Carden Primary and Nursery School - FGB Minutes

Meeting Type	Full Governing Body	
Date:	Wednesday 25th September 2025	
Time:	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 (Vice Chair) Gill Brooks Lisa Bryant	Esther Garibay Nigel McCutcheon Carl Pittaway Rachel Weller
Clerk	Zoë Heaton	
Guests	Paul Harrington (Deputy Head)	
Apologies	Sam Baker, AM to leave by 5.30pm	
Absent	Helen Wilson	

Acronyms which may be included in minutes	
BEEM	Child Protection
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EHCP	Educational HealthCare Plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FGB	Full Governing Body Meeting
HT	Head Teacher
NGA	National Governors Association
PTA	Parent / Teacher Association
SDP	School Development Plan
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
SENDCO	Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator
SG	Safeguarding
SPA	Schools Partnership Advisor
S&LC	Speech & Language Centre

Item	Summary of Discussion
1	The chair welcomed governors. Apologies were accepted. There were no declarations of interest in the agenda.
2	The previous FGM Minutes (09/07/25) 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: HW and all governors to carry out safeguarding training in September 2025 - In progress. Discussed in next item. ACTION - TS (SENDCO) to be invited to Autumn2 FGB – Clerk had made a note to do so.

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	ACTION - PH to invite Governors to Deep Dives in the next academic year – Noted, but more likely to be after half-term due to change in framework. 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 – Ongoing Committee roles and link governor responsibilities to be finalised at the September FGB meeting – Next item. ACTION – HT and BM to consider organising updated version of Carden promotional video to be on website - Ongoing ACTION - HT to speak to website creator to update copyright date and enquire about in-house training for staff – Completed and creator meeting with HT. ACTION – HT to add website promotion onto staff meetings and make action plan to update and improve content – Yes to be planned and put in place with creator tomorrow. ACTION: Vice Chair to approve before submission deadline at end of July - Completed ACTION – PH to reach out to professional swimmers to ask for sponsorship, funding for Carden swimming pool – PH had reached out but not had a response. Felt the initiative was focussed more in the north but would continue efforts. The Amex and Albion in the Community were suggested. ACTION – Clerk to investigate transition from SchoolBus to National College – Completed. ACTION – Clerk / HT to look out for and incorporate any updates to the complaints policy and toolkit in the Autumn term – Incorporated this term. ACTION - Clerk to email newly agreed dates to all governors and update website – Completed. **[ACTION – Clerk to agree revised date for HSW meeting due to clash with Photo Day and confirm with committee]**
3	**GB business and membership** The clerk had previously emailed governors requesting any nominations or feedback regarding roles and membership. She thanked governors for their responses and trust in the current chairs. **Election of Chair 2025-2026** The FGB re-elected Alistair McNair as the Chair of Governors for academic year 2025-26. **Election of Vice-Chair 2025-2026** The FGB re-elected Linda Newman as Vice Chair of Governors for academic year 2025-26. **Election of Chairs of Committees** The FGB re-elected Linda Newman as Chair of the D&R committee, Nigel McCutcheon as Chair of HSW committee and Carl Pittaway as Chair of the CLA committee.

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Governor safeguarding training
Some governors carried out SG training on the inset day at Carden and others at their place of work. Governors requested by the clerk to send evidence of any outside training. Any governors outstanding requiring training to contact PH (Designated Safeguarding Lead).

[ACTION: Governors who had undertaken SG training elsewhere to ensure evidence of this is received by PH (DSL) or the Clerk asap]

[ACTION: Governors who had not undertaken the annual SG training to contact PH to arrange a mutually convenient time for SG training to take place.]

Review and agree Instrument of government
No significant changes required to the Instrument of Government. Reviewed and agreed via Policy Manager, National College.

Skills Audit Returns
Governors were requested to return their skills audits at the end of the summer term. Several remained outstanding. The Clerks requested all skills audits were returned so an annual analysis could then take place.

[ACTION: All remaining Governors to complete their skills audits and return to clerk CP, HW and AM]

[ACTION: Clerk and Chair or Vice-Chair to organise skills audit monitoring meeting to identify gaps later this term]

Agree membership of committees / appoint link governors to key areas.
No changes proposed to current committee membership.
Agreed that RW join the CLA committee
Agreed that GB join the HSW committee
GB agreed to undertake SEND link governor role and work closely with LN who agreed to remain as link governor for Safeguarding.
RW agreed to undertake the Speech & Language Centre link governor role going forward.
It was agreed LN and the Clerk would cover the Governor Training link role between them.

Terms of References for committees for agreement
All committee terms of reference to be agreed via the National College.

Annual Schedule of planned work / visits
Governors were encouraged to carry out monitoring visits. Visits to be planned in conjunction with Carden's annual schedule of works including learning walks. See HT item below for details

Governor training
Governors had received the training schedule from BEEM. The clerk encouraged all governors to undertake any relevant training and the vice chair pointed to several coming up in the Spring term also.

4 **Headteacher Update**

HT Report

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The HT had previously sent the new format proposal for the HT Report. This was changed to reflect Carden's Ofsted priorities. It included small changes to headings such as the addition of Inclusion and the grading by Ofsted to show governors where Carden was in reference to the official criteria. This would be supplied to governors in conjunction with SDP (with similar amended headings and detail)

The new formatted HT Report was understood and agreed by the Governors.

Ofsted – SEF criteria:

The HT encouraged governors to focus on the Expected Standard level on an Ofsted Inspection as very rare to attain 'Exceptional' or 'Urgent Improvement'. As such she read out the description: *Expected Standard - Governors/trustees ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined, take account of context, and make sure that resources, including digital technologies, are used effectively. They typically support and challenge leaders appropriately, giving due regard to leaders' and staff well-being and workload*.

The HT asked Governors to ask themselves if they do these actions including challenging, scrutinising resources and budget. She felt this was generally done by governors.

The importance of knowing the strategic direction and aims of the school was stressed and it was thought helpful to spell these out, especially for the benefit of new governors. The HT acknowledged this and said these would now be more explicit on the HT report and reflected in parallel on the SDP which were provided at each termly FGB. This information should help governors know what areas were working well and which were more areas of concern.

It was understood it was the governors' responsibility to know these strategic aims and check the school was doing things to improve areas of concern. Also, to be aware of how discussions throughout the year in the different committees have fed into strategic planning for the year ahead. I.e. to know 'why' the school was doing what it was.

It was agreed that at the next FGB meeting these questions would be clarified on the HT report and SDP.

The HT also felt the *governors developed constructive relationships with parents and with the wider community, to build trust*. She encouraged governors to keep visiting the school and take opportunities to come to community events such as shows, assemblies, fairs and other events.

Governors use their knowledge and expertise to provide consistent support and robust challenge to leaders across all aspects of the school's work. The HT felt that this does happen but that she would request governors to tackle certain aspects of the SDP in readiness for the inspection, to be able to think about where Carden was and how areas were being addressed.

It was also thought to be helpful for governors to undertake some specific Ofsted training. LN pointed to an NGA Ofsted training module which had recently become available on the NGA website and that some face-to-face training for governors would be desirable if possible. This would be offered by the SPA and LA at a later date with details to be confirmed.

The HT then explained the process involved when the inspection took place. That it would likely occur during this academic year, that notice would be given on a Monday and the visit would then happen on the Tuesday and Wednesday of the same week. As soon at the school was notified, the clerk would email all governors and call the Chair and Vice Chair directly.

She emphasised the need for the Chair and at least one other governor to be involved with the process and available for the feedback meeting at the end.

Would it be better to have more governors attending? – Yes, I think so as it would show great engagement and enthusiasm for the school if governors were keen to be involved. And also, excellent to have a variety of different governors show their face and volunteer support.

Learning walks - The HT informed governors about forthcoming environment learning walks and invited governors to join. PH added that there would be more opportunities to visit in October and November for subject lead support and book looks.

[ACTION: PH to put together a learning walk timetable to share with governors and to provide opportunities for governor visits.]

[ACTION: ZH send Governors Christmas shows and fair dates]

Budget - The HT reported that the LA had still not agreed the deficit budget. There was a meeting with the LA head of finance where Carden was asked to make more cuts. Cuts were duly made and the budget resubmitted. Since then a new Pay Policy came out that impacted significantly and negatively on the whole budget.

The new Pay Policy changed the way Teachers get paid with increases now being introduced yearly rather than every 2 years and not performance dependent. The LA apologised as schools were not warned clearly about the impending changes. This was disappointing as now seemed there was no point in making those very difficult cuts. Though Carden had not had to cut current support staff, it was not able to employ two new support staff originally planned for this year.

LA was still to decide whether to keep to their initial 6th October deadline or to move deadline.

Are many other B&H schools deeper in debt than Carden? – Yes, many in much greater debt. Under the new Head of Education all schools who applied for deficit this year were refused. However, felt unfair as schools with large deficits from previous years under the previous administration had been supported with recovery package, where Carden only went into relatively small deficit this year had not even been approved.

The HT felt frustrated that LA Finance did not ask about the budget only noticed the deficit.

What happens if not approved? – The LA would keep asking us to make cuts.

The Vice Chair noted training for governors on understanding mixed-year teaching and it was acknowledged that the LA was promoting this change of school structure as a way of saving money. However, this had already been looked at and did not make sense in terms of numbers for Carden.

	Although initially 30k could be saved this was deemed to be a false economy as would mean fewer children would come to the school. **Flags of Colour –** The HT told governors that the school was seeing more British flags being displayed within the local area and families had been asking if there was anything that could be done about it. LA advice was not to release any official communications or announcements on social media and that the highways department would take them down over time in a non-confrontational manner. Governors acknowledged this created an atmosphere of intimidation and division and was against Carden's ethos of inclusion and was a tricky and sensitive area to address. The HT and DHT were quietly promoting inclusion within school through displays and assemblies. It was noted that there were also Anti-Racist cluster groups of local schools aware and discussing this issue and how to address. 6
6	Governors were required to read the following documents and sign to confirm via the new policy manager via the national college website. **Annual Declarations** - all still in progress Declarations of Interest- any outstanding declarations were completed at the meeting Declaration of Eligibility – read and agreed Code of Conduct – read and agreed Acceptable use of ICT – (To be confirmed if still required) KCSIE (x2) – read and agreed
7	There was no business brought forward by the chair.

Meeting closed at 5.40pm.

The date of the next FGB meeting Thursday 27th November 2025 – 5.00pm

Alistair McL

27-11-2025

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