Carden Primary and Nursery School - FGB Minutes

Meeting Type	**Full Governing Body**	
Date:	Thursday - 25th 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	Nigel McCutcheon Esther Garibay Carl Pittaway Gill Brooks
Clerk	Zoë Heaton	
Apologies	Rachel Weller, Lisa Bryant	

Acronyms which may be included in minutes	
ASC	After-School Club
ECT	Early Careers Teacher
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
BM	Business Manager
CPD	Career Professional Development
NGA	National Governance Association
FSM	Free School Meals
PP	Pupil Premium
RAG	Red, Amber, Green system
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SPA	Schools Partnership Advisor
SLC	Speech and Language Centre
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

Item	**Agenda Item**
1	The chair welcomed governors. Apologies were accepted from RW and LB and EG, who was due to arrive at 5pm. All other governors were in attendance. There were no declarations of interest in the agenda.
2	The previous FGB Minutes (27 Nov 2025) 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: SENCO to consider inclusion of individual case study in end of year annual SEN report – Scheduled for Summer FGB. ACTION: HT to consider introduction of 'enrichment contribution' from parents for next academic year – Item scheduled for Summer FGB. ACTION: HT to produce table to show both numbers of PP and SEN children and their convergence in the HT report - Completed (see item 4).

Core functions of the governing board.

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance of the management staff

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

	ACTION: HT to resolve inconsistencies between data provided in the two reports (SEND and HT) – Completed. ACTION: PH to send timetable of the forthcoming Pathways meetings to Governors - Completed ACTION: Governors to contact SLT if they wish to attend any Pathways meetings - Completed ACTION: Governors to email HT if wish to attend Learning Walks next term in January and February – Completed. ACTION: Any outstanding governors to approve newly revised version of Pay Policy and Governors Scheme of Delegation on National College website – Competed.
3	**FGB business and membership** Governors were pleased to hear that the LA Governor Nomination Panel had agreed to nominate LN for appointment as the LA Governor at Carden. The governors voted unanimously to appoint LN as their new LA governor.
4	**HEADTEACHER REPORT:** HT report, SDP Autumn and Spring were circulated to governors before meeting. **Ofsted** The HT presented her report to the governors. She explained that as the meeting was taking place between the Ofsted visit and the official publication of the Ofsted report she had held back a little in some areas until it was fully drafted and verified. She had however, put basic results against each heading in line with Ofsted ratings for overall clarity. **Staffing** • Staffing was stable with one ECT on an enhanced support plan. • There was one staff member signed off work and one staff member on reduced hours. The HT answered questions about the operation of an enhanced support plan. How are you coping with the staff off and on reduced hours? - Yes, we are manging ok at present and hopefully the situation will improve. EG and SB – Arrived 16.45 **Safeguarding** – Met • Ofsted were impressed with this area. **Inclusion** – Expected Standard • Were a little disappointed not to achieve strong standard in this area. • It was very close with Carden being recognised for a very strong inclusive ethos and these values coming through clearly in the pupil voice. Pupils felt welcome and included.

- Area which required more work was in class adaptation in lessons. It was felt not all children were included in the learning, noting that SEN and EHCP children were well catered for but those in the middle less so.
- Data on SEN, PP and EHCP provided as requested.

Curriculum and Teaching – Expected Standard

- Teaching focus linked to Ofsted feedback around teaching and ensuring that all teachers were aware of the needs of the class and how to get the best outcomes for all, not just the top and bottom
- Maths looking at precision teaching and how we can move children on quickly enough.
- Registered with the English Hub for enhanced phonic support. They would make termly visits supporting outcomes in phonics. Currently looking to train two more teachers and three more members of support staff on the phonics scheme.
- Foundation subject assessments were now being tracked
- Monitoring by subject leads continued as expected with more time allocated for Maths and English
- English were looking at guided reading and supporting key year groups.

Achievement – Needs Attention

- Carden was aware of issues with achievement and had positive conversations with Ofsted about including SLC.
- Reading and Writing were felt to be satisfactory.
- Maths was on three-year downward trend and needed to be a focus.
- Current phonics target was positive and on track at 70% including SLC figures.
- Year Reception target was on track
- GLD better in comparison to last year, from 46% to 62%.
- Extra teacher time being spent on Y5 maths interventions for entire summer term to improve the children's starting points in Year 6.

Governors thanked the HT for the useful data provided, the easy to understand comparison tables and highlighted RAG coding. Clarification was also provided about Year 1 and Year 2 tables.

The HT emphasised the effectiveness or using teacher targets to motivate improvement. She assured governors that no targets, including Maths would be downgraded.

Attendance and Behaviour – Expected

- The HT acknowledged attendance was low and told governors that Ofsted only just gave 'expected standard' for attendance and behaviour as behaviour was so good and they could see how hard the school worked on attendance and impressed by record keeping.
- Felt Ofsted got an honest view of behaviour during their visit, and assessed positively.
- Three children had taken unauthorised holidays in term time. Of these children the families of one was issued with fixed penalty notice and the two other families provided exceptional circumstances for the trip.
- One family had an unauthorised holiday over 5 days and was issued a fine.
- Two children considered 'missing in education' due to school refusal.

- One child was being 'educated off site' and using his EHCP funding to pay for tuition.
- Two suspensions (fixed term exclusions) were issued this year, for the same child. Eight internal exclusions were issued for three children combined.

The HT clarified that 40 sessions missed was equal to 20 days and that the only issued penalty notice was paid by the family.

Governors and HT discussed a number of children receiving tuition at home, either as home educated or as parents choosing to use part of their EHCP funding. HT emphasised that sometimes this is requested, but the funding has already been used in school and there is not money left. It was stated that the cost set for alternative provision will be planned for in the budget for this coming year.

Who is assessed on the outcomes for these children educated out of school? – The school is assessed for those using EHCP funding for tuition and still remain on roll and therefore count in its attendance and attainment data. Those children who are home-educated are not the school's responsibility and are taken off-roll.

Is there any over-arching authority providing services for these children? - No central level authority. The families can just choose to keep the EHCP money and spend how they want.

The HT explained that the Ed Psych was only for those children in school. If the families access alternative provision, the school does check it is quality assured. We would only pay for services gone through the approved register. Each of these providers on the directory undergo their own safeguarding and Ofsted checks.

Governors noted the two suspensions for the same child and some discussion was had about this individual case and the effect a small number of children with aggressive behaviour can have on the corresponding year groups. The HT said she preferred to issue internal exclusions rather than sending the children home if at all possible and not unsafe.

Governors were impressed how well commended Carden was by Ofsted on behaviour and felt it was right to celebrate this.

Personal Development and Well-Being – Strong

- Carden was offering a large number and range of clubs.
- All year groups completed at least one school trip.
- Continued to work on Empowerment approach and followed B&H PSHE and RSE schemes of work.
- Results from 'Safe at School Survey' from KS2 children were excellent.

The governors commended the HT and staff of the excellent results from the KS2 children's survey. They were particularly impressed by the high percentage of children saying they enjoyed learning at Carden (96%) and the clear sense of belonging the children had.
This was also compared positively against strikingly lower B&H average percentages.

Did every child in KS2 take part in the survey? – Yes.

Governors were also impressed by the very positive parent survey which was taken during the Ofsted visit. They asked if these positive feedback percentages could be checked to see if they were the highest in B&H and then published on the Carden website.

[ACTION – HT to check parent survey results against other B&H schools to see if Carden was one of the highest, in view of using to promote the school on website.]

Early Years in Schools – Expected

- Early years continued to improve.
- The nursery remained a strong foundation and a great starting point for the children. Numbers were up and several children due to start after Easter.
- Of those children in nursery 100% applied to the mainstream.
- Reception classes progress was strong and the gap between pupil premium and non-pupil premium was averaging around the school's aim of 15% across all the areas.
- The outside had been re-worked and the children were benefitting from this area now with more of a learning through play experience.
- Intention to enhance this area further and raise the nursery profile with social media posts and a planned open day.

Governors were pleased with the Ofsted assessment of EYFS, especially considering there had been some concerns from the SPA.

Does Carden's closing the gap percentage reflect the New White Paper recommendations? – Yes, 15% is in line with what should be working towards.

Leadership and Governance - Expected

- Spring term moderation went as planned and two teachers were seen as a follow up and were now moved back into the normal cycle.
- Future learning walks were planned for week beginning 22nd June.
- Final pathways were to take place during the week beginning 29th June.
- Governors invited to attend either event.

[ACTION: Governors to email HT if they wish to attend LWs and / or Pathways events in the summer term]

Governors acknowledged they had seen and were monitoring the SDP and happy to see progress.

Does Carden have the new reception numbers for next year yet? – Only indicative numbers so far, which are not high. Final numbers to be confirmed after the Easter break.

How is morale amongst staff since Ofsted? – Good, and not had anyone off sick in the last 3 weeks which is a positive sign. Felt the was a sense of relief and of pride in the aftermath.

Governors agreed that the school appeared to really pull together as a team for the Ofsted inspection and felt engaged and happy with the outcome. It was generally felt it was a good team of inspectors and overall a positive experience. A lot of Carden's hard work was recognised and celebrated.

It had not been verified if a follow up to focus on Maths would take place in two years' time.

The HT emphasised how much time and effort was made by all the SLT as a team, and that both TS (SENCO) and HB (EYFS Lead) spent as much time with the inspectors as the HT and DHT. She commended them for their hard work during this time.

[ACTION - Chair to email TS and HB separately to thank them personally from the governors for their valuable input during the Ofsted inspection].

Do you have any particular personal reflections from the Ofsted visit and has anything changed in your perspective of the school? – I had already been aware that the teaching had some weaknesses but was hesitant to formally acknowledge this previously. Ofsted highlighted some of these weaknesses and although there hasn't been much action before the Easter break, there is now a plan to look into it more afterwards, with a more proactive approach and possibly some instructional coaching.

The HT explained that during observations, some pupils on the carpet were not engaged, Also talk partners were used when a short answer would have been more appropriate, and carpet time continued even after pupils had shown they understood and could move on. She had already suspected some of these issues, and the feedback was taken positively, with a renewed focus for learning walks going forward.

Can the governors do anything to support with this? – Just check in and ask if the HT is addressing these issues.

The governors officially thanked all staff for a successful Ofsted and recognised all hard work and team effort.

The chair thanked the HT for the report.

5 **FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEES and Link Governors:**
5.1 Budget plan, 5.2 SEND Gov update 5.3 White paper summary notes

D&R (25/02/26) - Financial performance
The vice-chair fed back from the most recent D&R committee meeting providing an update on the budget**.**

- It was noted that the budget figures remained provisional due to uncertainties around pupil numbers and wider economic factors.
- The in-year deficit was reduced significantly from £86k to approximately £25k.
- A three-year budget was circulated as required, with Year 1 showing a deficit and a planned return to balance by Year 2, acknowledging the many variables involved.
- The final budget will be presented to the FGB next term for approval.
- Potential future pressures, including rising fuel costs, were highlighted.
- The committee reviewed traded services and agreed two changes: moving to the core BHISS package, which can be managed without impact to the school and provided a small saving; and cancelling the courier service in favour of using the Post Office due to low usage.
- Lettings charges were reviewed, with modest increases proposed in line with comparable schools and mindful of community access.
- The committee endorsed continuation of the five-year DBS renewal cycle, with the option to stagger renewals to spread costs.

- Benchmarking data from LA and national sources was considered; however, significant inconsistencies were noted, and concerns raised by the HT group.
- The vice chair escalated to the LA, with a response pending. It was emphasised that consistent ledger coding across schools is essential.
- The budget will be returned to the LA at the beginning of May.

CP left 17.27

Link SEND Governor Feedback – SEND Visit (Dec / Jan 25) and White Paper training

The chair thanked GB for her useful and clear SEN visit reports.
The vice chair agreed they were especially helpful in preparation for the Ofsted visit in providing details in the area of SEN covering gaps in knowledge.

GB had attended the SEND Forum which had focussed on the attendance framework which is in place at Carden, and is good at identifying underlying reasons for absence and putting support plans in place. She reported frustration from governors about the lack of LA support in this area of absence management.

GB continued with her termly meetings with the SENCO. She verified that Carden was using the council template on self-evaluation and action plan and talked though the different domains.

White Paper - Training Summary:
GB presented the NGA White paper summary document and encouraged Governors to read it more fully in their own time.

Some of the highlighted areas for SEND system reform were:

- Inclusive mainstream fund – in addition to existing core SEND funding, all schools could expect to receive additional funds to support targeted group interventions.
- 'Experts at Hand' Service - Multi agency support offer overseen by LA to bring together specialists.
- National inclusion standards – evidence based digital library of resources provided for guidance.
- Schools required to publish an Inclusion strategy – raising inclusion standards and to replace SEN Information reports.

Support for disadvantaged pupils included:

- DfE consulted on new model for summer 2026 targeting disadvantaged funding, moving away from current FSM eligibility with view to adopting income-based measure in future.
- White working-class children were identified as one of largest and lowest performing groups that required further support.

Formal collaboration and MATs key points were:

- DfE encouraged more structured collaboration between schools i.e. Federation approach.
- Expectation that schools to be part of a local grouping to collaborate on SEND and in the future pool funding and resources and expertise. GB commented that Carden already doing some of this.

	Parent collaboration and engagement areas included: • Families to be treated as partners in their child's education • Best start Family Hubs would provide single point of access • School Profiles - a new digital service bringing together data in one place Exclusions and Behaviour points included: • Schools to be flexible in requiring children to complete suspensions on site in a supervised environment, rather than being sent home. Felt Carden was doing this well with specialised environment and 'nest' provision. • Required to set work for excluded children to mitigate loss of learning. **[ACTION: GB to write up a response to the white paper and circulate to FGB]** The chair thanked GB for all her work on SEND and being part of the Ofsted inspection. **H&S Walk Visit** - to be reported at the next HSW meeting
6	HT thanked Governors for support with Ofsted and for all their preparation in the lead up.

Meeting closed at 5.45pm

The date of the next FGB meeting: Wednesday 8th July 2026 – 5pm

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

Chair…… Alistair McL ……

Date……8th July 2026…….

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