

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
MISSION GROVE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2025
AT 6PM
AT THE SCHOOL AND TEAMS**

Present: Matilda Thaddeus Johns (Chair)

Co-opted Governor(s) : Matilda Thaddeus Johns
Joanne Grainger
Galina Krasteva
Rita O'Farrell
Meshak Taylor
Natasha Scott

Headteacher: Kate Jennings

Local Authority Governor: Nicolae Serban

Parent Governor(s): Joseph Viscomi
Karla Thomas

Staff Governor: Sabah Hakeem

Clerk to the Governors/Trustees: Maddie Hall

Also present: **Debi Swinhoe (School Business Manager)**
Shade Alegbeleye

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
4.2	The board are to confirm with Governor Services that an online DBS is acceptable or not.	Matilda	Next meeting
4.2	Confirm new vacancies and members who's terms are ending	Governor Services	Next meeting
4.2	Natasha to check with Governor Services regarding the vetting process.	Natasha	Next meeting
4.2	Check with Governor Services the outstanding hub declarations for all the new governors	Governor Services	Next Meeting
7.2	Mission Grove to find out if Microsoft Planner is available for the governing body to improve communication.	Mission Grove	Next Meeting
7.1	Find out if there is a training set for summer regarding strategic leadership.	Governor Services	Next meeting.

9	Kate to compile information regarding parental engagement and meeting to provide a report.	Kate	Next meeting.
7.2	Conduct a poll to determine the best timing for this meeting.	Kate	Next meeting
	Agenda Items; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the Safeguarding Culture of the school • SFVS • Admissions 	Governor Services	Immediate
	Date of next meeting: 27 March 2025		

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Meshak Taylor.
- 1.3 The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 9 governors present.

2. NOTICE OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

- 2.1 Nicolae noted that he would like to discuss something confidential at the end of the meeting.
- 2.2 There are actions that need to be discussed that are not on the agenda; performance management reviews, target setting and standards and finance.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 Pecuniary Interests – Governors confirmed receipt of the register of interests.
- 3.2 There were no declarations made pertaining to any of the agenda items for this meeting.

4. GOVERNING BODY

- 4.1 The clerk noted who's vacancies will be coming to an end. Nicolae said he would like to discuss further at the end of the meeting.
- 4.2 The clerk confirmed that all DBS checks have been completed other than Natasha who has an online DBS. The board are to confirm with Governor Services that an online DBS is acceptable or not.

5. MINUTES

- 5.1 Governors received the minutes of the meeting held on 05/12/2024 and apologies were given due to an administrative issue. A new, updated copy of the minutes were sent out prior to the meeting.
- 5.2 Mission Grove facilitated a review of the meeting minutes, highlighting the need to delete specific actions from page one. The group discussed the status of governor declarations, confirming that only one was outstanding. Additionally, several actions were closed as complete, while others were recognized as standard orders of business.
- 5.3 Governor Hub declarations have been completed other than Gemma who is not on the governing body so this has not been completed.
- 5.4 All actions are complete from the previous meeting other than 5.2, which will be discussed in todays meeting for ratifying.
- 5.5 An update was given in regards to the Curriculum Report that Ms Atwal presented in a previous meeting, which includes a recent audit of the literature provision. Key points included the use of a whole-class text for each half term, accompanied by a

progression map. The program also incorporates a phonics soft start in the morning, with a dedicated book area, and children complete independent writing tasks to monitor progress. Priorities include improving SATS results, consistency, phonics, and comprehension skills. A challenge highlighted was the use of accelerated reading for benchmarking, as discrepancies between predicted SATS results and actual outcomes have been noted. Additionally, moderation efforts by teachers and inset training led by Sabah were discussed.

- 5.6 During the finance meeting on 16th January, the staff insurance renewal was discussed, with the decision made to gather additional quotes. Regarding the playground, governors voted to proceed with the chosen company, who provided the necessary insurance certificate. Staff performance updates were also addressed, with all teachers proposed to receive a performance-related decision (details pending). An action item was noted to listen to recording 53.08 for further clarity. Other topics included headteacher expenses for rabbits, budget updates, and an investigation into some specific items. The SEND deep dive revealed a few large staff expenses, but the overall budget remains in surplus and requires monitoring. The pupil premium allocation was also discussed.
- 5.7 Urgent repairs are required for a leaking roof and taps, as open taps have resulted in high water bills and pose a flooding risk. Payroll software is being reviewed, with a decision to assess its effectiveness after one year.
- 5.8 The recent internal audit was positive, with the school now rated as 'reasonable assurance.' Most areas are marked green, with two medium concerns and ten low concerns. The audit identified a few ongoing issues from previous audits that are being addressed.

6. CHAIRS ACTION

- 6.1 In the previous meeting, a lot of time was spent talking about payroll issues and exploring timelines. The parental survey was discussed which is an agenda item and there are a couple of key vacancies in the school. Insurance was discussed as well as the staff insurance policy and costs associated with that.

7. REVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN/SELF EVALUATION

- 7.1 Out of the seven areas reviewed, two key areas requiring development were strategic leadership and accountability. Some training has already been conducted in strategic leadership. Based on the analysis, Matilda suggests that these areas are addressed in the program through a series of training sessions. An action item could be to encourage more governors to sign up for the program.
- 7.2 Additionally, recurring issues are noted each year. It may be beneficial for governors to develop an action plan, which has not been done previously. A one-hour meeting with a select group outside of the main governing board could be arranged. Nic agreed, suggesting that it would be more effective to schedule an all-day or half-day meeting in advance. Action item: conduct a poll to determine the best timing for this meeting. Nic also suggested that governors could connect via Microsoft accounts for better collaboration.

8. ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

- 8.1 A copy of the Annual Effectiveness Report has been added to the documents. This doesn't require a complete rewrite, just a focus on the areas reviewed this year and the steps moving forward. There is no need to publish this until the end of the year.

9. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

- 9.1 During the last governors' meeting, the board discussed challenges related to parental engagement, particularly the low response rate to the survey. However, events such as "Stay and Play" in Reception and parents' evenings have seen strong participation. For school trips, there are often more parents volunteering than

necessary, leading to logistical challenges. The Parent Council continues to strengthen with each meeting, with dates set at the start of the year. To improve survey participation, an incentive, such as a lucky dip for an Argos or Sainsbury's voucher, was suggested. Parent engagement in the playground is high, although attendance at the police safety talk was low. The 2023 Ofsted survey reflected positive feedback, with a satisfactory response rate. However, there may be a need to raise awareness about future surveys. Parents are actively reading the newsletter, which is a positive sign, and this information could also be shared on the website. Additionally, weekly class assemblies are well attended.

10. GOVERNERS TRAINING

- 10.1 Jo attended training on handling allegations, Saba participated in training on [specific topic], and Kate completed training on data protection and inclusivity. The GDPR training is scheduled for Thursday, 6-7 PM, online. Matilda has contacted those who still need to complete safeguarding training.
- 10.2 It was noted that if anyone had any qualifications from other training providers, these can be sent over.

11. HEADTEACHERS REPORT

- 11.1 The report on premium funding is still a standing item.
- 11.2 There has been a good attendance at the open evenings for Reception 2025, with expectations for a higher intake than the current Reception cohort. Work is being done around the school's vision, and it would be valuable to gather governors' feedback. Year 6 students have completed one mock SATs, and the current figures are available. AR and AM will coordinate a date for the next mock SATs week.
- 11.3 Members approved by the courts for special guardianship are responsible for providing consent if needed at school. Looked-after children refer to those who have been fostered or adopted.
- 11.4 Another school improvement partner visit took place on Friday, with a review day scheduled for the end of March. Training inspectors conducted a review of the school. Although an Ofsted inspection is not due, it was deemed beneficial for the school. The Local Authority is funding the school advisor's work. Currently, observations are underway, with a focus on fires, led by Saba as the science lead.
- 11.5 There is a strong focus on mental health and wellbeing.
- 11.6 An advert has gone out and there has been 9 applications. The deadline for this is the 3rd March. It is advertised on jobs go public and the school website. Visits have been encouraged but there have been none as of yet.
- 11.7 Agenda item for the next meeting: *Reflect on the Safeguarding Culture of the school.*
- 11.8 A discussion with the school improvement partner highlighted that the school's priorities were not clearly emphasized at the beginning of the report. The key four focus areas are outlined on page 5. These remain central, along with the strategies, achievements, and ongoing initiatives. One point the school improvement partner did not mention is that some items in the school development plan are ongoing. A successful practice for year group leads is a detailed document that holds teams accountable, clearly defining roles and responsibilities. This approach is currently effective. Heads of Year review the RAG ratings and provide feedback to the Senior Leadership Team.
- 11.9 HT has met with the school leadership team and a report is in draft at the moment. There will be another report after the review has been done.

12. TO REVIEW AND AGREE AND STAFF STRUCTURE CHANGES

- 12.1 A meeting was held with the admin team to clarify their roles. The team expressed anxiety, having worked with Debbie for the past 11 years. Efforts will be made to

support the admin team and ensure they feel secure in their roles. A review of job descriptions will take place, but there are no plans for any restructuring at this time.

13. THEMED AUDIT REPORTS

- 13.1 The terms have been agreed, but there is a dispute regarding 14 characters. Item 11 concerns budget monitoring, and Item 12 involves the financial management system, which is a database. A former finance officer's accounts have been closed, and no further action can be taken, as part of the audit trail. This has been explained, and it is unlikely to affect the outcome.
- 13.2 Regarding Item 5 on the FMS, we have a recorded balance of £746, but only £12 is currently available. £764 needs to be written off, and Kate has agreed to this. This was presented to the auditors, and we seek confirmation from the governors on whether they agree. Action required?
- 13.3 Item 6 addresses historical debts, both related to Waltham Forest. One debt has been paid, while another remains uncollectible. There is also an invoice for £250 that needs to be written off. The LAC team has been unable to access the system due to the age of the debt. All evidence has been provided to the auditors. Additionally, there is an outstanding LAC team invoice from 2020, totalling £1,825, with a credit owed for funded nursery fees. The governing body is requested to approve writing off these debts.

14. FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

- 14.1 The school is currently working with HMRC regarding PAYE, and the process is ongoing. Regarding payroll, a percentage of staff have not yet logged into their pension portal. For the annual budget, there is a focus on ensuring that term-time only staff and those on 52-week contracts are correctly paid for annual leave. There are also concerns around high levels of staff sickness. In terms of asset management, recommendations are being reviewed. A health and safety issue has been identified in Year 6, involving a leaking roof and a compromised wall. It has been advised to contact the Local Authority regarding these concerns, particularly near the ramp area.

15. SCHOOLS FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARDS

- 15.1 As part of the annual review process, maintained schools are required to complete and submit the SFVS to the local authority by 31 March 2025. The review will be the sole agenda item for the meeting on Thursday, 20th March. The SFVS will be circulated to all members in advance and will be the main focus of the next meeting. Budget monitoring has been reviewed by the Finance Committee.

16. SCHOOL POLICIES

Committees agreed the below can all be ratified

- 16.1 Safeguarding Policy
- 16.2 Pay
- 16.3 Home School Agreement
- 16.4 RE
- 16.5 Pupil Premium
- 16.6 Equality Statement

17. ADMISSIONS (NGA)

- 17.1 This will be carried forward to the next meeting.
ACTION: Deferred Agenda item – Admission NGA

18. DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- 18.1 Date of next GB meeting; 27 March 2025.

Autumn 2024

18.2 Agenda Items; *Reflect on the Safeguarding Culture of the school, SFVS, Admissions*

18.3 Governors briefings will be held on:
Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 6:0pm via MS teams.

19. AOB

19.1 Goodbyes were said to Debbie.

19.2 Non governors were asked to leave the room to discuss confidential items.