



The Discovery School
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
Monday 18th May 2026 18:30 – meeting held via Teams

PRESENT

Miss Tina Gobell (TG) - Head Teacher
Mrs Annabel Cornall (AC) – Chair & Co-opted Governor (CoG)
Mrs Louise Connelly (LC) – Vice Chair and Co-opted Governor
Mr Conor Tobin (CT) – Parent Governor
Mr Louis Westlake (LW) – Co-opted Governor
Mr David Waller (DW) - LA Governor
Kelly Dey (KD) – Staff Governor

Apologies – Leanne Edwards & Mike Godwin

In attendance – Mrs Jenny Oakes – Deputy Head Teacher (DHT)

Governance Professional - Mrs Angela Alexander (GP).

AGENDA NUMBER	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION
1.	<u>1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence</u> The Chair welcomed all Governors to the meeting. The meeting was confirmed as quorate. <u>1.2 Apologies for absence</u> Apologies for absence were received from Leanne Edwards & Mike Godwin. It was noted that LC would be joining the meeting slightly after the start time.
2.	<u>Declaration of Business Interests.</u> There were no additional declarations made. The Register of Business Interests was confirmed as up to date with no business or pecuniary interests declared against any item on the agenda.
3.	<u>Consideration of AOUB items</u> There had been two AOUB items raised for consideration. These are confidential and are discussed and minuted in the Confidential minutes.
4.	<u>Minutes of the previous meeting 23rd March 2026</u> These had been circulated in advance and were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair will sign the minutes. The following actions had been completed:

- CoG signed the minutes from the January 2026 FGB meeting.
- **Register of Business Interests** - confirmed by all as up to date.
- **Membership** - The appointment and induction of the new Co-opted Governor is underway.
 - The GP has located the minutes and confirmed the CoG & Vice CoG appointment term & updated the Constitution.
- **Minutes of the previous meeting** – The letter from Bridgit Phillipson has not yet been added to the website as a review of the Pupil Premium website page is being undertaken following changes to the Pupil Premium funding scheme. It will be uploaded once this review is complete.
- **Finance Health & Safety** – Finance Monitoring reports from the March SFVS monitoring meeting, the April Closedown monitoring meeting and May new Three-Year Budget Plan monitoring meeting will be circulated to Governors with these minutes and uploaded the report from 23rd January 2026 monitoring meeting was uploaded to SharePoint.
- **School Improvement Plan and Monitoring Visits** – CoG has arranged a monitoring visit for the new RSE curriculum with DHT & another Governor.
 - [Action – CoG to share Science Week Monitoring visit report with GP for onward circulation and uploading to SharePoint.](#)
 - [Action – Pupil Premium report to be circulated and uploaded to SharePoint \(GP\)](#)
 - [Action – HT & CoG to organise a date for the Governor Day](#)
- **Head Teacher's Report** – A meeting has been arranged with DHT and Behaviour and Attitudes Governors – this is scheduled for 19th June 2026
 - The details of the SEND transition events have been included within the Head Teacher's report.
- **Policies** – This will be completed following the meeting scheduled for 19th June 2026.
- **Governor Training and Development** – Governors shared that they had not received their log in details for Modern Governor.
 - [Action - GP to investigate and arrange for further log in details to be sent.](#)

(LC joined the meeting at 6.43pm)

5.	<u>Membership update</u> The CoG reminded Governors that the amended Constitution had been shared as part of the FGB meeting documentation and that it now included correct term dates for both the CoG & the Vice CoG. Governors approved the amended constitution. The CoG shared the fantastic news that Louis Westlake had agreed to continue in his role as Co-opted Governor for a further term of four years. Action – GP to update the Constitution, Governor Hub and GIAS.
6.	<u>Finance</u> 2025-2026 Closedown The Finance Monitoring Governors met to review the end of year closedown position on Friday 25th April 2026. Closedown summary report and accompanying commentary were circulated to all Governors in advance and all confirmed they had reviewed these. A Finance Monitoring Governor shared that the school's finances finished the financial year in a strong position posting a final out turn of £8,388 (eight thousand, three hundred and eighty-eight pounds), an improvement of £17,967 (seventeen thousand, nine hundred and sixty-seven pounds) from the budget set in April 2025 which predicted an in-year deficit of £9,579 (nine thousand, five hundred and seventy-nine pounds). This improved position has enabled the school to carry forward a reserve of £85,211 (eighty-five thousand, two hundred and eleven pounds) to the new financial year. A Governor commented that it was evident the financial year had been really well managed despite ongoing pressures and thanked the SBM and all involved for their hard work in achieving a positive outcome. 26-27 Budget and Three-Year Plan: The Finance Monitoring Governors met to discuss the school's new three-year budget plan on Friday 15th May 2026. The Three-Year Plan, School's Financial Services CFR Assumptions Spreadsheet and accompanying commentary were circulated to all Governors in advance and all confirmed they had reviewed these. A Finance Governor advised that Year 1 had been scrutinised in detail and although it presented an in-year deficit of £19,810 (nineteen thousand, eight hundred and ten pounds), Governors were satisfied by the reasons for it and were reassured that the school had sufficient reserves available to manage through the next three years. The CoG asked why there was a 45% reduction in spending in E13 Grounds Maintenance compared to last year. The SBM explained that there were unforeseen, one off, additional works required in the last financial year. It had been

	planned to replace some sleepers in the allotment area but once these works started, it was clear that all sleepers needed to be replaced as they were rotten and posed a health and safety risk. This ledger code also contained the costs for the groundworks for the Reading House recently built. The SBM screen shared The Education People's 3YP CFR Assumptions spreadsheet with the board and explained that this tool compared the last financial year's budget and out turn with the budgets being set in the three-year plan and where there had been key differences, explanations had been provided. It also contained further detail around the rationale used to set the plan. Governors agreed it was a useful tool. The CoG then asked about the difference in the cost of water bills from the last financial year to the new budget. The SBM explained that bills for this financial year had already been received and confirmed the national position of significantly higher water bill costs. A Finance Governor shared that there had been a good discussion around rising energy bills given the current geopolitical situation and that it is necessary for the budget to be monitored and adjusted as necessary. Another Governor asked about the jump in spend for E20E laptops, desktops and tablets stating the jump was significant in percentage terms (109%) but not in monetary terms. The SBM explained that funds have been set aside from the Capital account to fund a rolling replacement programme for laptops and desktops and it was expected that these funds would be used as required for purchases and that funds allocated in the revenue budget are for ad hoc replacements. A further question was asked about the increase in expenditure in E18 – Other Occupational costs and asked for an explanation about this. The SBM explained that this was due to the new charges for Education Services being charged to the school's budget. The SBM went on to explain that a Consultation had been held asking schools for their views about KCC levying charges for their previously paid for services. The Schools Funding Forum had later approved the council's position and implemented charges for the following: - Statutory Compliance Testing & Surveys - Health & Safety advice and training - Employment Tribunal awards and legal costs - Administration of Teachers Pensions The SBM advised that the total costs for these new charges equated to £21,872. This is in addition to charges previously being levied for: - School Improvement Support - Moderation of end of key stage assessments - Redundancy Costs - Supply Cover - Trade Union duties - Free School Meal Eligibility Checks
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	These charges totalled £16,740. In total £38,612 (thirty-eight thousand, six hundred and twelve pounds) has been charged to the school's budget. The SBM went on to say that they felt that they could have obtained better value for money in undertaking the necessary statutory compliance testing locally but this was not an option for the school. The CoG asked Governors if they had any final questions. None were raised and Governors unanimously approved the new three-year budget for submission to KCC. The CoG thanked the SBM for their hard work on setting the budget in challenging conditions. See Finance Monitoring report 18th May 2026 for further Governor discussion in respect of the new Three-Year Plan.
7.	<u>Head Teacher's Report</u> The report had been circulated and was taken as read. Areas for governor challenge were highlighted. <u>Pupil Numbers</u> The school expects a full cohort of new Year R children will join the school in September 2026. Currently, the smallest Year group cohort is Year 6 and these children are leaving at the end of this academic year. There are two vacancies in Year 1 but both these places are under offer at this time. The school therefore expects to be full or oversubscribed in all year groups. <u>Attendance</u> The HT shared that attendance remains a key focus for Ofsted and inspectors are likely to explore Governors' understanding of the school's attendance data and actions being taken. Although the school is doing everything it can, attendance is still below pre-covid levels. The HT shared examples of initiatives the school has in place to help children attend school. These include collecting children from their homes, making referrals to the Local Authority Attendance Service, issuing penalty notices, and notices to improve. Attendance currently stands at 95.4% against the DFE's ABIE (Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation) of 95.1% for the academic year 2025/2026. When pupils with emotionally based school avoidance, or children missing in education (those that attended but have now left and have no new school) are disaggregated, attendance rises to 95.6%. The school's own attendance target is 96%. The school will continue to monitor absence closely.

	The CoG asked for clarification around the low percentages in Year R & Year 6 and asked for context around the Year 6 percentage (94.3%). The HT advised there is a child that is not attending school at all but is still included in the absence figure. The same child also has SEN and is in receipt of Pupil Premium funding so that data is also negatively impacted. The HT shared that KCC have full knowledge and provided consent for all children currently not attending as they are fully involved. The school has been instructed to agree to that absence. The CoG advised that when the SEND and Inclusion Monitoring is undertaken, the governors will focus on emotional school-based avoidance (EBSA) issues as that is a focus for the School Improvement Plan. The CoG went on to say that the EBSA policy written by the SENCo in conjunction with the Education Psychology Team provides a very clear framework. The HT shared that they had attended external training with the SENCo which although was high quality training, it did highlight that there is no quick fix and that attendance issues are often linked to mental health which the school have no control over. Also, that school is seldom the actual issue. The HT referred to Year 6 and advised that in that cohort there are a significantly higher number of children with SEMH issues, SEN and EHCPs – these often require time away from school for medical appointments etc. The HT asked Governors if they had any additional questions regarding the HT report. None were raised.
8.	<u>Policies</u> All policies were circulated prior to the meeting and copies stored with these minutes. The below policies were discussed and ratified: • Lettings Policy – reviewed with no changes. Agreed by the FGB. • Redundancy & Restructure – Minor changes made that include an update to allow for different communication channels (virtual meetings as well as in person meetings). Updated to include pregnant employees and staff on or returning from parental leave. Minor update to terms of Local Government Pension scheme qualifying service term. Agreed by the FGB. • Grievance Policy – References to SPS removed and replaced with HR Connect. Contact phone number for Staff Care Services updated. Amended to reflect changes under Employment Rights Act 2025 – Paragraph 2. inclusion of ‘sexual harassment’ Agreed by the FGB. The GP advised that Employment Rights Act 2025 has brought about a number of changes – some of these have already come into force but others will come in later this year. These changes mean that a number of other policies will need to be updated shortly. A Governor asked if the school needs to follow these policies. The CoG replied that the school does not deviate from Kent policies because the school would not

	receive support in relation to grievances or employment matters if it did. The policies are Kent policies that the school adopts. The HT reminded Governors that being a Local Authority School, we are ultimately Local Authority employees and KCC consult with unions on schools' behalf before the policies are shared. Governors agreed that it would be helpful to have training on the Employment Rights Act 2025 changes. Action – CoG & GP to arrange training on the key updates from the Employment Rights Act 2025.
9.	<u>Chair's update</u> <u>Urgent Chair's Actions</u> • 2 urgent actions raised <u>Quality Assurance visit for SATs</u> The CoG shared that compliance visits had been undertaken both before and during the recent SATs testing. The 'before' compliance visit focused on the storage of the papers and ensuring that staff administering the tests have had the correct training. The 'during' compliance visit involved walking round the school with the two staff distributing the papers to check that this was being done properly as many rooms and offices were being used to facilitate the testing due to the complexity of the cohort's needs. The CoG checked that children who were needing one to one space had not been prepped before the testing started and later observed the papers being collected in and stored before secure collection. All aspects of the test administration process had been checked and the CoG reported that the school's processes and procedures were correctly carried out. <u>Year 6 Residential Approval</u> The HT shared this year's Year 6 residential trip to PGL Marchant Hill needs formal approval from the FGB. The HT shared that all risk assessments had been conducted and have been submitted to KCC. KCC have given approval for the trip to go ahead subject to approval by the FGB – this is required as it involves an overnight stay and adventurous activities. The HT went on to say that all formalities in connection with the trip have been completed, including risk assessments conducted, insurance checked, attending staff ratios checked and medical needs and reasonable adjustments have been made for children needing them. Year 6 residential trip to PGL Marchant Hill approved by the FGB

Appointment of new co-opted Governor

The CoG shared that Kay's DBS had been completed and that she has met with the HT and had a walkaround the school. Her first FGB will be the July in person meeting.

Sustainability Lead meeting

The CoG updated governors regarding the meeting held with Nigel Hartnup from Commercial Services Group and the GP. The CoG shared that Nigel will be a helpful and important connection to develop especially in light of the budget conversations regarding utility costs. The CoG shared that Nigel was very impressed with what the school has done so far, not just around the curriculum work but also all of the management of the school. Nigel also articulated that he was aware that some of our good work and ideas have been adopted by others who might not have been as far in their sustainability journeys. It was a really positive meeting which provided the school with some avenues to explore.

GP update – Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act

The above act became law on 29th April 2026 and its aim is to improve children's wellbeing through a series of reforms.

The key updates coming into force are:

29th June 2026

- School Food Standards and Statutory Pay and Conditions Framework are going to be extended to academies.
- End to forced academisation for schools that are causing concern
- New legal duty for schools and Local Authorities to cooperate on admissions and place planning

September 2026

- Expanded Free School meal eligibility
- New Statutory duty to support children with allergies – Benedict's Law
- Cap on compulsory branded uniform items

Coming into effect at a later date:

- Pupils banned from using mobile phones in school during the school day
- Stricter rules on home education
- Routine Ofsted inspections of academy trusts
- National Curriculum requirement to be extended to academies.

The HT shared that a review of uniform was undertaken a few years ago, in anticipation of this act, that involved a consultation with parents and questionnaire resulting in a change to the school's uniform policy. The HT stated that the

	school's uniform policy is compliant with the new act and does not need to be reviewed again at this stage. The HT also advised Governors that proposed changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) were expected to be significant. Consultation had closed and draft guidance had been issued. Due to the late publication of KCSIE, it is likely that schools will have little time to implement updated processes. There will also be more around AI in schools. The HT suggested that training for Governors would be beneficial in either the September or October meeting. Action – CoG & GP to ensure KCSIE update training for Governors is scheduled for early in the new academic year.
10.	<u>Correspondence</u> – None received
11.	<u>AOUB</u> There had been two AOUB items raised for consideration. These are confidential and are discussed and minuted in the Confidential minutes.
12.	<u>Confidential Items</u> – see separate confidential minutes
13.	<u>Impact of meeting</u> Key impacts were noted: • Actions from the last meeting have either been completed or there is a robust plan in place for ensuring their completion demonstrating the effectiveness of the Governing Body. • The amended constitution has been approved confirming that the current governance model is effective. • A full scrutiny of the proposed 3-year new budget by the finance monitoring governors and subsequent discussion at this meeting has shown that the governors are carrying out one of their core functions with due diligence, ensuring that the school maintains a strong financial position, with no impact on the children's experiences, thanks to the hard work of the SBM and HT. The FGB approved the three-year budget plan. • The previous year's budget had been deemed to be successful as the school finished the year in a more positive position than had been originally anticipated. • Governors challenged the HT around attendance and strategies being implemented to improve current levels, especially around Emotional School Based Avoidance issues. Governors learned that external training had been attended and that has helped give governors an understanding of how the school is supporting children with EBSA.

	• The CoG had carried out a Quality Assurance assessment and compliance check around the recent KS2 SATs examinations, ensuring that staff had been adequately trained and all statutory requirements fulfilled. • Governors approved the Year 6 PGL overnight trip following assurances that all appropriate risk assessments had been completed. • The Lettings Policy, Grievance and Redundancy & Restructure policies have all been updated and approved by the FGB. • Governors learned about the new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act demonstrating continuing development of their knowledge. • The appointment of a new Co-opted Governor is complete and an existing co-opted Governor has agreed to extend their term and continue on the board. • Governors had an early in-depth conversation around changes to KCSIE and reflected on the need for further training to be delivered at the start of the new academic year to make sure that the right decisions around keeping children safe in school are made moving forwards.
16	<u>Date and time of next meeting</u> Monday 13th July 2026 18:30 at The Discovery School

Signed..... Chair/Vice Chair

Date.....

Appendix 1 - Actions from the FGB meeting 18th May 2026

4.	<u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u> - CoG to share Science Week Monitoring visit report with GP for onward circulation and uploading to SharePoint - Pupil Premium report to be circulated and uploaded to SharePoint (GP) - HT & CoG to organise a date for the Governor Day - GP to investigate and arrange for further log in details to be sent.
5.	<u>Membership</u> - GP to update the Constitution, Governor Hub and GIAS.
9.	<u>Chair's update</u> - CoG & GP to ensure KCSIE update training for Governors is scheduled for early in the new academic year. - CoG & GP to arrange training on the key updates from the Employment Rights Act 2025.