



MINUTES
GILLESPIE PRIMARY SCHOOL
FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING BUDGET APPROVAL
Wednesday 21 May 2025, 5.50pm

Membership

Mark Owen (MO)	Headteacher
Dan Hamilton (DH)	Chair, Co-opted
Ashley Smith (AS)	Vice Chair, Co-opted
*Alicia Jumman (AJ)	Co-opted
Michael Padfield (MP)	Parent
Deborah Lee (DL)	Parent
Shruti Dholakia (SD)	Parent
Tiffanie Lee (TL)	Parent
Shelley Wragg (SW)	Staff
Fin Craig (FC) (arr 19.04)	LA
Vacancies	1 x Co-opted
*Absent	

By Invitation

Katrina Moses (KM)	Deputy Head
Jenny Connolly (Clerk)	Clerk to Governors

The meeting was quorate.

1 Apologies/consent for absence

Apologies for absence received from AJ and accepted by governors.

2 Governance

2.1 Compliance

Governors were reminded to ensure Register of Business Interest Forms, Self Declaration Forms, enhanced DBS checks and Section 128 checks are completed.

There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interest.

2.2 Membership of governing board

2.2.1 Appointments

Governors noted the new parent governors.

Shruti Dholaki elected by the parent body for a period of four years until 14 May 2029.

Deborah Lee elected by the parent body for a period of four years until 14 May 2029.

Tiffanie Lee elected by the parent body for a period of four years until 14 May 2029.

2.2.2 Vacancies

Governors noted the co-opted vacancy. DH confirmed he is in receipt of a CV of a potential Co-opted governor.

Action: Governors to consider people who may be appropriate as a Co-opted governor.

2.2.3 Upcoming term ends

Co-opted - governors noted the upcoming term end of AS, 19 October 2025.

AS confirmed he will not stand again as a Co-opted governor and confirmed he is happy to help during any transition period. Governors thanked AS for his help as a governor and his support on the Finance Committee.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2025 were agreed as an accurate reflection of discussions and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising from the minutes

See Action Log

5 Chair's Action

No action taken by Chair requiring reporting to governors.

6 Minutes/reports from committees

Finance Committee – no Committee held this term.

Learning Committee – next meeting 04 June 2024, 6pm in school. All governors welcome to attend. The Learning Committee gives a good feel of the school and quality of learning.

Safeguarding Committee – no committee held this term.

7 Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report was included with the papers. Governors were asked to provide questions or issues arising from the report. Highlights:

Science for Life update - increased grant received from Dame Alice Owen Foundation (DAOD). Megan is Resident Scientist at Gillespie Primary School and Roving Scientist in schools across Islington.

MO explained that the school engaged in the process in 2013 and was able to find resourcing, raising capital funds to pay for a part time scientist. The school was then approached by Dame Alice Owen to support projects in Islington. The pupils get amazing benefits and demonstrate the project is highly valued.

The project is a leading, esteemed initiative in Islington and funding 60 disadvantaged children. Megan is an asset to the school. Outcomes in science are well above national.

Comment: DH commented that he had observed Megan giving a lesson to Reception and it was fascinating instilling science methodology and thinking.

Fire Drill – fire drills are held termly. A fire drill was carried out on 07 February 2025. The school was safely evacuated in under five minutes.

Attendance - Gillespie Primary School is one of the best in terms of pupil attendance.

8 Consideration of reports from external advisors, including Islington Professional Partner (IPP)

There have been no external reports.

9 Financial management / budget

9.1 Approval of the budget and deficit reduction plan

AS updated on the budget and answered governor questions. Highlights:

In common with a lot of schools, the school is not in a good position. The school has been in minus surplus for five years.

The school remains oversubscribed, but been hit with increased energy costs, staff and non-staff salaries, prospective increases in national insurance (NI) and experience of a fall in roll in nursery.

MO explained that currently there are five children in nursery, but more are expected in September 2025. The change to the 30 hours free childcare has impacted on mainstream schools. The key issue is the opening hours, 9am-3pm.

At the start of the year numbers in nursery are predicted based on number of children, for which the Local Authority (LA) pay funds. At the end of the year the LA look at how many children were in nursery and claw back per capita. The nursery had started with £64,000 and LA clawed back £44,000.

The cost is a national issue, there has been an explosion in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) requirements, nationally, locally and at the school.

The school receive approximately £9,000 per pupil with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), for those with the most complex needs. Some of the pupils need 121 supervision for their own and others safety at a cost of £29,000. The LA does not provide funding for any shortfall. This is rife throughout the borough and country.

The culmination had started in 2024 showing a cumulative deficit of £74,191 with closing position of £97,335, which has been superseded by events. In-year deficit for 2024-25 was £86,885; £44,000 back from nursery, unfunded SEN costs and one cost saving initiative which was rejected by the LA. Now have a cumulative deficit of £161,077. Within that includes a contribution from Friends of Gillespie (FOG) of £15,000, which may help in reducing the deficit.

Any monies raised by FOG will be held in a separate bank account to be included with separate paid priorities. It is hoped there would be some overlap.

MO explained he has seen change in his 20 years Headship of the school. From 2010 there was a change in community and disadvantaged pupils. The gradual decline in income was managed successfully until recently. There was an acceleration by the last government of the move to National Funding Formula (NFF), which has impacted on the school.

Q: With regard to the nursery is the issue the lack of conversion from nursery to reception phase or lack of care outside 9am-3pm? There is demand in the locality. A:

This school is consistently oversubscribed, there is nowhere in Islington with the right to have a place in a school. The offering of 9am-3pm is a relevant factor as to why numbers are low.

MO confirmed he has looked at offering 9am-3pm all year round. The costs of offering what people want is too high in terms of what is received. The nursery was restructured so a teacher did not have to be redeployed. The nursery has a fantastic practitioner but making a loss because of the small numbers.

Q: Is there an ability to see a month on month forecast and spend? A: This is the system the LA operates and therefore the school tended to have adhoc informal finance meetings to say this is what budget said, why adverse to that and this is monitored. It is not an intuitive document. MO added that separate spreadsheets are being provided within school which governors should find helpful going forward.

Q: It would be good to see the SEND children income and cost of care. A: The cost of SEND provision is £131,000. Total current cost unbudgeted is £70,000 in-year deficit.

Q: In terms of Pupil Premium (PP), had the same benchmark for next five years. Do we know if we are getting the £47,000 or is this dependent on numbers the school does not have. A: It will be slightly less next year; certain items roll forward in the spreadsheet.

The LA will be asked for a contribution towards SEN. The budget makes a relatively modest assumption for the Foundation of £20,000.

In response to a question on the EHCPs, MO explained the active process. The school will get a consultation letter/email and are provided with 10 working days to respond to the consultation. Schools are now also being asked to go over Published Admission Numbers (PAN).

Q: The school Budget planner indicates that the school is not allocating spending anything on supply teaching but spending £40,000 on insurance for supply teaching staff, can you explain. A: MO explained that the school did spend money on supply Insurance but not £40,000. The school does also allocate some spending to cover supply costs for teacher absence and other purposes.

Action: MO to seek further clarification from the School Business Manager on the supply teacher insurance and report back to governors.

Next steps and approvals

AS outlined the next steps and response to the LA.

The rules required in presenting a deficit budget is the school must also present a Deficit Recovery Plan (DRP), but this is difficult. The DRP will show plans to reduce in-year losses, but assistance is required from the LA.

AS is going to write to the LA to say here is the budget but cannot present a DRP. However, the school is willing to work with the LA on SEN provision and potentially the nursery to get to balanced position.

Governors agreed and approved the draft budget with a proposed resolution:

- That the draft budget for 2025/2026 (and with the projections for the subsequent years) is hereby approved.
- That the Finance Committee have delegated authority to finalise and submit the accompanying Deficit Recovery Plan, it being noted that a recovery of the deficit will not be possible over the relevant period.
- That the Chair and Vice-Chair be authorised to write to the Local Authority to apply for a Licensed Deficit Agreement, and to present the position (and make such requests) on the basis outlined in this meeting.

9.1.1 Confidential P2

Item minuted separately in confidential P2.

9.2 Nursery

Item minuted separately in confidential P2.

10 Safeguarding

Section 11 Audit combined with the Annual Safeguarding Report to Governors

The Annual Safeguarding report was approved by governors and sent to the LA.

Governors noted the on-line Islington Governor Services Training Programme sessions:

- Safeguarding for Governors – Tuesday 3 June, 6-8pm
- Safeguarding Refresher – Thursday 5 June, 6-7pm

- Safer Recruitment (for school leaders and governors) – Thursday 19 and Friday 20 June, both 9.30am to 1pm

Governors noted that the dates for autumn term training will be released later this term.

11 Policy Review

No policies for review.

12 Governor visits/link governor virtual meetings with lead staff

There were no governor visit/link governor reports.

13 Governor training and development and governors' briefings

Governors noted the forthcoming training in the Islington training programme and from other training providers such as the Diocese/Diocesan Board, The Key and the National Governance Association (NGA).

The LBI Governor Training Programme is available in the Resources section of GovernorHub or on [MyLearning](#).

Governors were reminded that, as part of the Governor Advisory Service Level Agreement (SLA), they also have free access to the online training on the National Governance Association (NGA) Learning Link.

14 Future meeting dates and agenda items

22 October 2025, 5.50pm.

15 Any other business, if any, since the preparation of the agenda

15.1 Sub Committees

DH explained that the Learning Committee meets twice a term. Mandy Leatham was previously Chair and will attend as observer on 04 June 2025 to support. MP to Chair the Learning Committee.

Finance - AS confirmed he will continue to Chair the Finance Committee until October 2025, but a replacement will be needed. The role is interesting and can make a difference. Most activity (75%) is done in May and there is a large period of monitoring. There is little to do in autumn term aside from monitoring. SD expressed an interest in the role of Chair, Finance Committee.

Safeguarding; the Safeguarding Committee normally meets once or twice a year, but there are actions that need to be done between meetings. Policies impacted by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) are scrutinised by MO and the Chair of Safeguarding Committee before coming to the FGB.

The safeguarding governor comes into school once a term to check the Single Central Record, register of epi-pens and undertake tours of the school. Bhavini Doyle (Associate member) will continue this term but on the basis someone else will take over in September 2025. FC confirmed an interest in the safeguarding governor role.

Governors are invited to attend any committee.

15.2 Diversity Survey

Each year the LA each does a diversity survey, governors invited to complete.

Action: Clerk to circulate the diversity survey.

15.3 Camden Global Majority Network

This venture is in conjunction with Camden Global Majority Network for governors. It is an opportunity to network, hear from speakers and share good practice. It is open to any governor. The next meeting is on 11 June 2025.

Action: DH to circulate Camden Global Majority Network details.

15.4 Social Event

DH suggested a summer event to say thank you to retiring governors.

Action: DH to organise a summer event for governors to say thank you for their support.

16 Confidential Items (Part Two of the meeting)

Nursery – minuted separately in P2

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7.39pm.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____

Action Log

	FGB 21 May 2025	Who
2 2.2.2	Governance Vacancies Governors to consider people who may be appropriate as a Co-opted governor.	ALL
9 9.1	Financial management / budget Approval of the budget and deficit reduction plan MO to seek further clarification from the School Business Manager on the supply teacher insurance and report back to governors.	MO
15 15.2	AOB Diversity survey Clerk to circulate the diversity survey.	Clerk Closed
15 15.3	AOB Camden Global Majority Network DH to circulate Camden Global Majority Network details.	DH
15 15.4	AOB Social Event DH to organise a summer event for governors to say thank you for their support.	DH
ITEM	FGB 26 February 2025	BY
2 2.1	Governance Compliance - AJ to bring in documents for SBM for the DBS process. 21/05/2025 – will chase AJ about DBS process. 21/05/2025 - MO to send KCSiE 2024 to new parent governors.	AJ MO
2 2.1	Governance Compliance - FC, KM, MO, MP, JR to confirm they have read KCSiE 2024 on GovernorHub. 21/05/2025 - governors reminded to read KCSiE.	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). 21/05/2025 – email exchanges.	DH

5	Minutes/reports from committees Finance Committee - AS, MO and DH to look at the in-year deficit, specifically in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils. 21/05/2025 – discussed in agenda item	AS, MO and DH
5	Minutes/reports from committees Finance Committee - Posts for the Foundation & Finance Committee to be allocated when everyone is in place on the FGB. 21/05/2025 - ongoing	DH/MO
5	Minutes/reports from committees Safeguarding Committee - BD to circulate the Safeguarding Meeting minutes. 21/05/2025 – safeguarding governor will report on safeguarding visit. No meeting needed this term.	BD
9	Safeguarding Annual Safeguarding Report to be circulated to governors for approval via correspondence (MO). 21/05/2025 – sent to LA.	MO
10	Governors Central Meetings MO will look into the Sunflower Project and update governors. 21/05/2025 – MO unaware of the Sunflower Project. SW looked into and inappropriate for the school.	MO SW Closed
11	Governor Training and Development DH to look at Safer Recruitment training for governors. 21/05/2025 – DH to look at further date for Safer Recruitment training.	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. 21/05/2025 – clerk to send link (GovernorHub) re Register of Business Interests to parent governors.	ALL GOVERNORS Due by next meeting