



The Discovery School
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
Monday 26th January 2026 18:30 – meeting held via Teams

PRESENT

Miss Tina Gobell (TG) - Head Teacher
 Mrs Annabel Cornall (AC) – Chair & Co-opted Governor (CoG)
 Kelly Dey (KD) – Staff Governor
 Mrs Leanne Edwards – (LE) – Parent Governor
 Mr Mike Godwin (MG) - Parent Governor
 Mr Conor Tobin (CT) – Parent Governor
 Mr David Waller (DW) – LA 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> None received. It was noted that MG & TG would be joining the meeting slightly after the start time.</p>
2.	<p><u>Declaration of Business Interests.</u> The CoG advised they had updated GovernorHub following a new business venture and an appointment as an Education Trustee for a national charity. The CoG confirmed that no consultancy work would be undertaken for the school and therefore there was no conflict of interest.</p> <p>There were no further declarations. 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> No AOUB items had been raised with the CoG.</p>
4.	<p><u>Membership update</u> The CoG reminded Governors that the Board currently has a small number of vacancies. The CoG and GP will meet in the coming weeks to develop a strategy</p>

	<p>for recruiting new co-opted Governors. The CoG stressed that the importance of recruiting individuals with the right skills and experience and therefore taking time to develop clear role descriptions and a recruitment strategy.</p> <p>Action – CoG to meet with GP to design strategy for filling board vacancies.</p>
5.	<p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting 27/10/2025</u></p> <p>These had been circulated in advance and were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair will digitally sign the minutes.</p> <p>The following actions had been completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair digitally signed the minutes • Chair met individually with FGB members regarding monitoring visits • All term 2 monitoring visits completed • Finance Health & Safety - Six-month monitoring report circulated • Head Teacher’s Report – Governor Visit Policy and Governor monitoring form amended • Cut-off date for Christmas school dinner communicated and school activities list circulated • Pay & Reward policy approved (Agenda Item 10) • Headteacher Performance Management (HTPM) discussed as a confidential item • Pay Committee feedback provided (Agenda Item 6) • Cyber security contingency arrangements agreed with Mereworth Primary School
6.	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p><u>6a 9-month Budget Monitoring</u></p> <p>The CoG reported that the Finance Monitoring Governors had met with the School Business Manager (SBM) to scrutinise the nine-month monitoring. An extensive report had been provided by the SBM and circulated to all Governors. Copies of budget documentation are stored with these minutes.</p> <p>While some budget variances were identified, clear and appropriate explanations were provided. Overall, the financial position was reported as slightly better than predicted at the six-month point, with the expectation of further improvement once year-end accounts are finalised.</p> <p>The CoG confirmed that feedback from Kent County Council on the six-month monitoring had been received and raised no concerns.</p> <p>Governors discussed high-needs funding and the shortfall currently shown. It was noted that funding for a pupil who joined in November is still being pursued, with the Central Team currently processing October requests. The CoG also advised that funding had been secured from the Community of Schools, and that the SENCo intends to submit a request for funding for an Emotional Learning Support Assistant.</p>

Governors noted that the installation of new boilers has had a positive impact on gas costs, although electricity costs remain high and continued to be monitored.

It was also noted that the school has moved from KCC Insurance to the DFE's Risk Protection Arrangement which provides broader cover, including Cyber security, and is considered a more comprehensive long-term option.

Discussion also took place regarding next year's budget, with potential budget freezes anticipated. The SEND White paper, originally expected in January has been delayed until Spring 2026, contributing to ongoing uncertainty around SEND funding and provision.

The CoG thanked the SBM for the effective and robust management of the school's finances.

The finance monitoring meeting took place on Friday 23rd January 2026 and the full report will be circulated shortly.

[Action – Finance monitoring report to be circulated to all FGB members.](#)

(TG joined the meeting at 6.35pm)

(MG joined the meeting at 6.38pm)

6b Pay Committee report

A Pay Committee Governor provided feedback from the Pay Committee meeting held in November. Governors reviewed a range of documentation, including performance management records, clearly outlining targets set and outcomes achieved. Applications for progression and movement to the leadership scale were detailed and clearly presented.

The Governor confirmed that questions regarding the performance review process were satisfactorily answered. The only outstanding matter was the formal approval of the Pay Policy.

6c Pay Committee minutes approval

The CoG thanked the Governor for the report and invited questions; none were raised. Governors unanimously approved the Pay Committee minutes.

6d Benchmarking report

The annual benchmarking report prepared by the SBM was discussed at the Finance Monitoring Meeting and circulated with the meeting papers. The CoG reported that, aside from a small number of anomalies, expenditure is broadly in line with similar schools. The anomalies relating to Educational Supplies and Educational ICT were attributed to differences in cost-centre coding, which is expected to normalise in future data.

	<p>Governors were encouraged to review the benchmarking data in detail.</p> <p><u>6e Gifts & Hospitality Register</u></p> <p>The HT reminded Governors that the Gifts & Hospitality Policy introduced last year. All individual gifts of £50 or more, and collective gifts of £100 or more received, must be recorded, including gifts provided by the school for reasons such as bereavement.</p> <p>The register was circulated as part of the meeting's papers. For Compliance purposes, it was formally noted that the register had been shared with and acknowledged by the FGB.</p> <p>The CoG invited questions about the Gifts and Hospitality Register. No questions were raised.</p> <p><u>6f Head Teacher Performance Management (HTPM)</u></p> <p>Discussed under Confidential items.</p>
7	<p><u>School Improvement Plan and Monitoring Visits</u></p> <p>Governors were reminded of the expectation to complete their first monitoring visit during this term.</p> <p>The CoG advised that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) visit had not yet taken place due to staff illness, but would be arranged as soon as possible. It was suggested that this could be combined with the next School Improvement Partner visit, which will focus on EYFS.</p> <p>Action – HT to notify Governors once the next School Improvement Partner visit is scheduled.</p> <p>The CoG reported on a completed SEND monitoring visit, noting that the agreed report has been published on the school's website. Governors met with the SENCo, reviewed the SEND provision, undertook a learning walk and considered pupil outcomes. Governors were highly impressed with the quality of provision and the dedication of staff, sharing that it was a really inspiring visit.</p> <p>Another Governor commented on the exceptional outcomes achieved and the extent to which other schools seek support from The Discovery School. It was noted that this reflects strong system leadership.</p> <p>The CoG confirmed that the Governor was right to highlight the requests for help and support that are directed to The Discovery School as a new area of focus is system led leadership and improving schools and outcomes.</p> <p>The CoG reminded Governors that one-word judgements no longer exist and are replaced by a report card under the new OFSTED framework. The Discovery</p>

	<p>School would be looking for Exceptionality and that a criterion of this is how the school is helping other schools improve the outcomes for all children.</p> <p>Another monitoring visit focusing on Attitudes to Learning and Behaviour was reported. Governors met with senior leaders, undertook a learning walk, spoke with Teaching Assistants and pupils and observed calm, purposeful learning environments.</p> <p>The Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) had been leading on a new Behaviour Policy comprising three non-negotiables: Good Sitting, Good Listening, Good Looking and that the purpose of these is to get children ready for learning. Teaching Assistants were able to share examples of what good sitting, good listening and good looking looked like in practice. Feedback highlighted strong staff support from leadership and a clear understanding of behavioural expectations across the school.</p> <p>Children were also able to articulate what good learning etc looks like in the classroom. They also spoke about changes to breaks and lunchtimes and were able to articulate that the timing change had made break time calmer.</p> <p>A Governor added that the visit was positive and children were calm and respectful, displaying good behaviours in all of the classrooms visited.</p> <p>The CoG commented that this visit had been a great opportunity to triangulate what is heard in meetings and shared by the HT with what is actually happening in school.</p> <p>The DHT outlined next steps, including further monitoring of consistent implementation and a focus on pupils' sense of belonging, which features prominently in the revised Ofsted framework.</p> <p>The HT shared that a published research paper on the sense of belonging suggested belonging as more a feeling than something that can be defined and that the behaviours for learning being promoted in school really embody that sense of belonging. This paper validates the approach that the school has been taking.</p> <p>The CoG also reflected on attending the Christmas lunch, noting the strong school culture and sense of belonging observed.</p> <p>Action – CoG to arrange Ofsted readiness training for Governors.</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>

Headline data from the Ofsted IDSR (data dashboard used during inspections, but is also used as a summary for Governors) for 2024/25 was shared. For the second year running, the results in our headline data for 24/25 are encouraging.

The Strategic Improvement Plan had been evaluated against Term 2 milestones and is on track.

Action – HT to share SIP evaluation with CoG to inform future monitoring visits.

Policies

Policies were reviewed under Agenda item 10.

Pupil Numbers

The school remains full in all year groups except Year 6. Total roll stands at 635 against a PAN of 630. Governors were reminded of the funding lag for pupil numbers.

Support for system-wide improvement

The HT and CoG highlighted activity aligned with Ofsted's exceptionality criteria, including support provided to other schools and system leadership activity.

As this is a new criterion and information that is not currently captured, the CoG and HT felt it important to record these achievements formally within Governing Body minutes.

- PPG Lead is supporting Mereworth Primary School in developing a strategy for supporting disadvantaged pupils living in an affluent area.
- Senior AHT hosted a school visit for the DHT of Bexley Preparatory School with a focus on supporting their school to establish an inclusive school culture.
- The CoG who has been identified as a leading Chair of Governors has supported KCC with its work on developing county wide school governance in maintained schools.
- The CoG has supported the governing board of Mereworth Primary School with its Cyber Security strategy and due diligence.
- The Network Manager has supported Kings Hill Primary School and Nursery with its IT implementation Plan.
- The RE Lead is supporting Stocks Green Primary School with its curriculum development.

Attendance

Attendance currently stands at 95.6% 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 are disaggregated, attendance rises to 95.9%. The school will continue to monitor absence closely.

	<p><u>Health and Safety</u></p> <p>Accident data has plateaued at an acceptable level, with fewer incidents following changes to play and lunch arrangements.</p> <p>The HT invited questions. The CoG recognised that the feedback from children reinforced the accident reporting trends, reporting a calmer lunch time and that was appreciated.</p> <p><u>School Improvement Adviser Visit</u></p> <p>The HT updated Governors about the recent School Improvement Adviser (SIA) visit. The SIA report was not shared in full due to its lateness in being received.</p> <p>The visit validated the findings of the SEND monitoring visit, with the work undertaken on inclusion rated strongly within the report. Development points raised had already been identified in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The HT stated that within the Ofsted framework that exceptionality is evidenced by schools who are striving to self-improve. Ofsted are not looking for the perfect school, but what they expect to see is there are no surprises. The report validated the school's internal monitoring and therefore provides strong evidence that the school are effective.</p> <p>The CoG congratulated the HT for a successful SIA visit and asked the Governors if there were any questions for the HT. None were raised.</p>
9	<p><u>Chair's update</u></p> <p><u>Urgent Chair's Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the Pupil Premium Strategy for publication. The CoG commented that it was very comprehensive and detailed. • Chair's action relating to a parental matter (see Confidential Minutes). <p><u>Chair's update</u></p> <p>The CoG shared that the school had received a personalised letter from The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP Secretary of State for Education congratulating the school on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, placing The Discovery School among the top schools nationally.</p> <p>The HT shared that with this, the school has been encouraged to engage with the RISE (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence) team as strong practice had been identified. Schools are invited to work with RISE to share best practice and provide wider system support, which is particularly timely under the exceptionality and system-wide support framework. The CoG congratulated the</p>

	<p>school on this fantastic achievement and asked for the Governing Body's congratulations to be passed onto the whole team.</p> <p>Action – HT and CoG to determine how the letter will be shared with parents.</p> <p>Action – HT to engage with RISE regarding wider support opportunities.</p> <p>The CoG also confirmed that the school's Climate and Sustainability Plan has been finalised and published on the school's website. Although a DFE requirement that all schools had a Sustainability plan in place by the end of 2025, the CoG shared that many schools had not yet done yet, another cause for celebration.</p> <p>Governors were advised that a significant amount of work was undertaken to finalise the school's plan and encouraged them to review the Sustainability web page.</p> <p>Thanks, and a special mention were extended to the whole Sustainability Team but particularly Kate Chapman who had been instrumental in driving this plan to its finished state.</p> <p>Action – All Governors to review the Sustainability web page Sustainability at The Discovery School - The Discovery School</p> <p>It was noted that Nigel Hartnup, Managing Director for Renewable Energy Generation, Kings Hill, had been recruited as the school's Sustainability and Climate Advisor to the Governing Board.</p> <p>Action – CoG and GP to meet with Nigel Hartnup in February to determine how his expertise will benefit the school.</p>
10	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>All policies were circulated prior to the meeting and copies stored with these minutes. The below policies were discussed and ratified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charging and Remissions Policy – reviewed with no changes to the latest guidance. Agreed by the FGB. • Gifts & Hospitality Policy – reviewed with no changes to the latest guidance. Agreed by the FGB. • Pay Policy – Latest updates included: Page 20 (highlighted), Page 35 Appendix 6 (changes to support staff pay progression bands, Page 36 Appendix 7 (changes to support staff performance review). Agreed by the FGB. • Finance Policy – Page 4, Paragraph 3.5 – Insurance. The update relates to a change in Insurance provider. The Finance Policy was reviewed and agreed by the FGB.

11	<p><u>Governor Training and Development</u></p> <p>The CoG shared the details for the upcoming National School Governors Awareness Day on 12/2/2026 and invited Governors to sign up for any of the (free) sessions.</p> <p>Action – Governors to notify CoG of sessions attended. <u>National School Governors Awareness Day</u></p> <p>The CoG shared that they attended Ofsted Ready Training for Governors which was interesting and that any training opportunities would be shared with Governors as they are published.</p> <p>The CoG and the GP attended the recent Governor briefing (webinar) which talked about sustainability, being Ofsted ready and the situation with high needs funding and SEND.</p> <p>The GP is currently completing GP training and will attend the Clerk’s briefing on 30/1/2026.</p>
12	<u>Correspondence – none received</u>
13	<u>AOUB</u> – None raised
14	<u>Confidential Items</u> see part 2, confidential minutes
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. • Governors have a strategic plan for recruitment of Governors moving forward. • Finance governors had carried out the 9 monthly monitoring which reported an improved position on the 6-month figures and demonstrated that the school finances are moving in the right direction. • The Pay Committee report was approved. • Governors scrutinised the financial benchmarking report which showed that expenditure is in line with similar schools and where it isn’t, there are reasonable justifications. • Governors reviewed the gifts and hospitality register and agreed the contents. • The two most recent monitoring visits (SEND & Attitudes to Learning and Behaviour) were validated by the visit from the School Improvement Advisor demonstrating robust and accurate Governor monitoring. • Governors were pleased to see that Senior Leaders, including Governors, are having an impact on support for system wide improvement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of where the HT, their team and Governors are supporting other schools with system leadership demonstrating exceptionality. • Accident reports show that the decisions made by the school around break times and lunch times are having a positive impact on accident data, evidenced by Pupil Voice data from a monitoring visit. • The impact the school has had with on outcomes for our disadvantaged children has been recognised by the DFE and will lead to further opportunities for system wide support. • The School's success in developing a Sustainability and Climate Plan putting them ahead of other schools' progress in this area. • Appointing an advisor to the Governing Body to help develop their knowledge further. • The Pay & Reward Policy was ratified by the FGB. • The Gifts and Hospitality Policy was ratified by the FGB. • The Charging and Remissions Policy was approved by the FGB. • The Finance Policy had been updated and was approved by the FGB.
16	<p><u>Date and time of next meeting</u></p> <p>Monday 23rd March 2026 6.30 pm (via TEAMS)</p>

Signed..... Chair/Vice Chair

Date.....