



The Discovery School
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
Monday 23rd March 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
 Mrs Leanne Edwards – (LE) – Parent Governor
 Mr Mike Godwin (MG) - Parent Governor
 Mr Conor Tobin (CT) – Parent Governor
 Mr Louis Westlake (LW) – Co-opted Governor

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

Governance Professional - Mrs Angela Alexander (GP).

AGENDA NUMBER	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION
1.	<p><u>1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence</u> The Chair welcomed all Governors to the meeting. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.</p> <p><u>1.2 Apologies for absence</u> The HT gave apologies for Kelly Dey. It was noted that LW would be joining the meeting slightly after the start time.</p>
2.	<p><u>Declaration of Business Interests.</u></p> <p>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.</p>
3.	<p><u>Consideration of AOUB items</u></p> <p>No AOUB items had been raised with the CoG.</p>
4.	<p><u>Membership update</u></p> <p>The CoG reminded Governors that the Board currently has a small number of vacancies and shared that the Governors should review it and agree if it is correct.</p> <p>The CoG shared that there were certain areas where the board needed to develop its expertise and the last two Parent Governor appointments had been successful at doing that. The CoG then shared that she had found a potential co-opted</p>

Governor to join the board and fill one of the vacant positions. The prospective Governor (Kay) has experience in Education, understands the role of a Governor and has the time to commit to events both during the day and in the evening. The CoG shared that she felt this new Governor would be a good fit for the board and asked Governors to confirm if they were in agreement to moving forward with the appointment.

Governors agreed to the appointment.

The CoG reminded Governors that if they knew someone who would make a good Governor to let her know.

Action – CoG to appoint Kay to the board.

The GP shared that the constitution is currently showing four vacancies (three once Kay is Appointed) and asked the Board to consider if that was the correct number of vacancies to show and whether it was appropriate to try and recruit a further three co-opted Governors or whether it was appropriate to reduce the vacancies. The HT reminded Governors that any decision made now can be reviewed in September particularly if there is a surge in interest.

The HT went on to say that the DFE are actively encouraging schools to appoint co-opted Governors rather than Parent Governors and too many Governor vacancies do not promote a positive image of the school.

The CoG shared that it is important that the right candidates are appointed and that reducing the size of the Governing Body slightly was a sensible option on the basis that it could be increased again, if appropriate.

The HT advised that the Board do not need to make an immediate decision and that Governors could take time to consider the position. The HT shared that their view is that it would not be appropriate to reduce the board by any more than 2 co-opted governors. Of the two remaining vacancies, one has now been filled therefore only one vacancy would remain.

The CoG asked Governors to let her know their thoughts on the matter so that it could be tabled as an agenda item for the next meeting.

A Governor asked for clarification around where it was viewed that open positions do not look favourable. The HT clarified that Ofsted will see the number of vacancies when a school is inspected and will look to see how long the vacancies have been open for. Although Ofsted may expect vacancies, they will want to see that there is an effective recruitment strategy in place.

Another Governor asked how quickly co-opted vacancies are filled. The HT explained that vacancies are usually filled fairly quickly but it is unusual to have four vacancies at the same time and that they were created by Governors resigning before the end of their term of office. The Governor shared that based on the discussion and presuming all are happy with the current balance they would be happy to remove one or two vacancies. Another Governor agreed with this view.

	<p>The HT asked if Governors wanted to vote on the decision to reduce the open vacancies by two and Governors unanimously agreed.</p> <p>The HT then shared that there was also a mistake in the Constitution document as the Chair's term of office date was incorrectly recorded.</p> <p>Action - GP to review past meeting minutes to confirm the correct Chair appointment date and update the constitution accordingly.</p>
5.	<p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting 26th January 2026</u></p> <p>These had been circulated in advance and were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair will sign the minutes.</p> <p>The following actions had been completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoG signed the minutes from the October 2025 FGB meeting. • Register of Business Interests - confirmed by all as up to date. • Membership - The CoG met with the GP to discuss potential Governor recruitment strategies (see update in Section 4. Membership update). • Finance Health & Safety – Finance Monitoring report from 23rd January 2026 monitoring meeting was uploaded to Sharepoint and signposted to Governors. • School Improvement Plan and Monitoring Visits - HT advised that the next School Improvement Partner visit is scheduled for 16th June 2026 at 9am. • The CoG & HT advised Governors that after discussion it was felt appropriate to postpone the Ofsted readiness training for Governors until after staff had received their training later this academic year. Ofsted readiness training for Governors will be deferred until September 2026. • Chair's update – it was agreed that the letter from Bridgit Phillipson would be shared on the school's website via the Pupil Premium page rather than sharing widely with all parents the work that had been done with Pupil Premium. Governors agreed to this strategy. <p>Action – Bridgit Phillipson letter to be shared on the school website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TG advised that she had reached out to RISE but had not yet received any response. • The CoG reminded Governors to review the Sustainability web pages to understand the good work happening in school and advised that a meeting had been arranged with Nigel Hartnup for April 2026. • The CoG stated that she had not received any feedback about any training attended – see training update in Section 11. Governor Training. <p>(LW joined the meeting at 6.37pm)</p>

6.	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>SFVS (School Financial Value Standard)</p> <p>The CoG reported that the Finance Monitoring Governors had met with the School Business Manager (SBM) & HT to review the SFVS line by line. They found no changes were necessary due to the document's clarity, and recommended its approval by the full governing body.</p> <p>Financial Position Update: A Finance Monitoring Governor confirmed that the school's finances have improved over the last quarter as predicted, and the school is expected to finish the year in a strong position enabling reserve levels to be maintained.</p> <p>9-month Budget monitoring feedback from KCC: Feedback had been received from KCC on the nine-month budget monitoring submission and that there were no material concerns with the current financial position.</p> <p>Pay Committee update: The HT advised that following changes to KCC's pay scales in 2025, there was no longer any need to hold a Pay Committee meeting. Performance based judgements had been removed from the new scheme and pay rises are automatic based on target achievement.</p> <p>The CoG asked Governors if they had any questions and were happy for the SFVS to be approved. None were raised & the SFVS was approved for submission to KCC.</p> <p>The CoG noted that the next governing body meeting will focus on budget close down, with a detailed review of the new budget scheduled for May's FGB.</p>
7	<p><u>School Improvement Plan and Monitoring Visits</u></p> <p>The CoG communicated that she had reviewed the monitoring that has happened this year, to set out the monitoring for the rest of the year and shared that she was really proud of how much had been done. The CoG wanted to remind Governors what had been achieved so far this year.</p> <p>Safeguarding Monitoring</p> <p>The CoG reviewed the safeguarding action plan, scrutinised the Single Central Register, and met with the administrator responsible for safeguarding compliance. Further meetings are planned to review new legislation and compliance.</p> <p>Leadership & Management</p> <p>The pay committee had met and the HT Performance Management had been undertaken. Cyber Security compliance had been monitored; this involved a meeting with the Network Manager to scrutinise our plans to confirm compliance. This practice has been shared with other schools in the collaborative who have asked The Discovery School to support them as they do not have this detailed</p>

framework in place. A governor has also conducted a website compliance check to make sure the website is fully compliant.

Curriculum and Teaching Monitoring

A Governor attended a Science Week celebration, observing progression and adaptive teaching across year groups. They commented it was great to see the children talking enthusiastically about their experiments, articulating what they had done and seeing in practice how the different teaching approaches change to meet the needs of the children. The Governor shared they will provide a monitoring note which will be shared to all Governors.

[Action – Science week monitoring visit report to be circulated once shared.](#)

The CoG attended CPD on the science of learning which is a key priority for the school in terms of teaching and learning, and future monitoring will involve the new co-opted governor.

Attendance and Behaviour Monitoring

The CoG and a Governor met with the DHT and the Senior AHT to review the new Behaviour Policy that has been developed. They conducted a learning walk and met with key staff, including support staff and conducted student voice with pupils to evaluate the impact of the non-negotiables that had been set.

Governors attended the Christmas lunch which afforded Governors the opportunity of seeing the school's values and culture in action whilst raising the profile of the Governing Body.

Inclusion Monitoring

Governors conducted a comprehensive monitoring visit to improve the SEND information report and conducted a learning walk to see the provision in place for those children requiring additional support.

The HT met with a Governor to evaluate pupil premium provision and the provision put in place for these pupils. The monitoring report will follow shortly.

[Action – Pupil Premium monitoring visit report to be circulated once shared.](#)

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Monitoring: A Governor reported on a visit to EYFS with the EYFS Lead. They looked at the classes and the environment and had a comprehensive discussion about the areas for development that have taken place across Early Years. Classroom displays and the different ways they can be used were discussed and the Governor advised that the EYFS is planning to develop this during the year. Discussions explored the successes that have been happening in EYFS especially in relation to teaching of reading and phonics and the pupil's good level of development which is currently around the low 80% mark; higher than in both previous years and the national level. Intervention timetables are used and maintain consistency across the three different classes.

Although the EYFS lead was absent for a few months, the EYFS team worked very hard and kept moving EYFS forward, focusing on speech and language development. The EYFS lead was keen for Governors to understand that some of the areas she has been working on e.g., the redevelopment of the home reader scheme and continual improvement of the outside area will require significant investment. Parental engagement is also being developed and it is hoped that an additional touch point during the year can be introduced for parents.

A written report will follow.

Action – EYFS monitoring visit report to be circulated once shared.

Finance

The CoG reminded Governors that there is a strict schedule of finance meetings with the SBM and HT that happen in between full governing body meetings and that the SBM is highly effective in managing the school's finances.

The CoG shared that she hoped that Governors are reflecting on the fantastic monitoring that has been happening and thanked them all for their time and hard work.

Future Monitoring Priorities

The CoG stated that with the HT, an evaluation of progress toward the School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities had been undertaken and that some aspects needed to be reviewed, including behaviour, attitudes and personal development.

Governors agreed to focus upcoming monitoring on:

- Behaviour - Work on behaviour principles for the school will be undertaken with the DHT.
- Safeguarding - Further compliance check to be undertaken including a review of the new legislation, Working Together to Safeguard Children and of the Single Central Record.
- Teaching and Quality of Education - To review how we are doing in terms of assessment and where we are on the journey. The new Co-opted Governor will be invited to look at this too.
- Inclusion - Emotional based school avoidance (EBSA) is a key priority and future monitoring will involve a joint meeting with the SENCo & HT to look at the provisioning impact and how that is affecting attendance.
- EYFS – The School Improvement Advisor will be focusing on EYFS as part of their visit in June 2026.
- Leadership & Management – The focus for the rest of the year will be around sustainability and will utilise the expertise of the sustainability advisor, CoG & GP.
- Finance – Meetings will continue as scheduled.
- A Governor Day will be scheduled for July to offer a comprehensive view of school operations, looking at different aspects of school life but drawn together by a focus on the experience of our disadvantaged pupils. A date will be agreed and communicated to all as soon as possible.

	<p>The HT shared with Governors that the new RSE curriculum needs to be in place by September 2026 and that this should be a focus of a monitoring visit by either Personal Development or Curriculum or Leadership Governors on how the school are implementing the new changes. The DHT agreed with this.</p> <p>Action – Monitoring visit on new RSE curriculum to be arranged. Action – CoG to arrange a date with the HT for the Governor Day.</p>
8	<p><u>Head Teacher’s Report</u></p> <p>The report had been circulated and was taken as read. Areas for governor challenge were highlighted.</p> <p><u>School Improvement</u></p> <p>The HT shared that SLT had been undertaking some comprehensive monitoring over the last two terms. The HT & DHT have conducted paired lesson observations and two AHT’s undertook the book looks. The Senior AHT summarised the findings, strengths and development areas to enable a focus on how improvements can be made, through individual coaching or whole school CPD. The HT reported there have already been significant improvements in practice which demonstrates the new model of monitoring is more effective than previous versions.</p> <p>The HT shared that next term’s focus would be EYFS and Year One. The HT asked if there were any questions. None were raised.</p> <p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>Policies were reviewed under Agenda item 10.</p> <p>Action – Governors to liaise with DHT regarding development of Statement of Behaviour principles.</p> <p><u>Pupil Numbers</u></p> <p>The school remains full in all year groups except Year 6. Total roll stands at 635 against a PAN of 630. Indicative pupil numbers for September 2026 show the school will be full and it is expected that a full cohort of new Year R children will join the school. This is a positive position given the continued fall in local birth rates.</p> <p><u>Attendance</u></p> <p>Attendance currently stands at 95.3% against the DFE’s ABIE (Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation) of 95.1% for the academic year 2025/2026.</p> <p>When pupils with emotionally based school avoidance are disaggregated, attendance rises to 95.5%. The school will continue to monitor absence closely.</p>

	<p><u>Health and Safety</u></p> <p>Accident data remains stable at an acceptable level, with fewer incidents following changes to play and lunch arrangements.</p> <p><u>Diary Dates</u></p> <p>Diary dates for upcoming events and class assemblies are included within the HT report. The HT extended an invitation to all Governors to attend any of these events regardless of whether they have children in school.</p> <p><u>Support for system-wide improvement</u></p> <p>In line with Ofsted’s exceptionality criteria, the HT shared an initiative the SENCo had been working on. The cutbacks in the Local Authority meant that SEND transition events hosted by Specialist Teaching Service no longer take place. Previously these would have included pre-school children transferring to school and Year 6 children transferring to Secondary school.</p> <p>The SENCo was disappointed that these valuable events had been cancelled so took it upon herself to organise the same forum. She has invited representatives from the Local Authority and also pre-schools and secondary schools. Three separate dates have been organised. Governors agreed this was an exceptional piece of work from the SENCo that demonstrated school to school support.</p> <p>The HT asked Governors if they had any questions. The CoG stated that this was a great example of exceptionality in practice and asked the HT to share the dates of the transition events.</p> <p>Action – HT to share the dates of the SEND transition events.</p>
9	<p><u>Chair’s update</u></p> <p><u>Urgent Chair’s Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p><u>Chair’s update</u></p> <p>The CoG shared that the mixed Year 5 & 6 girls football team participated in a tournament. The team played really well together and sadly lost in the final to an older team from Southend. Despite not winning this tournament, the team have gone through to the next stage as runners up. Further wins could lead to The Discovery School’s team playing at Wembley. Already though, this team are the most successful Discovery School football team. The CoG shared that the girls displayed Discovery School values in their behaviour and play which was great to see.</p> <p>There were no further CoG updates.</p>

	<p>The GP shared that the new long awaited white paper ‘Every Child Achieving and Thriving’ had finally been published and there are summaries widely available that Governors can read.</p>
10	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>The policy was circulated prior to the meeting and a copy is stored with these minutes. The below policy was discussed and ratified:</p> <p>Behaviour Policy</p> <p>The policy was updated to reflect the non-negotiables that have been introduced in school and to deliver clearer guidance for everyone in the school community, making it easier to understand what their responsibilities are when it comes to supporting children.</p> <p>The DHT outlined the updates to the behaviour policy, including clearer roles and responsibilities, explicit school values, research references, definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, reward and consequence systems, and expectations for behaviour outside school, including use of social media.</p> <p>The policy also details a new reasonable force record system that was introduced to document physical interventions needed to help dysregulated children and a playtime traffic light system implemented for Key Stage 2, credited to the Lunchtime Provision and Welfare Manager.</p> <p>The governing body approved the revised behaviour policy, and Governors will work with the DHT to review the statutory statement of behaviour principles.</p> <p>Action – Governors to work with the DHT to develop the statutory statement of behaviour principles.</p>
11	<p><u>Governor Training and Development</u></p> <p>The GP shared that they have reviewed training packages available and that the school currently subscribes to Modern Governor which contains a wealth of short training courses on all aspects of Governance, Safer Recruitment, Ofsted, change management, emotional intelligence etc. The GP has arranged for logins to be provided to all Governors and asked that they take some time to review the content and provide feedback as to whether it is a useful resource and one worth continuing.</p> <p>The GP also shared the latest training courses published on Governor Hub.</p> <p>Action – Governors to review Modern Governor and provide any relevant feedback to GP.</p>
12	<p><u>Correspondence</u> – None received</p>

13	<u>AOUB</u> – None raised
14	<u>Confidential Items</u> - None
15	<p><u>Impact of meeting</u></p> <p>Key impacts were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no outstanding actions from the last meeting demonstrating the effectiveness of the Governing Body. • The SFVS was scrutinised and approved by the Full Governing Body. • Governors evaluated the impact of the monitoring visits since September with a particular focus on monitoring that has happened since the last FGB. These included the curriculum visit, observing values and behaviours at sporting event, EYFS visit and Pupil Premium, disadvantaged pupil monitoring visits. • Governors have agreed their monitoring priorities form the remainder of the academic year and linked these to the School Improvement Plan. • Governors have planned a monitoring day with a focus on disadvantaged pupils. • Governance Professional has carried out an audit of the available CPD for Governors and asked for feedback. • The Behaviour Policy was ratified by the FGB.
16	<p><u>Date and time of next meeting</u></p> <p>Monday 18th May 2026 6.30 pm (via TEAMS)</p>

Signed..... Chair/Vice Chair

Date.....