Carden Primary and Nursery School - FGB Minutes

Meeting Type	Full Governing Body	
Date:	Wednesday 9th July 2025 – 5pm	
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 (joined remotely)	Nigel McCutcheon Esther Garibay (joined remotely) Gill Brooks (to be appointed) Rachel Weller (to be appointed) Carl Pittaway
Clerk	Zoë Heaton	
Guests	Paul Harrington (DHT), Helen Beckett (EYFS Lead)	
Apologies	Claire Judd (Sports Lead)	
Absent	Helen Wilson	

Acronyms which may be included in minutes	
BM	Business Manager
ECT	Early Careers Teacher
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FGB	Full Governing Board
HT	Head Teacher
NA	National Average
PP	Pupil Premium
PTA	Parent / Teacher Association
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENDCO	Special educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator
SPA	Schools Partnership Advisor
SPP	Sports Pupil Premium
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

Item	Summary of discussion
1	**Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest –** The Chair welcomed attendees and all were asked to introduced themselves. Quorum was confirmed. Apologies were received from Claire Judd (Sports Lead). Esther Garibay and Lisa Bryant joined remotely via Teams. No new declarations of interest were raised. Linda Newman affirmed her ongoing connection to a local swimming enterprise, for transparency in future partnerships and school development plans.

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Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

2	**Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Updates –** The minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2025 were approved without amendments. There were no matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda. Outstanding actions from the previous FGB minutes (27/03/25) were reviewed: **[ACTION: HW and all governors to carry out safeguarding training in September 2025]** **[ACTION - TS (SENDCO) to be invited to Autumn2 FGB.]** **[ACTION - PH to invite Governors to Deep Dives in the next academic year.]** **[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]**
3	**GB Business and Membership -** The appointments of Gill Brooks as Co-opted Governor and Rachel Weller as Parent Governor were formally approved. **[ACTION - Committee roles and link governor responsibilities to be finalised at the September FGB meeting.]** Governors discussed mentorship support for newly appointed members, with LN assigned to assist GB. RW's professional teaching background was noted as a valuable addition to the Governing Body. The Summer Fair was highlighted as a useful opportunity for informal governor engagement with the school community.
4	**Update on Oracy Project** 4.1 – Progression of skills and 4.2 – Triad Visit review had been previously circulated to the GB. HB (EYFS Lead), presented the Oracy Project which was being implemented in EYFS and provided context for the report. Framework's aim was to support communication development. The project incorporated sentence stems, games, role play and a progression of skills framework. The approach was adapted at Carden for the high percentage of PP / disadvantaged children at the school with the research showing that literacy was key to social impact with families who were disadvantaged in terms of vocabulary, reading and writing and also the wider curriculum. Data showed children at 36 months from professional families knew 1016 words

as opposed to welfare families knowing only 525 words. It was understood that this was a significant disadvantage in term of talking, and learning through talk.

The Oracy project was supporting schools with a high PP cohort and offering strategies to improve communication skills and encouraging them to take responsibility for gaps arising. The aim was to close the gap in outcomes in reading and writing.

Part of the course encouraged joining with other schools, swapping visits, tours and sharing findings.

The project was not yet fully implemented and was to be trialled in Reception, Year 2 and Year3. Year 1 was excluded due to ECT and phonics focus.

HB explained that the plan for implementation was to put together a progression of skills framework which supported teachers in understanding and teaching oracy and to create expectations with bench markers for whole of school. Following the visit and report there would be some amendments and then it would be ready to roll out.

The report showed that Carden was already doing lots of oracy in school with the Talk 4 Writing programme, the Learning Journey Characters in assembly and lots of opportunities for the children to talk. Governors agreed that they were impressed with how articulate and confident the children appeared, specifically in a recent assembly visit.

Did the idea for this project and actions come out of communicating and visiting other schools? - It was rooted in boosting oracy generally and this was a good starting point as provided actions and benchmarking. Also, came from our Learning walks where we went into classes and made notes on oracy in lessons. We noticed bits missing and kept indicators of what we needed to do.

Governors commended the clarity and potential impact of the initiative and felt it was a good investment, agreeing with the steady approach to implementation with trialling and adapting as progressed and not adding to workload of teachers.

Will the meetings with other schools and links continue? – Yes, envisage keeping in touch with the two other schools in the triad and Oracy expert and hope we can support each other moving forward.

Are there sufficient presentation opportunities for the children? - The children have lots of small, short presenting opportunities, but not so many 'standing up' for official presentation to whole class e.g. on ancient Egypt. Not so much structured talk linked with specific topic and vocabulary. We will be making changes to environment to support talking with exposure to sentence stems and specific vocabulary and with a more consistent format across the year groups.

	How often does the project get reviewed? – It is reviewed in half-termly phase meetings which address the impact of Oracy. As the Oracy project develops wondering how will it look in a school week? – It will be taught to whole class with explicit lessons shared with teachers. Some topic-based vocabulary will already have been taught. This will be extended across all areas of the curriculum, incorporating stems and vocabulary in independent learning and carpet time. Will it be similar to how the Empowerment approach was integrated? – Yes, HB will share with Teachers initially involved with the trial and then it will be gradually rolled out to the whole school, with hopefully low-stake investment from the teachers. The HT congratulated HB on her work with the Oracy project and her communication with other schools. HB left the meeting 5.34pm
5	**Head Teacher's Report** 5.1 HT Report, 5.1i Support staff letter, 5.2 SDP – Spring and 5.3 SDP – Summer review had been previously circulated to the GB. The HT introduced her report and invited questions. **Admissions** – • There were similar class numbers since last report. **Attendance** – • National Average 93.5% / B&H average is 93% Carden was still below, but with slight improvement. **Staffing update for next year** – • Two teachers were leaving to start new career jobs at other schools. • One teacher was to be on maternity leave • Literacy Lead moved to Year Reception to sure up writing and phonics. • SM staying in Year 1 with focus on Phonics across both Year 1 classes • Three new teachers were joining the school; ECT in other Year 1 class; Experienced teacher from London to join Year 4 and another to join Year 6, who will also take on the Maths Subject Lead. • A revised support staff model was to be trialled. Change from assigning support staff to specific children to a more fluid model whereby support staff were attached to a year group with several children in a pool. Families already informed by letter and invited to talk at the parent forum. Prospect of change relatively well-received. Governors discussed the new support staff model and its potential benefit in terms of growing pupil resilience with less attachment to individual staff members thereby increasing

their independence and ability to cope with change. Another positive is for support staff to have more variety and potentially use their strengths and knowledge to do specialised work with the children. Hoped to raise outcomes for these children by tailoring support to their needs and promoting independence.

HT commended for making this positive change and for the strong explanatory letter to parents.

[ACTION – HT to monitor and review the new support staff model and update governors on progress at the Autumn 2 FGB].

Wellbeing –

- Positive feedback from the staff survey. HT had circulated to governors and agreed would continue to use this short set-questioned survey for comparison purposes going forward.

Outcomes –

- Results data provided on Phonics from Spring as not allowed to share newer results as not officiated yet. Results as expected. Below NA but progress evident and knew next steps. Area of ongoing focus.

Are these results due to Carden's high SEN intake? - It does have an impact but there is certainly room for improvement overall to get closer to those targets.

- Writing is identified as weakest area and taking steps to improve this. DofE have not identified a problem with our current Sounds Write scheme and encouraged to keep faith with the system and should see improvement.

Do you make use of past papers for testing? – Historically not. DFE came in last year to support and suggested we need to do this type of drilling and testing more as other schools use this practice to improve results.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment –

- Continued use of Learning Walks and positive pupil voice.

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management –

- Governors commended SLT on improved communications and environment coming from management.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare –

- Still working hard on attendance. Still below 90% for PP pupils and above for Non-PP. Working on supporting those children and families to improve.

Extra-Curriculum and Enrichment Activities –

	• Governors impressed by variety and number of clubs available and push to include all children. Final progression on this will take place on the Autumn term. Do the children have a chance to say what they want to do? – Yes. Sports clubs are governed by competitions but also listen to pupils' voice and have introduced, Japanese, Drama and Lego clubs on that basis. **School Development Plans (Spring / Summer)** – Is there something the SLT is proud of achieving this year? – Yes, most goals in the Spring SDP have been achieved and Summer term goals in progress. Also, particularly proud of Year 6s in how well they are prepared for transition to secondary. This year group has set the tone for rest of school with calm role modelling, vertical social play and mature attitudes showing governors around school. Does your new operating system (Arbor) allow for a different sort of data capture to analyse pupil's progress and can it be incorporated into this year's individual learning pathway plans? – It is a whole school system for maintaining staff and student records. However, we are inputting SEN data which will help track progress with the SEN children and hoping this will highlight their targets and progress on whole data system.
6	**(PART) CONFIDENTIAL ITEM:**
Part Item 8	**Marketing / Promotion - update (brought forward from next item 8)** How are nursery numbers? - Despite being in deficit, nursery numbers are good and higher than predicted. Plan to create 'Open Day' leaflet in September with help from PTA. Also intend to look at website and see how to promote nursery there and on social media, perhaps with digital tour similar to Year Reception. The marketing link governor initiated some discussion about improving the use of the website as a promotional tool. Thoughts both from governors and HT included: • Staff taking on a bit more responsibility for year group content on the website in conjunction with website creator offering in-house training to staff. • The positive use of short videos about specific areas of the school, such as Nursery, Outdoor spaces as an effective and engaging promotional tool and to showcase Carden values. • The possibility of re-filming a whole-school new promotional video. In discussion with BM and HT. • The benefit of looking at other primary school websites to gain knowledge and inspiration (e.g. Blatchington Primary website). • Creating a HT video talking about the school to update sense of current Leadership strategic direction and ethos.

	[ACTION – HT and BM to consider organising updated version of Carden promotional video to be on website] **[ACTION - HT to speak to website creator to update copyright date and enquire about in-house training for staff.]** **[ACTION – HT to add website promotion onto staff meetings and make action plan to update and improve content.]** In terms of promotion is there any scope to reach out to local and other nursery s to promote us too? – We already do this, sending leaflets and asking Nurseries to give to parents. Governors commented of positive feedback from nurseries due to Carden's in person pre-school visits to meet the new children. Noted that not many other primary schools did this. It was noted that in June alone there were 9000 impressions and 500 clicks on the Carden website, proving its worth in investing in it as a significant promotional tool for Carden.
	SPP Report - 7.1 SPP report and 7.2 SPP spending update doc review had been previously circulated to the GB. CJ (Sports Lead) had provided governors with a summary report of SPP spending over the year. In the absence of CJ, the HT accepted questions from governors on her behalf. She explained that the official report would be completed online in a slightly different format to previous years and that this report showed all the information which would go into it. The official and detailed SPP report to be produced and uploaded onto the website by the end of month deadline. Is the Sports Lead aware that there is a lot of new guidance about format required for submission of the SPP report this year? – Yes, she has all the information and it will be done next week. **[ACTION: Vice Chair to approve and sign SPP report before submission deadline at end of July]** It was understood that the Swimming pool was a great asset to the school and that the costs were manageable if nothing went wrong. However, if repairs were required costs became unsustainable. Despite bringing enrichment to Carden and bridging the disadvantaged gap, it was not essential in terms of the curriculum.

7	Would an alternative to closing the swimming pool be to rent it out? – There would be complex health and safety issues that come with renting. However, having spoken to the LA, and they may be interested in renting it as alternative provision as there is nothing out there like it for Year Reception and Year 1 children. Children would be brought in on a Friday to have time in the water. This may be viable in bringing in more income. LA was working with EVOLVE with regards to liability. Would it be an idea to approach Olympic or professional swimmer for grants or sponsorship and promote as 'first-time experience swimming'. – Yes, this could be tried out. **[ACTION – PH to reach out to professional swimmers to ask for sponsorship, funding for Carden swimming pool.]** How about local companies? – This has been tried but can be tricky to ask for local companies to sponsor as they request high profile promotion in return. Then there have been locals complaining when posters are stuck on railings as deemed a distraction for drivers at a junction that is considered dangerous. Would it be enough for companies to have visibility on our website? - Possibly, but often the companies are not offering enough discount or money to make it worthwhile (e.g. Buxton's) How much would you charge for renting out the pool? – £50 per hour. £200 each week. The governors also discussed using the pool for private swimming lessons but this was considered too risky and too much of a liability for the HT and School. Fundraising in general was debated and the point made that the PTA found it easier to apply for grants for something very specific especially community ones, such as the SEN room. The use of 'Grant Finder' was muted as a useful grant application tool. Governors congratulated Carden on its provision on the diverse range and quantity of extra-curriculum clubs offered by Carden from boxing and rugby to line dancing. It was also acknowledged that Sports day had gone well with good parent turn out.
8	**Summary Feedback from committees and link governors** 8.1 CLA mins 11/06/25 and 8.2 Parent Forum letter had been previously circulated to the GB. Committee chairs and link governors provided brief feedback from recent activities. **Educational performance** – The Curriculum & CLA Committee reported that they had be provided with and reviewed a thorough report on subject leadership and the Oracy strategy and commended the variety and number of extra-curriculum clubs offered.

	The Finance Committee confirmed budgets remained on track. Noted unresolved dispute regarding the TSS unpaid invoice due to non-agreement of terms (travel expenses) backed by the D&R chair. **Parent Forum feedback** - Focused on transition, singing assembly, lunch provision timings, club variety, and playground equipment. Largely positive. New policy on playtime and new equipment shared with forum for initiation next year. **Performance Management of Staff** – Confirmed that cycles of performance management were taking place. Support Staff appraisals recently carried out. **Governors visits and training -** Governors had conducted site visits linked to safeguarding, staff interviews, budget monitoring and Sports day. Governors encouraged to attend the forthcoming summer fete on Saturday. LN and AM had attended the local Governors Briefing and fed back to the board about HT's priorities of collaboration and transition. Next year's focus would be on attendance with some free of charge support offered by the council. There were some updates to look out for on Complaints procedure and toolkit and the need for a Healthy Food Policy. LN had highlighted lack of good communication from the council. Governors were reminded to regularly monitor the LA bulletin for policy updates and key communications. Marketing was formally added as a recurring agenda item for future FGBs. Governors reported a few difficulties logging onto the SchoolBus, compliance manager system to read and sign policies due to the change over to the National College. **[ACTION – Clerk to investigate transition from SchoolBus to National College / technical aspects]** **[ACTION – Clerk / HT to look out for and incorporate any updates to the complaints policy and toolkit in the Autumn term]** **Governor Visits & Training** – NM had attended interviews. LN had attended budget monitoring and SG visit. CP and AM attended Sports day and AM due to attend the Summer fete. **Marketing / Promotion** – already covered in previous item 7.
9	**Meeting Dates, Visits and Safeguarding Training** Dates for 2025–26 governor meetings were agreed with minor adjustments.

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	[ACTION - Clerk to email newly agreed dates to all governors and update website] All governors were invited to the staff safeguarding training session at Carden Primary School on Wednesday, 3rd September 2025 from 3:30pm to 4:30pm.
10	**Any Other Business -** No additional business was raised by the Chair.

Meeting closed at 7pm

The date of the next FGB meeting Wednesday 24th September 2025 – 4pm

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

Chair…… Alistair McK ……

Date……24/09/2025……

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