



MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
DARNHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL
HELD ON THURSDAY 16th MAY 2024 AT 17.30pm

Members of the Governing Body

Name	Category of Governor	Date of end of tenure	Designated Role	Attended
Mrs Sarah Tomlinson	Headteacher		Headteacher	✓
Mr Richard Strachan	Co-opted	19/05/2028	Chair SEP 25	✓
Ms Jackie Stringer	Co-opted	20/05/2025	Co Vice Chair May 24	✓
Mrs Steph Crane	Co-opted	09/05/2027	Co Vice Chair May 24	Apologies
Mr Chris Bate	Co-opted	09/05/2027		Apologies
Mr Andrew Robinson	Co-opted	01/03/2027		✓
Ms Chloe Lupton	Staff	21/10/2025		✓
Mr Richard Mault	Parent	19/10/2026		Apologies
Mrs Lyndsey Tasker	Parent	25/03/2025		✓
Mr Colin Meachin	LA	09/07/2024		✓
Vacancy	Co-opted			
Vacancy	Co-opted			
Also in Attendance				
Natasha Mulholland	Dep. Headteacher			✓
Stephen Ewell	Clerk to Governors			✓

Part One Non-Confidential Minutes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received in advance of the meeting from Steph Crane, Chris Bate and Richard Mault.

RESOLVED:

- That the apologies received from Steph Crane, Chris Bate and Richard Mault be accepted.
- That the meeting was deemed quorate.



2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of pecuniary interest for this meeting.

RESOLVED: that there were no additional declarations of pecuniary interest for this meeting.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FGB

The Chair informed Governors that Chloe Lupton had been successful in finding a position at another school and would be leaving her position as Staff Governor. Following an election a new Staff Governor Matthew Dunning has been appointed, and he will join the FGB at the next meeting. The Chair and FGB wished Chloe all the best for the future.

The Chair added that unfortunately, Hayley Rigby had resigned from her position as Co-opted Governor, and that there was now a gap for a Governor with Health and Safety experience on the FGB.

Governors considered the appointment of Co-Vice Chair and Jackie Stringer indicated her wish to continue in the role. The re-appointment of Steph Crane would be considered at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That Jackie Stringer be re-appointed as Co-Vice Chair for a further one-year term.

Colin Meachin indicated that he would be keen to continue in the role of LA Governor. The Clerk would send through the appropriate form for completion.

Governors considered the two Co-opted Governor vacancies, and the Chair stated that he had been contacted by a parent who had expressed an interest in joining the FGB and had Legal and Health and Safety experience. The Chair will have a more formal discussion with the parent, and hopefully this will move forward positively.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Governors considered the non-confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th March 2024, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the non-confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th March 2024 were confirmed to be a true record.

The minutes would be signed electronically.



5. MATTERS ARISING

Governors reviewed the actions carried forward from the previous meeting. Both actions would be carried forward.

AGENDA ITEM NO.	ACTION	BY WHOM	UPDATE
28 MAR 24 Item 6.	To include a cover sheet to the Finance Committee minutes.	Helen Young	Ongoing
28 MAR 24 Item 6.	To confirm the dates for the future Finance Committee meetings.	Helen Young	Ongoing

6. CURRICULUM TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Curriculum Development Report was shared on screen for Governors to review.

The Headteacher and Natasha Mulholland had developed the report, recognising that the curriculum was progressive in terms of its content, but there was still work to be done in ensuring that the key skills being taught are essential, purposeful and progressive. The Intent element of the curriculum has been re-written, so that it can be easily understood by both children and adults.

Intent should be a new inclusive learning journey that begins in the children's local community. It should then be developed to look at the whole country and beyond this to exploring the wider world. The aim is for the children to be prepared for their whole life journey and be curious as well as developing resilience. Recognise that it is okay for the children to make mistakes, and this is part of the journey, which will help build resilience. The school will also undertake yearly curriculum overviews.

The Headteacher had met with Mrs Jardine as there were some concerns over the use of Literacy Counts in EYFS, and so the scheme will be utilised from Year 1 and its use in Reception will be reviewed in due course to ensure it is effective.

Q. *Why has the school moved to the new Literacy Counts scheme?*

A. *The previous scheme was covering too many genres in a half term and the children were not embedding their understanding. It was also proving weaker on writing for purpose.*

Natasha Mulholland added that they had reviewed schools using the new scheme, that had more successful writing outcomes and also the textbooks being used are more up-to-date. The scheme has been trialled and very positive feedback has been received.

The Year 6 Curriculum Overview was reviewed, highlighting Writing Outcomes and Writing Purpose. The aim is to help the children to make connections in their learning, and the school has devised an interconnected curriculum to support this. The school will



also manage the progression through the school years for each area of the curriculum and ensure that teachers can readily access the required information.

Key Learning Documents – there has been lots of work to highlight the essential knowledge that the children need to know, and to ensure that teaching plans include the key elements of teaching for each half term of learning.

The Year 1 Key Learning Document for Geography was provided as an example. It clearly highlights the national curriculum objectives which are the areas that the children must learn, and then other areas of learning will be added.

A number of other schemes have also been purchased to support the delivery of the curriculum plan. The next area of focus will be on pedagogy for teaching and learning, and the Headteacher will be supported by James Marsh. There will be an emphasis on increasing the effectiveness of TAs.

The Headteacher summarised stating lots of work had taken place to create this overview, and further work will be required to finalise. The output will be delivered to the Design Team in June so it can be circulated in July ready for implementation from September 24.

Governors discussed the Curriculum Plan and the Chair noted that it was a very important piece of work. Governors noted that the inter connectivity between subjects was a strong development.

Q. How will the Curriculum Plan cater for children with different abilities?

A. The teachers will be able to adapt the Curriculum Plan to the needs of higher achieving students, as well as children with some level of SEN in their lesson planning.

RESOLVED: Governors received the Curriculum Development Report.

Lyndsey Tasker joined the meeting at 18:16pm

Leadership Partner Visit Report – James Marsh 9th May 24

The report was shared on screen for Governors to review, and it was noted that a number of strengths had been highlighted.

Recommendations were made as follows:

- It was noted that Leaders need to spend more time refining the expectations for how they expect teachers to teach and deliver the school's curriculum. Leaders need to pay particular attention to pedagogy using the 'I do, we do, you do' stages of practice and Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction.



- Staff to ensure that transition times in the Infants are more effective as currently too much learning time is wasted.

The Headteacher stated that following this recommendation she had spent three days observing teaching in the infants as well as looking to increase the effectiveness of phonics teaching.

- It is essential that learning intentions are always made clear to pupils in every lesson. Teachers to ensure that the learning intentions and key vocabulary are shared every lesson and referred to throughout lessons.

The Headteacher stated that the school would ensure that learning intentions are clear in every lesson.

There were no major concerns regarding the three recommendations made, and the school would ensure that all are followed up on effectively.

RESOLVED: Governors received the Leadership Partner Visit Report.

7. FINANCE

Finance Report May 24

The Finance Report was shared on screen.

Governors reviewed the summary of SLA renewals with CWAC that required approval. Governors considered the Sickness Insurance for teachers £8,349 and TAs £13,182. Last year the school received a net £5,000 into the budget to offset sickness absence. It was noted that in the past the school has run without insurance, and it proved costly to the school. One benefit of the CWAC insurance is that the school does not need to declare any pre-existing medical conditions.

The insurance does not cover Admin and Site staff. Governors requested that a calculation of the cost of supply staff to cover staff sickness be undertaken. Lyndsey Tasker indicated that she would be able to visit the school and review the Sickness Insurance.

ACTION: SBM to calculate the cost of supply staff to cover staff sickness for 23/24.

ACTION: Lyndsey Tasker to visit the school and review the Sickness Insurance.

The school is considering a change to the number of ICT visits, reducing from visits every week to 3 visits every 4 weeks. This should provide a saving to the school. Governors approved the proposed reduction in the frequency of IT visits.



RESOLVED: Governors approved the renewal of the CWAC SLA contracts including the reduction in the frequency of IT visits. This was subject to a review of the Sickness Insurance.

Benchmarking Exercise

The SBM had conducted a benchmarking exercise which compares spend against other local schools and other schools with resource provisions. The output was reviewed at the Finance Committee. A series of charts was available for review and a link was provided.

The following areas were highlighted:

- Spend is lowest on teaching staff across the other local schools.
- Spend is higher than most other local schools on education support staff and in the middle for spend on non-educational support staff.

The Headteacher added that the analysis for teaching staff was not consistent so would skew the results. Energy costs were high, and this was considered to be due to the school having two separate sites, as well as older energy inefficient buildings.

Q. Who does the school use for energy supply?

A. It is with CWAC who should be able to provide competitive pricing due to bulk buying of the energy.

RESOLVED: Governors received the Benchmarking exercise.

SEN Funding

A summary of the current situation regarding SEN funding was provided. The school is constantly chasing the SEN team for confirmation of when funds claimed are likely to be received, as well as updates on the additional SEN funding applied for.

Currently included within the budget is £91,571 SEN income that is not yet confirmed as being due to be received from CWAC.

Some SEN funding had been sent to St Chads for a period of 18 months, that should have been received by Darnhall.

Q. Has this funding now been received by the school?

A. Yes, it has been received and equates to c£10k.



RESOLVED: Governors received SEN Funding update.

The Headteacher noted that the next Finance Audit would take place on the 24th June 24 to review the Action Plan.

Q. *Did the school request this audit?*

A. *No, it was scheduled to follow up on the Action Plan.*

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meeting was held on 18th April 2024 attended by the Headteacher, Richard Strachan, Jackie Stringer & Helen Young

A review of the updated budget papers which had been received on Monday 15th April took place. The papers were substantially different from the papers that had been reviewed by the FGB on 28th March 24. It was agreed that further analysis was required to establish the true position, and to enable the Headteacher to set a staffing structure going forward.

RESOLVED: Governors received the Finance Committee minutes and Finance Report.

Budget 24/25

The latest version of the Budget 24/25 had only just been received and was shared on screen for Governors to review. The summary is detailed below:

SECTION 1 - SUMMARY MEDIUM TERM PLAN	Actual 2022-23	Forecast 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	Forecast 2025-26
(A) Balance Brought Forward (previous E)	-48,515	13,402	-114,196	-74,855
(B) Projected Income (From F)	2,712,482	3,035,122	3,257,920	3,260,880
(C) Projected Expenditure (from D)	2,650,565	3,162,720	3,218,578	3,261,073
(D) In year surplus/-deficit (B-C)	61,917	-127,599	39,342	-193
(E) Projected Carry Forward (A+D)	13,402	-114,196	-74,855	-75,048

Governors reviewed the revised Budget and noted that the closing position for 23/24 had worsened from a £79k deficit previously to £114k deficit. The Chair raised concern as to how much worse the figure had become.

Q. *Is this now the final outturn for 23/24?*

A. *Yes, the final position is £114k deficit.*

Governors noted that the deficit is reduced somewhat in 24/25 by £39k, but that there is no further improvement in 25/26 and for CWAC to approve the budget, Governors would need to provide a clear plan for removing the deficit.



Governors discussed the potential reasons for the in-year numbers changing so dramatically during the year.

Q. *Are the problems arising from Unit 4?*

A. *The new system has caused issues as the process is different, but it is not inaccurate in terms of the actual figures produced.*

Governors considered the £92k of SEN income currently included within the budget, which is not yet confirmed as being due to be received from CWAC. Governors agreed that it needed to be included within the budget as it is expected to be received, but that it was right to be mindful of the impact of not receiving some or all of this funding.

Q. *Are the new mobile classrooms included within the budget?*

A. *No, they are not included so this budget is a worst case scenario.*

The Chair added that he had emailed Mark Dixon from the SEN Team, for an answer regarding the potential funding for the mobile classrooms.

Governors were in agreement that they were not in a position to approve the Budget as they had only recently had sight of the updated budget, and further review was required. In addition, the budget needed to illustrate a clear plan to remove the deficit carry forward position.

It was agreed that an Extra FGB meeting be scheduled for Tuesday 28th May to approve the budget in advance of the submission deadline. In advance of this meeting Lyndsey Tasker and Jackie Stringer would undertake a further review of the budget including a line-by-line analysis which would focus on staffing costs.

RESOLVED: Governors scheduled a further Budget approval meeting for Tuesday 28th May.

8. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Headteacher's Report was the Curriculum Development Report which had been received under Item 7.

9. POLICIES

The following policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health And Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy

There were no substantive changes to the policies presented to the meeting and the policies were approved by governors.



RESOLVED: Governors approved the five policies presented to the meeting.

The Complaints Policy would now be presented to the next FGB meeting.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY

The CWAC Health and Safety Report had only been received yesterday, and included responses to the Governors Health and Safety review, as well as a number of actions. The Report would be tabled on the next FGB meeting Agenda.

11. GOVERNANCE

There were no Governance matters raised at the meeting.

The Headteacher thanked the Chair for his support on a number of matters relating to finance, including the signing off of the SFVS return, plus the email sent in relation to the SEN Funding.

12. COMMUNICATION TO THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS/CHAIRS ACTIONS

There were no matters brought to Governors' attention.

13. DECISION SUMMARY

- Re-appointed Jackie Stringer as Co-Vice Chair.
- Received the Curriculum Development Report.
- Received the Leadership Partner Visit Report.
- Received the Finance Committee minutes and Finance Report
- Approved the scheduling of the Budget Approval Meeting.
- Approved the five policies presented to the meeting.
- Received the Confidential Staffing Update.
- Received the Safeguarding Update.

14. AOB

There were no additional non-confidential matters for Governors to discuss.

Natasha Mulholland left the meeting at 19:28pm.



15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 11th July 24.

The 24/25 meeting schedule is detailed below.

FGB	Thursday	26/09/2024	17:30
FGB	Thursday	24/10/2024	17:30
FGB (Teams)	Thursday	28/11/2024	17:30
FGB	Thursday	16/01/2025	17:30
FGB	Thursday	13/02/2025	17:30
FGB	Thursday	13/03/2025	17:30
FGB	Thursday	01/05/2025	17:30
FGB	Thursday	05/06/2025	17:30
FGB (Teams)	Thursday	03/07/2025	17:30

Signed: **Date:**

There following actions were carried forward to the next meeting.

ACTION PLAN

AGENDA ITEM NO.	ACTION	BY WHOM	UPDATE
28 MAR 24 Item 6.	To include a cover sheet to the Finance Committee minutes.	Helen Young	
28 MAR 24 Item 6.	To confirm the dates for the future Finance Committee meetings.	Helen Young	
16 MAY 24 Item 7	SBM to calculate the cost of supply staff to cover staff sickness for 23/24.	Helen Young	
16 MAY 24 Item 7	Lyndsey Tasker to visit the school and review the Sickness Insurance.	Lyndsey Tasker	