

St Mark's C of E Primary School FGB Minutes

July 7th, 2025, 5.30- 6.15



The Core functions that the governing board is responsible for are:

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.

Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of staff.

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

St Mark's C of E Primary School Governing Board		Appointed/Term of office.	Committee/ Linked role.
Foundation Governors	Christine Bartley Sebastian Dawson-Bowling Amanda Healey (Co-chair) Martin Lloyd Williams Alistare Smedley (Co-chair) Ben Atkins Rachel Hart	10/10/2023 – 08/10/2027 20/11/2024 – 19/11/2028 14/09/2017 – 13/09/2025 N/A 07/10/2023 - 06/10/2027 21/1/2025- 20/1/2029 22/4/2025- 21/4/2029	
Parent Governors	Josephine Dunlop Helen Mapa Murch	20/1/2025- 19/1/2029 05/07/2023- 04/07/2026	
Staff Governors	Jane Fendley (Head Teacher) Jess Murch	01/01/2011	
LA	Vacancy		
Associate member	Frances Rix	20/1/25- 19/1/27	

Delegation of responsibility to individuals - Terms of Reference:

- To liaise with the appropriate member of staff.
- To visit the school with the purpose of gathering information concerning their area of responsibility and to increase their knowledge of the school.
- To regularly report to the FGB on developments and progress within their area of responsibility.
- To raise the profile of the area of responsibility when related matters are considered by the FGB.
- To attend training as appropriate.

Items for discussion:

5.30-6.30.

1 Opening prayer and welcome.

a. Any apologies for non-attendance. Meeting is quorate with 5 or more governors attending.

Apologies from RH given in advance.

BA and AS also shared apologies.

The GB welcomed Claire Roberts (HT from September) to the meeting.

Natalie McKenzie (NM) also attended the meeting (up to the end of item 2).

b. Minutes from previous meeting (28/4/25) to be formally agreed.

Minutes agreed.

c. Formal sign off of reviewed Data Protection Policy.

Data Protection policy was formally agreed.

Actions:

Minutes to be filed and published on the website.

2 Sustainability Presentation- NM and JD.

Governors were taken through slides explaining the thinking behind sustainability - Why, How, What. Information in the presentation included:

WHY - the Purpose: Addressing evidence that the world is accelerating into a 'poly-crisis' (global issues such as energy instability, greenhouse gases affecting the climate, biodiversity degradation, population migration and conflict, pollution, food insecurity and disease). That this needs to be tackled in schools- that the situation will only get worse if there is no action at every level. That the crisis is based on how we organise society – education fits into this, being part of the solution, instead of carrying on being part of the problem.

HOW - the Process: Schools and their GB are in a privileged position to have a positive impact. Solutions to the crises all exist - values of school align with action. Action plan into 2027 was shared, that actions were planned at a slow and steady pace - this included initiatives that the school is already a part of, partners that the school is already working with. B&H focus- 'Our City, Our World' (OCOW) - this was described as a whole school initiative, Greening the curriculum as well as developing School Operations. This model is split into six themes - Biodiversity, Energy, Water, Transport, Food and Consumption+Waste. This model empowers the whole school community to be positive changemakers - children, families, staff and other stakeholders. This was recognised as a big task- but schools have the skills to tackle this. Each theme is a focus for a term, so over two years, each theme will have been worked on. Areas are highlighted through assemblies, lessons, audits, surveys, young governor focus, links with Roedean.

Aims for 2025-26:

- Governors were informed of the themes per term over the next two years, with 'Consumption and Waste' being the first, followed by 'Food' and then 'Biodiversity' by the end of next academic year.
- The GB role was explained – that governors are a key part of strategy, involved in sustainability action planning, building in regular contact between the pupils and the GB, monitoring impact of governors on the strategy.
- Governors were taken through events- starting with a whole school launch in September of the action plan- that the curriculum is already tilted towards environmentalism, which is positive.
- It was suggested that Sustainability was to be a standing item on FGB agendas.
- That it would be a focus at Staff meetings- launching the action plan on INSET days in September (with a focus on climate science and eco-anxiety).
- That there would be a development of eco ideas running through all areas of the curriculum.
- That by the end of the first Term, the school aimed to succeed in achieving OCOW's Bronze award for Sustainability.
- The GB would be involved in Carbon audits involving, discussing Procurement analysis.
- Another aim was to increase visibility of this approach - sharing regularly with the community through newsletters, etc.

Governors were informed that the school had signed up for B&H's 'Climate For Communities' plan- that this was Lottery funded, that more information would be shared next term about this.

Aims for 2026-27:

- Developing community engagement, partnerships with other schools, nature connections- linked to the curriculum, induction for new staff, OCOW in school presentations for new parents, St Mark's to become a community leader in sustainability, completing net zero route map, UN sustainability development aims in curriculum development- underscoring teaching and learning with how actions impact our environment.

WHAT - the Result:

- It was highlighted that students are at the core of this work, as well as involving parents in a culture of shared responsibility- that this joined up approach could lead to a mental health boost, giving the community the tools to know that they are doing something together to tackle the poly-crisis.
- It was hoped that this approach could also lead to cost savings, improve education and wellbeing outcomes, as well as building resilience and protecting God's creation.
- *'We are the 1st generation to feel the effects of climate change, and the last to do something about it'* Barak Obama.

Governor follow-up discussion: Governors were impressed with the presentation and the actions shared. They discussed how grants could support the action plan aims – that diocese support should continue to be sought out. The school shared how the recent Y6 trip was to a sustainability camp – that making deeper links with this organisation could be another avenue of support.

Action:

Sustainability updates to be a standing item in FGB meetings / as part of HT or SLT reporting.

- 3 Succession planning- a discussion around who will lead the GB in September- whether co-chairs continue, who has time to take this on, vice-chair role etc. Governors agreed that a transition plan was necessary – that this would cover everything, including mentoring, planning to move things forward as a GB, encouraging newer governors to take on a leadership role. It was shared that discussions about leadership had taken place outside of the meeting- AS had put himself forward as co-chair, CB as Vice chair, offering mentorship. AS and CB were elected as co-chair and vice chair. JD was elected as co-chair – governors thanked her for her passion and commitment.

Actions:

Governor support to be informed of outcome of elections and GB leadership changes.

Training for HT appraisal to be an item for future FGB agendas.

Leadership of the committees, the role of the safeguarding governor/ SEN governor, and the make-up of the admissions committee – also to be items for the first FGB agenda next term.

- 4 Budget monitoring- update on licensed deficit application, income and outgoings, forecasts. Governors were informed that the school's licensed deficit application to B&H had been rejected- that this was included in a strongly worded letter from B&H- that the reasons given for this decision was that the school's budget recovery plan was based too heavily on predicted pupil numbers and getting grants to support income/ spending. The letter insisted that the school engaged with the SRMA (Schools Resource manager advisor) process. Governors were informed that the process was led by business managers from other schools. That at least engaging with the process would give the school external validation regarding budget planning. The letter also suggested that the school should look at mixed age classes as a possible solution, even though this had been rejected by the LA when the GB had suggested this earlier this academic year.

Are pupil Numbers increasing?

The school suggested that whole school pupil numbers seem to be holding. That there were 154 pupils on roll at the October census- compared to 163 now. Governors supported a push back against the LA's request for a new budget plan to be submitted by September 12th- that it would be more sensible to work on this after the SRMA. That the LA should be aware that there will be a new HT in September – that this should form the basis of discussions at the final strategy with the LA before the end of this term.

Action:

Invite diocese to strategy meeting.

CR to be invited to the meeting.

- 5 Governor monitoring.
Updated governor monitoring plan was shared prior to the meeting.

Actions:

Follow up discussion of what form governor monitoring will take next term to be a discussion point for 1st GB meeting.

Diocese governors training available in new term to be highlighted when available.

- 6 HT report was circulated before the meeting – Governors thanked the HT the informative report.
Information on attendance was highlighted – it was agreed that this was going to be difficult to address because of all the factors involved as highlighted in the report. Governors were reminded that this had been picked up by OFSTED- how complicated the issues were, but how much the school was already doing to support pupils and their families.
An offer to be part of a literacy partnership in a recent B&H bulletin was highlighted – the school that they had already signed up for this.
- 7 HT and Chair of Governor farewells- this was the last FGB meeting for the current HT and Co-chair of GB- both were formally thanked for their hard work and commitment over the years, that their leadership has been exactly what the school has needed to support the journey the community has been on. It was agreed that future leadership had big shoes to fill- but it was agreed that the school is in the best place now to continue to serve its community.

Action Log- St Mark's Full Governing Board meeting- April 28th, 2025.



Agreed actions:	Responsibility of:	Completed by:
1. Minutes to be filed and published on the website.	School	End of summer term
2. Data Protection Policy to be published on the school website.	School	End of summer term
3. Sustainability updates to be a standing item in FGB meetings/ as part of HT or SLT reporting.	JP/ SLT	Ongoing.
4. Governor support to be informed of outcome of elections and GB leadership changes.	JP	ASAP
5. Training for HT appraisal to be an item for future FGB agendas.	JP/ JD/AS/ CR	September 2025
6. Leadership of the committees, the role of the safeguarding governor/ SEN governor, and the make-up of the admissions committee – also to be items for the first FGB agenda next term.	JP/ JD/AS/ CR	September 2025
7. Invite diocese to strategy meeting.	JF/AH	End of term.
8. CR to be invited to the meeting.	JF/AH	End of term.
9. Follow up discussion of what form governor monitoring will take next term to be a discussion point for 1 st GB meeting.	JP/ JD/AS/ CR	September 2025
10. Diocese governors training available in new term to be highlighted when available.	JP	Ongoing.

St Mark's SUGGESTED Meeting dates 2025-26

AUTUMN TERM 4/9- 19/12/25

Half term: 27-31/10

FGB- 8/9

Admission- 15/9

Resources – 25/9

FGB- 10/11

Resources- 4/12

SPRING TERM 5/1- 27/3/26

Half term: 16-20/2/26	
FGB- 19/1 Resources- 13/2 Admissions- 23/2	FGB- 16/3
SUMMER TERM 13/4- 22/7/26 Bank Holiday- 4/5 Half term- 25-29/5/26	
FGB- 27/4 Resources- 8/5	FGB- 6/7