Carden Primary and Nursery School - FGB Minutes

Meeting Type	**Full Governing Body**	
Date:	Thursday - 27th March 2025 – 4.30pm	
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 Sam Baker Lisa Bryant	Nicola Claber Nigel McCutcheon Esther Garibay (joined remotely)
Clerk	Zoë Heaton	
Guests	Paul Harrington (DHT)	
Apologies	Carl Pittaway	

Acronyms which may be included in minutes	
ASC	After-School Club
EAL	English as an additional language
ECT	Early Careers Teacher
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
BM	Business Manager
CPD	Career professional Development
PAN	Published Admission Number
PP	Pupil Premium
PTA	Parent / Teacher Association
RAG	Red, Amber, Green system
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SPA	Schools Partnership Advisor
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

Item	**Discussion**
1	The chair welcomed governors. CP had sent apologies which were accepted. All other governors were in attendance and EG joined the meeting remotely via Teams. There were no declarations of interest in the agenda.
2	The previous FGB Minutes (5th Dec 2024) were circulated to governors prior to the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and agreed to be signed electronically by the chair via the clerk. There were no matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda. Actions from the previous FGB minutes were discussed and considered: ACTION: Clerk / HT to amend PP report introductory statement before presentation as official document on the Carden Website – completed. ACTION: HT / Clerk to amend challenge number on the last page of report, from 5 to 6 – completed. **[ACTION – HB to email confirmation that she carried out SG training via to NB / PH]**

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	ACTION - HT to share KYSV visit feedback with GB at next FGB meeting – shared in item 4 ACTION – PH to work out percentage data for children accessing extra-curriculum provision with PP and non-PP breakdown for curriculum report / next FGB. – completed and provided on HT report. ACTION: Clerk to upload agreed version of Pay Policy and Governors' Scheme of Delegation on to SchoolBus as agreed – completed. ACTION: To confirm governors on federation working group and agree strategy – completed (refer to item 6).
3	**GB business and membership** NC confirmed she would be stepping down at the end of her term finishing on 15th April 2025. The chair thanked her for all her hard work across school with governors and parents. He acknowledged she would still be supporting the school in other capacities. The board expressed their sadness at her departure and thanked warmly her for her contribution. LN (Vice-chair) agreed to fulfil the link governor's role for safeguarding in her absence over the summer term and until another governor was ready to be assigned to this important role. NC confirmed the central record had been scrutinised just two weeks ago. **[ACTION - LN to meet PH (DSL] at the beginning of summer term to look at safeguarding]** **[ACTION - Clerk to carry out new parent election in the summer term]** A new prospective co-opted governor had registered her interest and her application was circulated to governors in advance of meeting. Appointment agreed in principle – Gill Brooks to visit the school early after Easter holidays and carry out training over the summer term and attend the next FGB for official appointment. **[ACTION - HT and chair to arrange meeting with prospective governor (GB) at the beginning of the summer term.]**
4	**HEADTEACHER REPORT -** 4.1 HT's Report, 4.2 SDP – Autumn review, 4.3 SDP – Spring were circulated in advance of the meeting. The HT introduced the report and invited questions. **Admissions** – The HT confirmed that class numbers had fluctuated somewhat but numbers were more in than out overall. She clarified that the fluctuation was, in part, due to the coming and going of pupils from the travelling community and also due to house moves. No children had left for negative reasons. **Attendance** – The HT informed governors that attendance was slightly up from the last time which tallies with the B&H average. However, this figure was below the national average and Carden still needed to work towards the higher target.

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Staffing –

- Staffing remained settled.
- The PE teacher reduced her hours to 0.8 of the week, with the remainder being covered by an ECT known to the school PE team.
- One teacher was pregnant and would be on maternity for the next academic year. This amount of time was convenient to cover by a new teacher. The advert would be live from tomorrow and SLT would be looking to employ someone with EYFS experience.
- No one signed off sick
- There was a recent bout of norovirus which affected staff and children.

Has the recent sickness bug peaked? - No one was actually sick in school this week so far, but not yet outbreak free. Required to be 48 hours free of anyone reporting their child off with sickness. Hoping the Easter holidays would provide a natural break.

How has the new SENDCO settled in and is that appointment going well and has there been any improvement? – Yes, TS has been working 4 days which had provides more capacity overall for SEN. There has been excellent feedback from staff and families. They feel well supported and TS noted for her good communication and really getting to know the children.

[ACTION - TS to be invited to attend the next FGB to meet governors]

Wellbeing –
This term's meeting took place on 24th March. The HT told governors that this meeting had been positive with fewer concerns being voiced and that the group was able to focus on other areas such as ways to improve the staffroom and breaktime organisation.

The staff wellbeing survey had been emailed to staff today and after some discussion a shorter deadline was given to encourage staff to take part straightaway. It was hoped more staff would take part than last year.

[ACTION - HT to email results to GB when available and invite comments at next FGB]

Is this term the hardest for staff? – Not really. Autumn term probably the hardest with new children starting and settling in. By the spring term children are more settled in their new classes and there is a sense of progress. Positive that there has been more sunshine and able to use the field for lunchtimes.

Do you think staff feel able to give feedback to SLT? – Yes, certainly think staff feel they can communicate any concerns.

Outcomes – Spring pathway data showed all percentages were up apart from Year 1. This discrepancy was accounted for by one high ability child being replaced by one of low ability so was not a reflection on the teacher. Teachers were on board with targets and excellent improvement of 11% for Year 6.

Writing was the weakest area which brought down overall combined percentage. Steps were being taken to improve this. Year 6 have come away from the T4W model in its purest form and were working on getting more writing out of the children. There have been external moderations and seen the work in other school's books which has helped lift expectations.

Overall the EYFS picture looked positive. However, the lowest areas were those that transition up. The writing was a particular concern although up to 44-45%. The English lead planned the units for the Spring Term to ensure there was more writing taking place. The classroom environment was changed to include free writing opportunities.

The HT noted that the boys' results were generally below that of the girls so were looking to introduce more boy-focussed subject areas to improve engagement. Also, was due to start inviting parents in every Friday to read with their children.

In terms of phonics results, was worth noting that this year's cohort had a low GLD coming out of EYFS. Baseline was 54%. This was now up to 58% through intervention and would have been higher but had lost a child who was going to get it and they were replaced with one who was not. Hoped to get results up to the 60%s.

Do you look at difference between summer born and older children in terms of results? – Yes, a bit and especially noted in Nursery. However once in Year Reception it comes up less often and has to not matter in the end as it is not something we can affect.

Does the Nursery year also experience the same difference between boys and girls writing and reading? – The EYFS teachers have just carried out a writing moderation and much evidence that boys are lower in writing. However, some outperform in reading.

Is not the trend that females are generally higher in all fields at school? – Yes

These figures were current combined for the Autumn term. In the separate areas can also see where children are working at or the teacher's target. Current Year 6 predicted combined is 56%.

What is ARE? – Age related expectation.

How are teacher targets different? – We asked teachers to set their own targets based on their knowledge of each child. It is a way to hold teachers to account and monitor how many are on track. It does not mean they will all be ARE just an indication of where each child can get to.

Which targets do you look at? – Both the teacher targets and combined, targets are accountability and to keep an eye if a child drops down.

Do you look at each individual pupil? – Yes, we look at each year group as a whole and groups within such as PP, EAL, then go into RWM. We also scan down individual pupils.

How has the new Math system settled in and how will the model be affected by the maths subject lead going on maternity leave? – The new model seems to have settled well now in school. Subject leadership for maths is shared so should not be a problem. It is also possible that any new teacher employed to cover this year may have this subject interest. Year 3 maths assessment was noticeably much better after last year, clear that the pupils could do more. Also evident in Year 5. Much more imbedded in the curriculum now and no complaints from the teachers in terms of work load.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment –
All staff meetings and INSET sessions took place as planned.

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Effectiveness of Leadership and Management –
The leadership team met up weekly and followed a plan of moderation and school improvement. TS attended the new SENDCO induction training and met with the partnership SENDCOs half termly for support.

LS and HB were part of an Oracy project and received three days of CPD to ensure effective Oracy across the school. Helen was leading on this project and will feedback to governors in the Summer Term.

[ACTION - HB (EYFS Lead) to come and talk at next FGB as first item]

Janis (SPA) carried out her KYSV with both HB and RM and created a phase specific action plan with them both. On visiting the school again, she had fed back positively about the leadership team working together and understanding areas requiring focus. She also commented that behaviour and attitudes to learning were good and that the quality of teaching had improved significantly with higher levels of consistency evident. She noted there were much higher expectations and ambitious targets set.

In terms of next steps, these had already been given and were being followed up:

- There were changes to improve handwriting in EYFS which had already made a positive impact.
- EYFS staff visited outstanding / good nursery and reception classes at other local schools.
- Would ensure that Year Reception 'special books are special for next year going forward.
- Work going on with Reception/Year 1 on a 'Year 1 ready' programme for the Summer Term;
- Work on raising expectations in EYFS in terms of amount of writing and more focus activities already happening. Seen the quantity of writing doubled since the autumn term.

What was learnt from visiting other local schools? – Was good to get feedback from other schools especially in the way they were carrying out interventions. Also got the idea of inviting parents in to read with their children on Fridays.

Visiting neighbouring schools also fed into the Ofsted focus on subject leadership, providing lots of information on leadership tasks which will inform the next deep dives in subject areas. Governors were invited to support with these in the summer term.

[ACTION – PH to provide governors (CLA) with deep dive times and dates in the summer term to encourage governor involvement]

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare –
Governors were pleased to see that attendance for non-PP was 95%. However, PP percentage was still lower at 93%. This was due to just a couple of families where the children were persistent absentees. The HT reported that one child (30%) had triggered a 'missing in education panel'. The HT had been questioned about what had been done and Carden had

carried out all possible actions such as letters and meetings. The only advice was to go to the final resort of fining the family.

Were the 6 penalty notices paid and what happens if they are not paid? – If the fines are not initially paid, the fine is doubled after a certain amount of time. After this, if still not paid it goes to a court hearing. The result of this may be that a payment plan is put in place.

What are the reasons for persistent absentees? – There can be various reasons, often emotional-based school refusal and it is a difficult area to negotiate and feels hard to fine. The families may be referred to social services at the high level of school absence. There is one family where one child comes in and one does not. The LA advice is now to fine as this at least gets the issue into the legal system.

Why were only 6 of the 12 families who took unauthorised holidays fined? – As the number of days taken has to exceed 4 before a fine is triggered.

Safeguarding –
Clarification on CIN (Children in Need) was sort and provided.

Extra-Curriculum & Enrichment Activities –
The chair commented that the range and number of clubs offered by Carden was very impressive.

PH had sent governors data showing PP and non-PP take up of extra curriculum activities offered by the school. The data showed the percentages to be very close, with a little variation depending on the type of club.

PH explained that PlayPE's ASC was not included in the figures as only wanted to analyse those clubs which offered a specific learning experience.

The staff governor added that she had recently started a 'Mrs B's club' to encourage some of the quieter, less active children to join. She did x3 week blocks concentrating on different year groups in turn. They consisted of time spent together doing nice craft activities with a focus on wellbeing and fun.

Carden's aim for the year was for all children to participate in an enrichment activity. With this in mind, would analyse the spring term's data and examine those groups who had not yet accessed the clubs offered. Hoped that by the end of the summer term at least 90% would have attended. Understood that 100% would be unrealistic as some are not able to stay after school and worth noting other children access their own after-school clubs not through Carden.

Why have wrap-around care and lunchtime clubs not been included in the data? - These were not included as although essential and a very useful resource, the children are not there to specifically learn a new skill. Games are available like chess but not learning how to play. Very many children go through these clubs so it was skew the data.

What is lunchtime club? – It is a supervised space in the library for children to spend time inside rather than outside in the playground if too overwhelming.

It was thought to be very useful to be able to work out what else might be wanted by the children. Carden very much encouraged children to offer up ideas and if possible, new clubs could be created. Chinese, dance and drama were all started from suggestions by children.

A gardening club was also be run on a Monday.

School Development Plans –
Autumn review and Spring SDPs previously circulated to GB.

Autumn SDP review

- Many outcomes in green and some others in progress (yellow).
- The HT confirmed the first follow-up action had been carried out.
- The Owl challenge was introduced across all areas of the curriculum with stamps being used and apparent in books to show instances of GD (Greater Depth).

Spring SDP

- Phonics observations nearly finished for the term, to be updated soon.
- For aim to ensure the curriculum is ambitious and meets the need of SEND have implemented ILP targets assessments on spreadsheet – in progress.
- For aim to close the gap between outcomes for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged have introduced partner classes scheme whereby teachers monitor PP children in another 'partner' class for communication and engagement. The class teachers were not told which children were being focussed on, but the process was deemed to be excellent in terms of class to class support and raising the profile of these disadvantaged children. Felt very positive to go into other classes and act as a critical friend. Would like to repeat this termly but will no longer have the final year students to cover so will see if it can be managed.
- Aim to embed empowerment approach was still ongoing. Working group up and running and actions done. Slightly behind for lesson plans and language due to staff sickness.
- Aim to improve attendance to 96%. Work still ongoing.

Is the 96% attendance target realistic? – Possibly not but need to aim high.

Is reaching 79% in phonics possible? – Probably not but the figures will improve with what's being done with the children and need to aim high. Phonics is also being introduced in nursery year now so this will already be embedded when they move up to reception.

The governors noted and were impressed by the clear shift upwards in the data. The HT let the GB know the official numbers would be published in April.

Are you confident there will be 2 classes in Year Reception this year? – Yes, the numbers are in fact slightly up from last year on first choices.

The HT commented that this was partly due to the success on the Carden nursery this year, as all children were transitioning to year reception and the nursery was full. She congratulated LB on her hard work making it such an excellent and nurturing environment.

The governors agreed it was good policy to continue to invest in nursery

The HT felt it was important to note that the Nursery was running at a loss but also balanced by the positives of children feeding into the reception year and providing an excellent community service. The governors conceded that the nursery would never be profitable financially but that it was achieving what it was meant to be doing and was a valuable asset long-term.

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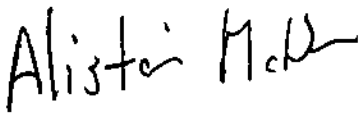
	Governor suggested that it might be interesting to note what percentage of children transition from our nursery to Year Reception over the last three years and going forward. **[ACTION – HT to analyse and provide percentage data of children moving up from Carden Nursery to Year Reception over last 3 years and monitor going forward]** **[ACTION – GB to look at next years end of year data and track the group of children coming up from nursery]** It was thought to be worth investing in marketing the hugely positive nursery and also to make more of all Carden's assets such as art and PE too using the Carden website and Facebook. The HT confirmed that the Facebook page was quite active and that there had been an increased number of tracked website visits in the past few months. It was discussed if worth building marketing into staff meetings and increasing the number of staff able to add items to the website. **[ACTION – Clerk to include marketing as a standing item on the FGB agenda going forward]**
6	**Federation / Local picture –** update The HT reported that so far, the governors working group had met with one academy trust and were due to meet two more next week and a fourth after Easter. The plan was then to invite the LA in to balance the picture, after which the working group would feed back to the GB. After this initial overview, and if one or two of the trusts are liked, would then visit specific academy schools within these trusts. The vice chair reported that the recent HTs meeting seemed better and that, although the LA still thought that federation is a money saving approach they were not pushing it so strenuously. And, with a more anti-academy government would have to see how the situation developed. Is the change in catchment area affecting mood and would you say schools are more willing to work together? – Were told secondary schools had found it testing but conflicting schools still finding it possible to work through together which was impressive. There were different points of view, some having changed over the year and talk of some schools faring better than others. One struggling with very low numbers. However, the LA wants to keep these schools open.
7	**Staff Survey Results / Staff wellbeing** – As discussed above there was a recent wellbeing meeting which was generally positive with no serious issues to report. The staff survey was sent out yesterday, with the HT to communicate results to the GB and which will be discussed at the next wellbeing meeting.
8	**Feedback from committees:** **Financial performance** – (D&R minutes from 26th February 2025 were previously circulated) The D&R chair summarised the recent D&R committee meeting for the GB. • She congratulated the HT and BM for managing a small carry over at the end of this year's budget and appreciated how hard that was.

	• She noted from a recent school visit how hard all the teachers work during class time and assembly keeping an eye on all the children and their various needs and behaviours. She was astounded by the remarkable job they all do and felt there would be absolutely no room to manoeuvre in terms of staffing or would leave school unsafe. • In terms of the next year she commented that both the education sector and councils were under financial pressure. She felt upset that there appeared to be no significant funding proposed by the government for education and, especially in the areas of SEN, which is a growing pressure on schools. • The D&R committee had seen the draft budget for next year which was for the first time in deficit. They felt this to be unavoidable with the increased salaries and national insurance. It was approved for submission and now awaiting comments back from the LA. The chair suggested the GB leave this with the D&R committee at present to await feedback. • She noted there would be partial funding provided for the national insurance rises. • The committee had discussed the ongoing costs of the good practice 5-year renewal of staff DBS. Agreed to continue and review next year. • Pupil numbers for September admission were thought to be similar or slightly increased from last year. Number will be confirmed 16th April. Are most schools submitting a deficit budget this year? – Yes, and we deserve the credit for avoiding deficit up until this point and the LA should recognise this as Carden has always been extremely careful and prudent. Just the fact that we are in deficit this coming year should signal things have become very difficult and notice be taken. Are you not impressed with the changes to funding for SEN? – There have been some sensible changes which logically should make a positive difference, but not convinced this will translate to significant impact on the ground. **Governor Visits & Training – Feedback** NM reported that he had carried out a learning walk in Year 1 and 2 with HB (EYFS Lead) which was interesting and he was very impressed with the behaviour and engagement which seemed consistent across classrooms. He noted that when the swimmers returned to class they were seamlessly integrated. There was a slight lack of work displayed on the walls, which was noted and subsequently rectified. He felt a lot of work had gone into improving behaviour and that this was hopefully a sign that the empowerment approach was working. LB had attended her new governors first induction training and was booked to do the second one in June. She was also booked onto the Governor's Conference taking place on Saturday. Will there be more opportunities to visit the school next term? – Yes certainly, also there is the Eid picnic next Friday if any governors would like to attend. This is a lovely community event where people bring and share food. This will follow the wellbeing day for all the pupils which is a nice end to the term.
9	**School Policies –** The clerk confirmed there were eight policies requiring approval on the SchoolBus and that she had sent reminders yesterday. She alerted governors that there would be a few more coming over the next week or so. She advised that governors try to do these as and when they come in so that are not held up before being sent to other staff to read.
10	There was no business brought forward by the chair

Meeting closed at 6pm

The date of the next FGB meeting Thursday 10th July 2025 – 5pm

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

Chair……  ……

Date……10th July 2025……

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