

Barnett Wood Infant School

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 1st April 2025 at 16:00



Present

Marie Cast	MC
Guy Bailey (Chair)	GMB
Sophie Bloxam	SB
Becky Clements	BC
Claire Brooke-Wilson	CBW
Anne Gibbard (Headteacher)	AG
Kelly Headen	KH
Paul Tylor	PT
Beth Warren	BW

In Attendance

Cecile Mazewski (Interim Clerk) and Charlotte Davies (CD) – online for the History Curriculum presentation.

Advice given by governors at this school is incidental to their professional expertise and is not given in their professional capacity.

Governors will respect the confidence of those items of business which a governing body decides and not disclose what individual governors have said or how they have voted within a meeting.

Documents distributed in advance: Agenda, Minutes of the last meeting, HT Report, March FMRs, SDP, Action Register, Policies for review.

Questions, support and challenge = in blue

Item		Action Agreed
1.	Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies had been received. James Sutcliffe did not attend the meeting. Claire Brooke-Wilson informed the Chair that she would be late in arriving. All other governors were present. The meeting was quorate.	
2.	Declarations of Interest No governor declared a conflict of interest in any agenda item. All governors confirmed that their business and education interests were up to date on Governor Hub (GH). GMB reminded the Governing Body that, while not a conflict of interest, while he ran his Sustainability Consulting Business, he could offer the school strategic advice if needed.	
3.	Minutes of the Last meeting Governors agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2025 as a true and accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.	Accountability GMB to sign Minutes
4.	Matters Arising and Actions Governors reviewed the action register and noted all actions were either marked as closed, retained or were carried over as Outstanding actions . Governors discussed the following Outstanding actions in more detail: <div><div>8</div><div>Convene a Deficit Working Group to review the draft budget The debate on reserves was ongoing with Surrey Finance, focusing on whether to build the school's financial reserves or not. The final submission of 25/26 budgets to Surrey is due on 8 May 2025. AG, Lisa Murphy (School Business Manager) and Marie Cast the Finance governor convene to meet before this deadline.</div></div>	Accountability Update Action Register

	<p>The finance team needed to ensure that the budget remained balanced without posting a possible deficit and without depleting reserves. Outstanding action is to confirm that there is no in-year deficit and that the school's budget does not operate at a loss.</p>	<p>AG/ LM/ GMB/ Finance Gov</p>
11	<p>Arrange Parent Governor election GMB reported that Laura Bailey had been elected by parents as the new parent governor, replacing Sophie Bloxam when her term ended on 6 April 2025. SB will become an Associate Member (for a one-year term), focusing on community partnerships as part of the school's strategy. GMB thanked SB for her service to the FGB. Laura Bailey would be invited to join the next FGB meeting, starting her term on 7 April 2025. The Chair also noted strong parental engagement in the election, with excellent candidates, which was extremely positive for the school.</p> <p>Action: GMB to draft a role description for new Associate Member position, and upload to GH for all governors to review.</p>	<p>GMB</p>
5.	<p>Curriculum Presentations • History - Charlotte Davies Since Charlotte Davies joined the meeting online, this presentation was given last, after all other agenda items had been discussed.</p>	
6.	<p>Finance • Update on FMR • Update on Draft Budget 2025-26 • SFVS • Capital budget</p> <p>• <u>Update on FMR and Draft Budget 2025-26</u> AG reported that the school's financial situation had improved significantly. The March FMR had been completed in the last week. The predicted in-year deficit stood at £25,000, but if the current strong budgeting trend continued, this was expected to reduce to a deficit of £12,000. Energy bills and building expenditures had improved.</p> <p>Action: GMB requested a meeting date to be set for the Deficit Working Party to meet, as soon as the draft budgets had been finalised.</p> <p>• <u>SFVS</u> There was a brief discussion on the SFVS submission. GMB requested an Action to check if the SFVS forms had been signed before submission and uploading to GH.</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>GMB/Deficit Working Party</p> <p>AG/GMB</p>
7.	<p>Chair's Actions and Report The Chair advised that he had not needed to take any emergency actions since the last meeting. He acknowledged the need for more regular catchups with AG but stated that the current arrangement was satisfactory and had no further updates to report.</p>	
8.	<p>Headteacher's Report • SEF/SDP update • Attendance • Admissions</p> <p>Governors reviewed the Headteacher's report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. They had submitted questions to AG and these are summarised below:</p>	

Pupil Update - Context

· Our PP and FSM is still below all other schools – how can we be confident we have captured all?

Office staff were confident in potentially identifying families that were struggling. Information about these issues was also included in the September and December school newsletters - parents were asked to check if they might be eligible for Pupil Premium (PP) or Free School Meals (FSM).

GMB noted that the school had significantly lower numbers of FSM children compared to other schools in the area. He emphasised the need for the school to maximize the available funding. Paperwork had been sent to every family in September to complete, if needed.

· Has the number of pupils on Pupil Premium gone up from last year, and same with children with EAL?

The number hovers between 7 and 10, indicating that the school has a relatively small number.

Pupil Update - Admissions

· How to the 2025 admissions for first choice compare to last year?

There were 37 first-choice applications this year, compared to 63 last year, which presented a challenge for the school.

· How do you plan mitigate the risk with the reduction in PAN for reception next year?

It was reported that the school has just under its Published Admission Number (PAN) with 150 pupils. The absence of the Ofsted report was noted as a disadvantage, particularly in such a competitive set of schools in the area. The announcement of available places would be taking place over the Easter holidays.

· Sad to see leavers from Reception, given this cohort was their no1 school of choice – what was the reason here?

A significant challenge arose with St. Peter's being the first choice for a number of families due to changing high school preferences and sibling choices.

· Great to see joiners – again what was their reason and could we target similar parents?

Various reasons but mainly moving into the area and moves from other schools.

The Ofsted report highlighted the school as being highly inclusive, which was a definite positive. An Open Day was being planned for the summer term to target potential parents/pupils.

· Given our view on pupils on roll next year in reception – do we need to look at a part time teaching roll or do we think we will still need?

It was noted that as soon as the pupil number in reception exceeds 30, then an additional teacher will need to be employed.

· For extra marketing, also worth mentioning closer collaboration planned with pre-school to partner more on open days and pre-school children joining lessons at the school to increase appeal

This was noted as a possible option for further marketing the school.

Pupil Update - Attendance

· Has the number of children with persistent absences grown over the last year?

It was reported that the number of cases of Persistent Absence (PA) had not increased since last year, although it was still not as low as was desired.

The school had experienced a very high number of chickenpox cases, resulting in approximately 100 school days missed, which impacted PA numbers. The school was actively working with parents and was aiming for a target of below 5%.

Attendance numbers had improved by 0.5% compared to the previous year, and the school was now emerging from the residual effects of Covid.

· Good steady progress on attendance compared to last year, especially with Becky on mat leave too. Well done. Is there a standout approach with parents that has proven more successful?
Consistency in messaging, along with the weekly newsletter, had proven successful.

· For attendance, the absence of persistent absentees for our SEN pupils is higher than National. Apart from those on a reduced timetable, are there other SEN pupils whose attendance has fallen into this category and if so what is in place to support improving their attendance?
The number of pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) remained low, with six pupils currently on the SEN register and two holding Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). These families were being prioritised in ongoing efforts to increase engagement and improve outcomes.

· Absence – our reception figures (which is normally a year with highest absence) look amazing – what is the story here, is it linked to all being No 1 school of choice parents or is it just luck?
Parents have generally become more aware of the importance of regular attendance.

· Is there a direct link between home visits and this better absence?
As part of this work, home visits have been conducted and attendance leaflets distributed.

· Your data suggests that our most disadvantaged children have poorer attendance than the national average for their cohort – great to see this reporting split – what are we doing to correct this worrying gap?
It was noted that the most disadvantaged pupils tend to have lower attendance rates, which remain below the national average. Governors observed that these pupils often find it easier to remain at home, largely because their parents are not in employment.

Pupil Update - Outcomes

· For the pupil outcomes, the new format is good, easier to read with a more detailed breakdown - is it possible to have the previous year figures and national average too for the next report to be able to effectively compare the data?

Staffing Update

SDP

· Thank you for the excellent Happy Mind presentation on this last meeting, very informative and interesting. I can see this features several times in the development plan- will there be long term impact monitoring completed to understand the success?
AG agreed that it would be beneficial if the long-term impact of the School Development Plan (SDP) could be measured. Progress could be assessed both before and after implementation, and it would be beneficial to have tracking and evidence of the plan's effectiveness. Teachers would receive an impact report to inform them of the school's progress.

Safeguarding , Child Protection, Welfare and Behaviour

· How were the bullying and racist incidents handled? Have the parents of the affected child / children been made aware of how it has been handled (Linked to Ofsted parent view feedback where we had lots of unknowns?)
Safeguarding had been addressed appropriately. A parent survey had been conducted, during which issues of bullying had been raised. Parents had reported these incidents, and they had been dealt with accordingly. Clear and effective communication with the relevant parents had taken place.

Health and Safety

· Health and Safety – were there any accidents and near misses? Even if zero can we please list in the report?

	<p><u>General</u></p> <p>· How confident are you in your practical capacity to continue being part classroom based for the summer term?</p> <p>Do you need any additional support or resource?</p> <p><i>While it had been a busy term, particularly with Sports Day, everyone was working together. The school newsletter had been successfully shared with the school community and had proven to be highly effective. Also acknowledged, was the need to delegate more efficiently moving forward.</i></p> <p>GMB expressed thanks to AG for her concise and informative Headteacher's Report, noting that a succinct approach was often much more effective.</p>	
9.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>A summary of Safeguarding in the school had been included in HT's Report. Governors thanked KH for having conducted a successful Safeguarding monitoring visit and for submitting a comprehensive report (published on GH).</p>	
10.	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>PT reminded governors that one of the focus items on the Risk Register should be the school's budget and contingency planning. It remained unclear whether this responsibility lies with the school or with Surrey County Council (SCC). Governors must understand the risks associated with the contingency fund, given the limited flexibility within the budgets. Ahead of Strategy Day, governors were asked to revisit the Risk Register to identify strategic themes. A thorough review was essential to assess any significant changes and their justifications.</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>GMB/AG Agenda item Strategy Day</p>
11.	<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Audit • Deficit Working Party Report • To note Parent Governor Sophie Bloxam's end of term of office on 6th April • To welcome new Parent Governor <p>• Skills Audit</p> <p>The Skills Audit needed to be completed by all governors (including the newly appointed staff governor). It should be included as an agenda item for Strategy Day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficit Working Party Report • To note Parent Governor Sophie Bloxam's end of term of office on 6th April • To welcome new Parent Governor <p>These matters had been previously discussed during the meeting.</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>GMB/AG Agenda item Strategy Day</p>
12.	<p>Governor Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Visit Reports <p>GMB expressed his gratitude to BW for the excellent Governor Monitoring Visit report that had been uploaded to GH.</p> <p>He reminded the FGB that governors could visit the school at any time, to conduct a monitoring visit. Regarding upcoming visits, he emphasised the need for more focus and planning and ensuring that the appropriate skills were represented during these monitoring visits. He also highlighted the importance of setting out a schedule for each governor visit.</p> <p>BW reminded governors that a Wellbeing monitoring visit and the Headteacher's appraisal had been conducted.</p> <p>To note: The next Governor Monitoring visit would be on Health and Safety.</p> <p>Action: Governors were instructed to arrange their monitoring visits urgently and to ensure that dates were scheduled as soon as possible. Dates to be diarised and added to the Action register.</p> <p>Paul Tylor left the meeting at 17h12.</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>All Governors</p>

13.	<p>Policies Governors reviewed and approved the following policies that had been uploaded to GH.</p> <p>Statutory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accessibility Plan 2025-28 KH/CB-W</i> • <i>Managing Allegations against staff (including low level concerns) Policy.</i> • <i>March 2025 - GB/BW</i> • <i>Instrument of Government Mar 2025 - GB/JS</i> • <i>Privacy Notices Apr 20245 - CB-W/SB</i> • <i>School Complaints Policy Apr 2025 - JS/BW</i> • <i>Equality Information and Objectives Apr 2025 - KH/BC</i> <p>Non-statutory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent Code of Conduct (WhatsApp groups)</i> <p>Governors noted that the proposed WhatsApp Policy appeared to be drafted more as guidance than as a formal policy. It was agreed that a Working Group, consisting of BW, SB, and the newly appointed governor LB, would review the document and develop a revised draft.</p> <p>GMB discussed the process of the policies directly related to monitoring visits, and how these policies could be effectively tested during these visits. He emphasised the importance of assessing whether staff are familiar with the content of key policies, (for example safeguarding.) He highlighted the need to test statutory policies, in particular, to ensure they were being implemented correctly. He also focused on the importance of continuous improvement in both monitoring visits and governance practices. It was noted that almost all policies were available on the school's website.</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>AG update policies on GH</p> <p>BW/SB/LB</p>
5.	<p>Curriculum Presentations (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>History</i> <p>Governors welcomed Charlotte Davies who gave a presentation on the ways in which History was taught and embedded at Barnett Wood.</p> <p><i>Governors asked whether teachers had the flexibility to choose the topics they teach in the history curriculum. It was explained that, while certain topics are mandatory, there was some flexibility with other for example, local history topics such as the history of Ashted and Epsom.</i></p> <p><i>When asked about cross-over with other subjects, CD was noted that history topics tend to be more directed and do not always have clear links with other areas of the curriculum. However, there were clear learning objectives and specific history objectives in place to guide and embed the teaching.</i></p> <p>Governors thanked CD for an informative talk.</p>	
14.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sustainability Report was included as a pre-read within the Headteacher's Report and was made available for governors to review in preparation for approval at the upcoming Strategy Day. • BW reminded the FGB of the importance of ensuring that meeting minutes accurately reflect the discussions that took place, without being open to misinterpretation. It was suggested that this could be added as an item on the Risk Register. Future minutes must be precise and clearly documented to avoid any potential for them to be construed differently. 	<p>All Governors</p>

15.	Dates of Next Meetings <i>Summer 1 - Strategy Day - Monday 19th May 2025 (09:00 - 13:00)</i> <i>Summer 2 - Tuesday 8th July 2025</i>	
16.	Part 2 business as required No Part 2 confidential business noted.	

The meeting ended at 18:04

Signed..... Date.....

