery numbers are declining.

- **Attendance**

Q: What is being done about Persistent Absence (PA) as a school? A: MO confirmed the school is at the top of the table in Islington (Autumn 2024) and had the best figures nationally of overall attendance. Usually, the families concerned have supportive needs and a robust approach is taken, regular meetings take place with families and the school encourages better attendance. Families are offered a lot of support.

DH added this is frequently discussed at the Chairs of Governors meetings at Islington.

- **After School Club**

Q: It is noticed in the After School Clubs, that Pupil Premium (PP) children attendance is low. MO commented this has been reported on, there is a reduced

number of PP in the school. This is another contributor to reduced income in the school as there are less disadvantaged families.

One after School Club is offered free and the Administrative Officer will call every PP family to encourage uptake. Pupils are encouraged to attend Science, Eco-Committee, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and the Debate Club. By the end of Year 6 (Y6) PP pupils are making excellent progress and achieving higher than all children nationally.

- **Fire Drill and Fire Alarm**

Q: Can you provide an explanation about the unanticipated fire drill on 07 February 2025? A: MO confirmed that a pupil accidentally leant against the fire alarm at lunch time. The drill showed that processes are robust; everyone complied with procedures and evacuation was under five minutes.

Q: What is the cost for the replacement fire alarm? A: MO confirmed no cost as alarms are plastic, rather than glass, and can be reset.

7 Parent Voice - Overview of results

The raw data of the parent voice had been circulated. MO highlighted:

There is a separate online ballot around smart phones. There will be a number of outcomes following the ballot; a parent event and co-planning with parents. The event will be advertised in this week's newsletter. The event will take place on 26 March 2025 and there will be professors in attendance who may be keen to do research.

In terms of parent voice, parents often do not know what is done in school, so a workshop will be organised to show this. This will be linked to the pupil survey which should include useful questions around smart phones. The important thing to report is the sharing of work and doing work collectively.

SW added that tracking of screen times shows the effect on mental health. It is good that parents are proactive and block and pupils also have an awareness.

The school workshop – the approach is to link to well-being and creating resilience. Outcomes will be seen from this evening and work will be done with pupils (interviews and surveys).

8 Financial management / budget

8.1 Scheme for Financing Schools 2024-25

The monthly budget monitoring report shows the last three months of the financial year for the LA and identifies pressures, potentially leading to cumulative deficit positions and mitigation.

8.2 Schools Financial Value Standard

See Agenda Item 5.

8.3 Contracts and services 2025-26

Governors noted that the Brochure of Traded Services, which is due to be published on Schools Bulletin, will be circulated to Chairs of Governors in February 2025.

8.4 Budget 2025-28

MO confirmed the usual budget setting process will start in next few weeks and will culminate in the budget to be submitted to the LA. An FGB to be convened to approve the budget in the third week of May 2025.

9 Safeguarding

Section 11 Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit 2021-24 and Annual Safeguarding Report to Governors 2023-24

MO confirmed that the Annual Safeguarding report, due to the LA by 31 March 2025, will be circulated to governors and approved via correspondence.

Action: Annual Safeguarding Report to be circulated to governors for approval via correspondence (MO).

10 Governors' Central Meetings

DH reported on the Governors' Briefing held on 06 February 2025.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme is advertised in the school Newsletter and parents are signposted.

The Sunflower Project is about supporting children who have been in families experiencing domestic abuse.

**Action: MO will look into the Sunflower Project and update governors.
Action: DH will send the minutes from the Governors Briefing to MO.**

11 Governor Training and Development

DH advised that the substantive Safeguarding course can be done online.

Action: DH to look at Safer Recruitment training for governors.

DH added that there are helpful online training materials on The Key.

12 Future meeting dates and agenda items

FGB (Budget Approval) - 21 May 2025, 5.50pm

Learning Committee - 04 June 2025 - June Hall, Independent Educational Consultant, will be invited to attend to undertake a deep dive. All governors are invited to the meeting.

13 Any other business

There was no AOB.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7.40pm.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____

Action Log

ITEM	FGB 26 February 2025	BY
2 2.1	Governance Compliance - AJ to bring in documents for SBM for the DBS process.	AJ
2 2.1	Governance Compliance - FC, KM, MO, MP, JR to confirm they have read KCSiE 2024 on GovernorHub.	FC, KM, MO, MP, JR
2 2.2 2.2.1	Governance Membership Term ends - DH to have discussions with JR regarding the parent governor vacancy or possible appointment as an Associate member (Learning Committee).	DH
5	Minutes/reports from committees Finance Committee - AS, MO and DH to look at in-year deficit, specifically in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils.	AS, MO and DH
5	Minutes/reports from committees Finance Committee - Posts for the Foundation Committee to be allocated when everyone is in place on the FGB).	DH/MO

5	Minutes/reports from committees Safeguarding Committee - BD to circulate the Safeguarding Meeting minutes.	BD
9	Safeguarding Annual Safeguarding Report to be circulated to governors for approval via correspondence (MO).	MO
10	Governors Central Meetings MO will look into the Sunflower Project and update governors.	MO
10	Governors Central Meetings DH will send the slides from the Governors Briefing to MO.	DH
11	Governor Training and Development DH to look at Safer Recruitment training for governors.	DH
ITEM	FGB 23 October 2024	BY
3a	All governors to update Register of Interests via GovernorHub. 26/02/2025 - FC, MO, MP, JR, KM reminded to update business interests on GovernorHub.	ALL GOVERNORS Due by next meeting
3c	Governors to contact Sara if they need DBS check information. Email: swright@gillespie.islington.sch.uk	ALL GOVERNORS Closed
4a	School to arrange Parent governor elections early next year. 26/02/2025 – parent governor elections to be arranged.	SW/MO
5	Clerk to upload approved minutes to GovernorHub and mark as signed.	CLERK Closed
9a	Shelley to signpost information about Children's' Centre's to Mark. 26/02/2025 - There was a discussion relating to the Children's Centre, incorrect minute.	SW/MO Closed
10	Head to send out invitations and specific timeslots for governors to attend.	MO Closed
11	GB to review use of The Key in the summer term. Clerk to check whether Governor Hub signposts governors to useful resources. 26/02/2025 – DH confirmed this was a helpful resource.	CHAIR/CLERK Closed
12a	The Head to inform parents about the deficit.	MO Closed
12a	Jodie to introduce the Chair to a parent with the skills to help with income generation.	JR/DH Closed
12b	The Chair, Head, FOG fundraisers, Hafsa and Jodie to meet to see where there could be joint fundraising activities.	DH/MO/FOG/HA/JR Closed