Carden Primary and Nursery School - FGB Minutes

Meeting Type	**Full Governing Body**	
Date:	Thursday 5th December 2024	
Time:	5.00pm	
Location	*Carden Primary School – in person*	
Quorum:	For decisions to be binding at least one half of current governors are required. The meeting was quorate throughout.	
Governors Present:	Laura Sibley (HT) Alistair McNair (Chair) Linda Newman (Vice Chair) Nicola Claber	Nigel McCutcheon Esther Garibay (via Teams link) Carl Pittaway Lisa Bryant
Clerk	Zoë Heaton	
Guests	Paul Harrington (Deputy Head)	
Apologies	Sam Baker (work commitments) / Helen Wilson	

Acronyms which may be included in minutes	
CP	Child Protection
ASC	After-School Club
EHCP	Educational HealthCare Plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
ESBA	Emotionally Based School Avoidance
KYSV	Know Your School Visit
PP	Pupil Premium
PTA	Parent / Teacher Association
RWM	Reading Writing Maths
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SG	Safeguarding
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
S&LC	Speech & Language Centre
SMRA	School Resource Management Advisor
SPP	Sports Pupil Premium

Item	**Summary of Discussion**
1	The chair welcomed governors to the last meeting of the year. Apologies were noted. There were no declarations of interest in the agenda.
2	**GB business and membership** **Appointment of new staff governor:** Governors had received the application and skills audit information for the new staff governor's role. LB was automatically assigned to the GB as she was the sole candidate for the position of new staff governor in the election. LB's application was approved and she was welcomed as new staff governor to the board by the governors.
3	**Pupil Premium Report** – update from RM (PP Lead) was previously circulated to GB. In the absence of the PP lead the HT invited questions concerning the PP report. The Vice chair requested an amendment to the introductory paragraph of the PP report due to misleading statement about allocation of PP funds.

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[ACTION: Clerk / HT to amend PP report introductory statement before presentation as official document on the Carden Website]

In the future, would the school do anything differently? – Each PP strategy report runs for three years. After some training and discussion with SENDCo the plan would be to locate more funds into Quality First Teaching in the next strategy 3-year plan.

Why is there no response to 'Challenge 6' in the PP report? – There is relevant information relating to this challenge at the end of the report under 'Challenge 5'. This should be corrected.

[ACTION: HT / Clerk to amend challenge number on the last page of report, from 5 to 6].

Does Carden have a higher level of PP than other local schools and will the changes in admission priorities affect the school? – Yes, but the changes will not really affect Carden as we were not chosen as single school catchment and in the new approach PP would only be the 3rd priority down list.

Governors sought to clarify the issues surrounding the boundary changes for catchment areas affecting applications to secondary school. The vice chair said the changes were in consultation and that there was quite a bit of misinformation circulating around this issue.

Governors recognised that there was progress shown in reading, writing, phonics, and maths with the investment from the PP and, therefore represented positive value for money.

Sports Premium Report - update report was previously circulated to GB.

In the absence of the SPP lead the HT invited questions concerning the SPP report.

What percentage of children attend an ASC? – Not sure of exact percentage but they are all now on a data sheet and able to be tracked. This tracking system was paused due to the pandemic and then to our PE Lead's absence. We are re-starting the process now and will be able to track every child with the aim of every child accessing extra-curriculum clubs either before, after or during school time. We will analyse halfway through the year and target those children who have not yet accessed any clubs, creating new ones to suit if necessary.

Is the outdoor gym being well used? - Yes, it is well used, especially when not able to open the field.

Governors noted that Carden stated 95% of children being able to swim by the end of their time at primary. This was thought to be the highest in Brighton and Hove and therefore commendable.

Finally, it was noted by governors that this might be the last year of Sports Premium funding by the government.

How would a cessation of SPP funding impact Carden – A lot, as it pays for most of ASCs, transport to sports events and aspects of the swimming pool including lifeguards.

Governors acknowledged that the funding may not be phased out but just weaved into other funding streams and paid and accounted for in a different way, but that it was something to keep an eye on going forward. The vice chair was to follow this news with the DofE.

Is the swimming pool being used as regularly as we hoped? – Unfortunately not at the start of the term due to maintenance problems but is now up and running and back on schedule. Also

	starting to use the pool as an alternative provision for SEN children and hoping to expand this whereby SEN children would have timetabled times out of class for swimming lessons.
4	The previous FGM Minutes (25/09/24) were circulated to governors prior to the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the chair. There were no matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda. Actions from the previous FGB minutes were discussed and considered: ACTION – HT to approach Patcham High to enquire about parent governors and teachers – Completed – The HT told governors that the HT was keen on the idea and would definitely bear in mind next time parents made enquiries. ACTION: AM to email EG the HT advert to reuse some text on diversity for adverts - Completed. ACTION: AM to ask Barnstormers theatrical group based at Patcham Methodist Church if willing to provide free performance at Carden - Completed. AM had spoken to the group who had agreed they would be willing to do it, but would have to be next time as were booked up for current Christmas performances. ACTION: PH to send termly curriculum update to Chair of CLA going forward – Completed. PH currently writing the next update and would email on at end of term. He had also recently sent through details of Subject Leadership tasks and work taken place on inset days. ACTION: Clerk to change date or time of forthcoming HSW meeting to accommodate governors attendance and let GB know – Completed. ACTION: LS will inform GB of training and other events for potential visits e.g. Empowered approach training day Monday 4th of November, other dates to be confirmed – Completed. ACTION: Clerk to organise staff governor election and speak to AB about the positives of being a staff governors to include in the election email – Completed. ACTION: Governors who had undertaken SG training elsewhere to check evidence of this is received by PH (DSL) or the Clerk – Completed by all governors except HW. **[AM to contact HW, who was provided with PowerPoint SG training document sent by PH to provide signature as evidence of completion]** ACTION: Clerk to email HW re SEND role training and SG training – Completed. ACTION: EG to contact videographer friend re the possibility of making short parent videos for the website. – Carried forward, EG to action when returned to UK. ACTION: Clerk to update GB meetings 2024-2025 on the website - Completed.
5	**HEADTEACHER REPORT:** HT report and SDPs had been circulated to GB in advance. The HT went through the report headings and invited questions. **Admissions** -

Overall Carden was still gaining more children than had leaving. Two children left due to housing issues that were impacting their wellbeing and ability to attend school

Attendance –
Governors noted that attendance was slightly up on this time last year. However, the HT highlighted poorer attendance as the term progressed towards winter and Christmas.

If there is statically lower attendance in the second half of the Autumn term, could heavier workload for pupils be shifted to other times of the year when better attendance? – Not really as the curriculum doesn't work like that, but types of work, for example, opportunities for story writing in English, will come up again each term. For Maths, the learning gradually builds up over the year with overlap and repetitions to consolidate learning. Generally, the harder work comes later in the year anyway.

A governor added that no school would adapt its curriculum to suit attendance.

Staffing -
Governors noted that the current staff picture looked settled. The HT added that, since the HT report, one member of the teaching staff had been signed off work until the start of next term.

How is the new SENDCo settling in and how are you feeling about the appointment? - Really good. She has settled in quickly, is present, proactive, has her own ideas and has got to know all the children really quickly. Being based upstairs in the EYFS area has proved excellent in terms of seeing the Nursery and Year Reception children on a daily basis and therefore being in the best position to identify those children needing additional support early on. Parents have also given very positive feedback.

Governors were pleased to know this was going well, especially given the importance of the role due to SEN being so prevalent at Carden.

Wellbeing -
The HT pointed out that this time of year was often difficult for wellbeing due to the transition of a new year and the season change. She added that the school was seeing some pockets of challenging behaviour which they were working with the children, families and local authority to support. She recognised that behavioural incidents impacted wellbeing and was important that governors were aware of it.

The DHT added that there had been a number of safeguarding issues in Year 6 which had come to light in the community and this was affecting some children's behaviour. It was good to be aware of this and understand what was going on at home for some pupils. A strategy meeting was held to identity some of the behaviours in light of the background picture. Sharing this information with relevant staff both helps them deal with the behaviours and their wellbeing too.

The staff governor wanted to emphasis to governors that SLT had managed wellbeing issues really well, were very responsive in putting something in place to support. She felt that there was always a member of staff to talk to if needed and that staff were looked after as a team. She said staff appreciated being given a 'wellbeing' afternoon on the inset day in recognition of how hard they worked.

Governors were pleased there was a Christmas party planned and the HT confirmed it would be well attended. She also said there was a shared breakfast planned for the end-of-term inset day.

Outcomes for children and other learners -

Do you think the lower results were noticed, or concerned prospective parents and was this evident at the recent open days? – No questions about it were asked at the meetings, although obviously we don't know if parents research the data. As we were expecting these figures, we were open about it at the parent meetings but emphasised our focus on progress and value added experiences benefitting the whole child.

Janis, the schools advisor, recently carried out a 'know your school' (KYSV) visit, and the HT was awaiting her report. However, she gave very positive verbal feedback and had no concerns about the teaching, classroom environment and management. She was aware this was unfortunately not reflected in the results yet. The HT told governors this year's Year 6 results would also not see improvement due to a cohort with high levels of SEN (over 50%), and disadvantage.

SLT had looked at linking up with local schools with a similar profile (e.g. % of FSM) as Carden but with better SATs results to achieve some informative and helpful external moderation.
The HT added that Carden should keep faith in the way things were being done but that it could take 2-3 years to start showing in the results data.

Secondary schools receive breakdown of GCSE results data so can see and analyse each question. Would it be helpful to have the same from the SATs results to be able to focus on where the knowledge gaps are? – Carden does not receive this level of detailed information automatically from the LA but are aware that fractions are always prominent and therefore provide maths fraction workshops. LS and HB have also attended an Oracy course which provides information on the vocabulary needed for the tests.

The HT added that the teachers were able to identify areas of difficulty and used practice papers to support this knowledge, however she would contact Natasha, the assessment co-ordinator, to try and gain knowledge about what to prepare for.

[ACTION: HT to contact Assessment Coordinator for SATS information].

How is the new maths system embedding? – It has settled in well now and feels like teachers know what they are doing. Pupil voice will be in report next week to gage how they are getting on with it.

How do you feel this attempt at a shift culture around expectations is going and whether the parents are engaging with the learning?

The HT affirmed that Carden is trying to increase the number of opportunities for parents to come into school informally and regularly to provide room for conversation and the chance to give out tips for supporting their children at home and information on specific goals in a non-threatening, casual-feel atmosphere. For example:

- An open afternoon to take place next week for parents to come in and look at their children's work books.
- The EYFS team have initiated a 'story time' to take place half-termly, inviting parents in to share stories with their children for 10mins on Friday. This would model 'How to read and tell a story' giving parents scaffolding around this important literacy area. Hope to show simple things that parents can do early on to build confidence for them and for their child's reading.
- Bespoke meetings for year 6 parents to learn about how to support their children. These have been well attended in the past, especially for those parents new to year 6. After the

initial meetings interest often wanes for follow-up meetings. PH (DHT) keeps a list of those who have not come and then follows up, even phoning them individually.
- Booster groups provided after school to support children in preparation for SATs.
- The SEN support group was created and has proven proactive in getting more parents involved. The group has met with TS (SENCo) and they are invited to wellbeing meetings.

Despite these attempts to communicate and engage parents, it is difficult to reach everybody and change some entrenched negative perceptions around school.

The governors discussed this issue touching on how some parents are fearful and intimidated in the school environment due to their own experiences and that often negative attitudes around learning mask these fears such as maths being too hard and that it is not the parents' job to teach their children. Governors recognised that in fact, parents are the primary educators and extremely important part of their child's learning and have a huge impact on literacy levels.

Commented [ZH1]:

The HT promoted a gentle approach with parents taking the pressure off them by suggesting the school would take responsibility for most aspects, such as teaching phonics and to just suggest one thing like sharing a story they enjoy. She also advocated a more casual approach whereby parents are invited in for class assemblies and then taken back in the classrooms to do a bit of timetable practice with children.

Governors appreciated that Carden was clearly already thinking a lot about this area.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment -
The schools LA advisor carried out KYSV visit on the 27th November.

[ACTION: HT to share KYSV visit feedback with GB at next FGB meeting.]

Extra- Curriculum & Enrichment -
Are there some students who are unable to access this provision? – Some of the S&LC children are not able to come to the ASCs as they are taken home via school transport taxis. However, many of these children do come to the lunchtime clubs. Also sometimes siblings are unable to access, as logistics at pick up time made it too tricky for parents to organise. They could be encouraged to join the drop in dance and Lego sessions and other lunchtime clubs.

Who runs the clubs? – All clubs are run by staff expect for the official ASC, PlayPE. They are all free apart from those externally run and skateboarding, which is funding a ramp.

Parent governors noticed that many of the non-sports clubs seemed to be on the same day, which made it difficult to do more than one. The HT agreed that there was currently a bit of overlap, but that next year clubs would be offered to different year groups, including gardening club.

What percentage of children access provision? - Not sure of exact numbers but as keep a record can work this out and provide this data in the curriculum report for governors including a PP and non PP breakdown.

[ACTION – PH to work out percentage data for children accessing extra-curriculum provision with PP and non-PP breakdown for curriculum report / next FGB.]

Governors agreed that it would be a massive achievement if every child accessed extra curriculum provision throughout the year.

	Governors thanked the HT for her update. **Federation / Local picture - Confidential item – see separate pink paper document** [PH left 18.26]
6	**Finance** – All relevant papers were previously circulated to the governors. **Pay Policy 24/25** - HT presented the revised Pay Policy and confirmed this closely mirrored the LA's model policy. All governors had read and approved the Pay Policy 24/25 **Pay increments** - The D&R Chair reported that pay increments had been processed and previously approved by the pay committee. **Audited accounts for School Fund** - They had been audited and the FGB accepted them formally. **Monthly outturn (Oct)** The D&R chair provided a synopsis of the last completed outturn. She confirmed that SLT and BM were doing an amazing job to keep the budget on the right side of the line and controlling it each month, however, there were constraining factors and any more expenditure at this point would make it nearly impossible to stay in credit. There was a surplus but this was reliant on incoming monies owed by UK insurance policy claims (40K) arriving by end of March 2025. BM was withholding 32K School UK premium until these monies were paid. The Chair had questioned why the budgeted amount for 144 PP children was underpaid. The BM explained that this was an estimated number but the actual number on Census day was 132. How would academisation affect deficit budgets? - It would not be wiped out but often the trust would pay off half of it. Governors commended the BM for their incredible work despite the falling reception numbers taking their toll on schools. Whereby some other schools were hugely in deficit, Carden appeared very active in its preparation for this and this should be recognised. **Governor's Scheme of Delegation** This review had been made by the D&R chair in discussion with the BM. She confirmed Carden was using the version closely based on the LA model policy, with only one minor being made in title of BM. All amounts had been reviewed and deemed reasonable. Governors approved the new Governors' Scheme of Delegation policy. **[ACTION: Clerk to upload agreed version of Pay Policy and Governors' Scheme of Delegation on to SchoolBus as agreed].**
7	**Feedback from committees:** (HSW minutes from 6th November 2024 previously circulated) The HSW Chair summarised the recent HSW committee meeting for the FGB: • FW (Premises Manager) attended the meeting which was very useful.

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- HT thanked for providing committee with quote from Buxton's and acknowledged it was too high.
- Looked at update SEN report and noted excellent attendance for SEN children.
- Usage of the sensory rooms was discussed in terms of logistics and looked at ways of tackling location issue. The HT confirmed that this would be addressed at a support staff meeting.
- Two improvements in individual children's attendance, one had gone from 48% last year to 100% this year so far, and one improved from about 55% to 93%.
- Fire Drill had taken place with no issues. Another one to take place unannounced in the spring term which will be linked to the lockdown policy.
- In relation to action points from the ESCC Fire Service report 2023, access to the boiler room had been resolved and Fire service happy with the arrangement
- In relation to the nine outstanding action points from 2022 report nearly all dealt with apart from doors on lower wing which were not compliant. This was due to cost but now booked in for repair at Easter.
- Contract lettings to Operatic Society, Silverbox and PlayPE going well
- Noted that the upstairs lettings should comply with fire drill – this aspect had gone well.
- No significant contract works planned.
- Feedback from the H&S walks included: blinds required refixing or replacement; fire exit signs to be repositioned or removed; Art storeroom to be cleared and tidied.
- In the wellbeing and mental health item, pupils were reported to have returned well to school and year reception had settled better than last year. There were three exclusions, which had proved difficult for both children and staff.
- Parents' wellbeing was worst affected by housing problems with several in temporary accommodation and one family moved to Eastbourne.
- The empowerment approach was discussed. Reported that some staff taking it on board well and others more resistant. Governors were positive about the approach and talked about the practical side of implementation both for different sized groups and for different age groups.
- There was an online parent workshop on the empowerment approach which was not well attended by parents from Carden. The HT felt Carden needed to advertise it better next time and encourage parents to engage.

Governor Visits & training – update.

- HW was sent details of SEND meeting this week and reported she would attend. To provide feedback next meeting.
- EG had done Introduction to SEND course and attended a Trans inclusion Toolkit session.
- NC met with PH for Safeguarding training and with BM. Had discussed development of lockdown procedure in case of intruders, which was in progress.
- LN attended the Governors' Briefing, which discussed the need for all schools to have a climate action plan and sustainability lead going forward. The HT confirmed Carden already had both in place and that EG was the GB's sustainability link governor. She added that the LA were developing a strategy for 2030 called 'City of Belonging' She recommended the forthcoming Governors' conference (March) about empowering workforce.
- LN was also due to attend 'Working with Unions' which she judged to be useful in terms of major educational events and recommended to new governors to gain insight.

8 There was no business brought forward by the chair.

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The date of the next FGB meeting Thursday 27th March 2025 – 4.30pm

Minutes approved by the full governing board and signed by the chair:

Chair…… Alistair McL ……

Date……27-03-2025……

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