



**MINUTES OF THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL  
FULL GOVERNING BODY MONDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025**

**PRESENT**

Miss Tina Gobell (TG) - Head Teacher  
 Mrs Annabel Cornall (AC) – Chair & Co-opted Governor  
 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

**Governance Professional** - Mrs J Roe (GP).

| AGENDA NUMBER | ITEM FOR DISCUSSION   |
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| 1.            | <p><b>1.1 <u>Welcome and Apologies for absence</u></b> The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. The meeting was quorate.</p> <p><b>1.2 <u>Apologies for absence</u></b><br/>None received. It was noted that LW would be joining the meeting slightly later than the start time.</p>  |
| 2             | <p><b><u>Declaration of Business Interests.</u></b> The Register of Business was up to date with no business or pecuniary interests declared against any item of the agenda.</p>  |
| 3.            | <p><b><u>Minutes of the previous meeting 29.09.2025</u></b> These had been circulated prior to the meeting and were agreed to reflect the business 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"> <li>• Chair had digitally signed the minutes.</li> <li>• Skills audits completed</li> <li>• Governor Services had approved the proposed new IOG which would take effect from 01.11.2025. The FGB approved this, and the GP had updated Governorhub and the School website to reflect the changes.</li> <li>• Martyn’s Law will continue to remain a focus of H&amp;S/Safeguarding monitoring</li> <li>• Antibullying Policy – Statement of Principles – Awaiting update from SLT</li> </ul> |

- Chair had written to parent re request to advertise a phone free website within school newsletter. The parent had responded but the Chair explained that no further action was required.
- The HT had written to the local business explaining that the FGB had refused their request to promote their business on school property.
- The Staff wellbeing survey will formulate part of the discussion under item 7, Head Teacher's Report.

(LW joined the meeting)

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**Governor Responsibilities.** The CoG thanked governors for submitting their monitoring preferences. The membership of the Pay Committee and HTPM Panel had been agreed at the FGB on 29.09.2025. The following monitoring roles had been allocated.

| Area of monitoring responsibility | Name of Governor (s)                             |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Cyber Security                    | Annabel Cornall                                  |
| Health & Safety                   | Kelly Dey  |
| Sustainability                    | Annabel Cornall                                  |
| Safeguarding                      | Annabel Cornall                                  |
| Inclusion – Pupil Premium         | David Waller                                     |
| Attendance                        | Louise Conelly                                   |
| SEND                              | Annabel Cornall Louise Connelly & Leanne Edwards |
| Achievement                       | Whole FGB  |
| Behaviour, & Attitudes            | Conor Tobin and Louis Westlake                   |
| EYFS                              | Mike Godwin                                      |
| Wellbeing                         | Louise Connelly                                  |
| Leadership and Management         | Annabel Cornall and Leanne Edwards               |

Governors were asked by the Chair to complete their first monitoring visit during this term. The Chair said that she would speak to governors individually about their areas of responsibility.

Action – CoG to speak to all governors about their areas of monitoring responsibility.

Action – All governors to complete a monitoring visit during this term.

The CoG reminded governors that they were always welcome to attend school events and that these provided the FGB with evidence of the school values. It was noted that there was a Remembrance assembly on the 11.11.2025 at 10.25 am, a visit from an author on the 4<sup>th</sup> December and the school Christmas lunch on the 10<sup>th</sup> December. The CoG reminded governors of the enjoyment that they and the children had when they shared a lunch on the governor monitoring day earlier in the year and encouraged governors to attend. For catering purposes, the kitchen has a cut-off date for requesting the Christmas lunch and the HT will let governors know when this is. There were also dates for the school nativity and the Christingle Service. Confirmation of the dates will be circulated by the CoG.

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|   | <p>Following her email, governors were also reminded to let the HT know if they could represent the school at the Remembrance Service at the Community Centre.</p> <p>Action – HT to inform governors of cut-off date for school Xmas lunch request.<br/> Action – CoG to circulate dates for school events.<br/> Action – Governors to let HT know if they can attend Remembrance Service at the Community Centre.</p>   |
| 5 | <p><b><u>Statutory FGB documents for approval</u></b></p> <p><u>Code of Conduct</u> The amended Code of Conduct had been circulated by the GP to all members of the FGB who had signed and kept a copy. A copy of the Code of Conduct is stored with these minutes.</p> <p><u>Terms of Reference</u> – These had been updated by the GP and circulated prior to the meeting. The Terms of Reference were agreed by the FGB. A copy of the TORs are stored with these minutes.</p>   |
| 6 | <p><b><u>Finance, Health &amp; Safety.</u></b> The finance monitoring governors had met with the SBM to scrutinise the 6 monthly (September) monitoring. The SBM had provided them with an extensive report which had also been circulated to all members of the FGB. Copies of the budget documentation are stored with these minutes. Although there were budget variances there was sound reasoning behind these.</p> <p>Governors learned that there was an overspend in E101 staffing, which was due to the 4% teachers' pay increase. At the budget setting process the school had allowed for 2%. Even with the DfE grant awarded to cover the additional 2% there was still a significant shortfall.</p> <p>E13 – there had been an overspend due to repairs on the activity trail, hedge cutting and tree pruning. Governors were asked by the Chair to be mindful that as the school building was ageing, there could be costs incurred that may not have been budgeted for.</p> <p>E18 – There had been remedial works to fix the car park barrier, but it is likely that there will have to be money allocated in the next year's budget to replace this.</p> <p>Governors learned that the finance governors had spent a considerable amount of time discussing their concerns around I01, SEN funding. There was still no clarity as to how money will be allocated. They had discussed some worrying scenarios around the funding that would be at a cost to the school. The HT was taking action with the other HTs within the local collaborative group and the Chair of governors was liaising with the other Chair's in the collaborative group to write a letter citing their concerns around the shortfall in funding. Governors were aware that it was a problem nationally, but Kent there was a huge amount of concern.</p> <p>A governor asked the HT whether there had been any indication about what is going to happen around the funding and what the timescale of this could be. The HT replied that the original indicators were that the current funding would remain in place for pupils with an EHCP until August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026. However, the programme of implementation has been delayed by Kent and the DfE have</p> |

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|   | <p>delayed the release of a white paper relating to SEN needs. The outcome of what this means was still not clear.</p> <p>The finance monitoring took place on the last day before the half term holiday so the full report will be circulated shortly.</p> <p>Action – Finance monitoring report to be circulated to all members of the FGB.</p> <p>Cybersecurity – Please see confidential items, part 2 of minutes.</p>  |
| 7 | <p><b>Head Teacher’s Report</b> The HT apologised for the lateness in the circulation of the report. It was noted that areas for governor challenge were highlighted in yellow.</p> <p><u>Staff Wellbeing Survey</u><br/>Governors spent a lengthy period discussing the staff wellbeing survey.</p> <p>A governor asked if there were any surprises that had arisen out of the survey. The HT responded that the results had not been as positive as in previous years, but the SLT had anticipated that this could have happened as some of the things that supported staff wellbeing especially around the changes to supporting payment for time off for childcare were out of their hands. The decision to change the policy was because it was beyond the affordability for the school.</p> <p>A member of staff had commented that whilst they understood they could not be paid for the time they took off when their child(ren) were ill or had appointments because this was set by KCC, it had caused them huge issues for wellbeing around finances and as the staff members in school were mainly women who had children felt it was unfair that staff were penalised for needing to be at appointments or looking after a sick child or relative and whether there was anything that could be done.</p> <p>The HT informed governors that the cost for supply had increased and the daily cost was in the region of £230 (two hundred and thirty pounds)</p> <p>A governor questioned what other local schools did within the collaborative group. The HT said that they all followed KCC policy.</p> <p>Another member of staff had questioned whether staff could have the opportunity of taking their PPA from home either once a month or per term to enable them to cope with the demands of juggling work/family/personal circumstances. They felt it would enable them to have valuable space to manage planning whilst being able to alleviate some personal pressure. The HT commented that this was not something that she would rule out completely and whilst it was an operational decision, it was important that governors were to have some oversight as the decision could have an impact on children.</p> <p>Governors had a robust challenge around the question. Staff if they or a family member has an appointment will often request to leave a staff meeting early which SLT are always happy to support. If they have an appointment during their PPA time staff are expected to make up their PPA time.</p> |

Governors agreed that PPA in school allowed for high quality collaborative PPA sessions and had observed this during their previous monitoring. The DHT commented that there were a lot of job shares within the school and if there was no opportunity to collaborate effectively this would affect the outcomes for the children. The staff governor commented that her teams had always been supportive to working as a collaborative group. The CoG said that there was lots of research that supports collaborative practice. Governors were very sympathetic to the difficulties staff face in terms of arranging appointments for children etc but in the current economic climate, supporting staff taking their PPA from home either once a week or a month was not a viable proposition.

A governor questioned how often the school carried out the staff survey and were the answers anonymised. The HT replied that they were carried out annually although the questions were not the same each year. The surveys do not carry staff names but do ask what group they belong to which provides valuable feedback.

The governor then asked what the follow up was on the survey and how the results are fed back to staff. The HT said that sometimes this is delegated to year group leads, and some are through staff bulletins.

Following a further discussion a governor suggested carrying out a mid-year check in asking the same questions again around specific points people had raised.

### Attendance

Attendance had risen above the school target to 96%. The issue remains around pupil premium children and SEND children although the school are continuing to work on driving attendance up to pre-pandemic levels which were above 97%. The school remains 2% higher than the national average of 94%. The HT said that nationally attendance remains an issue with a culture shift in parental attitudes towards attendance following Covid.

### Policies

It was agreed to review all policies within the HT report. All policies apart from the Pay & Reward Policy were circulated prior to the meeting and copies stored with these minutes.

- **Finance Policy** - The Finance Policy had been reviewed and agreed by the FGB.
- **Governor Expenses Policy** - There were no changes to the Governor Expenses Policy which was agreed by the FGB.
- **Governor Visit policy** - It was noted by the HT that the appendix to the Governor Visit Policy was different to the pro-forma used by TDS. TDS governors had evaluated the monitoring form previously and after discussion it was agreed that as there was strong evidence in terms of the outstanding Ofsted and from positive SIA visits around governor monitoring,

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|    | <p>to continue to use TDS proforma. The appendix with the governor monitoring form will be amended to show TDS form. The Governor Visit Policy was approved by the FGB.</p> <p>Action Governor Visit Policy appendix to be replaced with TDS governor visit proforma.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acceptable Use of ICT Policy</b> – The HT thanked the DHT for her work on updating the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and the Mobile Phone Policy. The Acceptable Use of ICT Policy was approved by the FGB.</li> <li>• <b>Mobile Phone Policy</b> – The DHT had updated the Mobile Phone Policy. Governors agreed that it was very robust and reflected everything that had been discussed at FGB meetings. It clearly set out what the school responsibilities were.</li> </ul> <p>In terms of the Mobile Phone Policy, a governor asked for clarification around the use of a mobile phone by pupils on school property as they had witnessed pupils taking selfies before entering the school gate. They asked the HT whether this was something the school would consider putting in the policy. The DHT responded by saying that mobile phones must be switched off once pupils enter the school gate. The HT accepted that this was a very valid point but said it would be difficult to police as the school only assumes loco-parentis for children once they are through the school gate. If a pupil is caught using their phone, they are told they cannot bring the phone into school at all. The Mobile Phone Policy was approved by the FGB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pay &amp; Reward Policy</b> – It was noted that the Pay &amp; Reward Policy had only just been released by HR Connect and will need to be adopted by the FGB. The GP suggested that there is an extra ordinary FGB meeting prior to the Pay Committee to ratify the new Pay &amp; Reward Policy.</li> </ul> <p>Action – FGB to approve Pay &amp; Reward Policy prior to Pay Committee.</p> |
| 8  | <p><b>Wellbeing</b> – No further discussion as staff wellbeing survey discussed under item 7, HT report.</p>  |
| 9  | <p><b>Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance Policy</li> <li>• Governor Expenses Policy</li> <li>• Governor Visit Policy</li> <li>• Acceptable Use of ICT Policy</li> <li>• Mobile Phone Policy</li> </ul> <p>The above policies were ratified and discussion recorded under item 7 HT's Report.</p>   |
| 10 | <p><b>HTPM &amp; Pay Committee</b> It was noted that the HTPM was arranged for the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025. The Pay Committee would need to meet after 31.10.2025. The</p>   |

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|    | <p>HT will send the GP some dates for the Pay Committee. The GP will liaise with the Pay Committee members to agree a suitable date.</p> <p>Action – HTPM to report back at the next FGB meeting on HTPM meeting 01.12.2025.</p> <p>Action – HT to forward dates for Pay Committee to GP and GP to liaise with Pay Committee members.</p>   |
| 11 | <p><b><u>Chair's Actions.</u></b> Nil of note</p> <p><b><u>GP updates</u></b> – The GP signposted governors to the updated training on Governorhub and the monthly bulletin.</p>  |
| 12 | <p><b><u>AOUB</u></b> - The Chair and HT thanked the GP, who had resigned, for her service to the FGB. The GP thanked governors for all their support.</p>  |
| 13 | <p><b><u>Confidential Items</u></b> Cyber Security see confidential items, part 2 of minutes</p>  |
| 14 | <p><b><u>Impact of meeting</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New IOG had been approved by Governor Services, evidencing the GB's commitment to continue to remain as strategic as possible.</li> <li>• Monitoring governor roles had been allocated in line with the new SIP with a monitoring visit to be arranged within each category of monitoring this term enabling governors to focus on ensuring that the SIP is evaluated.</li> <li>• Code of Conduct had been signed by all members of the FGB ensuring that governors remain compliant.</li> <li>• The TOR's had been updated to reflect changes to the monitoring roles enabling the governors to ensure that they complete their statutory requirements and carry out their core duties.</li> <li>• Finance governors had carried out the 6 monthly monitoring which evidenced challenges around HNF which they will continue to monitor.</li> <li>• Although there were variances in the budget there was sound reasoning behind this, and the finance governors were confident in the ability of the SBM and HT to continue to ensure that the budget remains on track.</li> <li>• The staff wellbeing survey had enabled governors to have robust discussions around PPA times for staff as well as unpaid leave for staff to look after sick children/family members. Whilst governors were sympathetic, the school is not in a financial position to support these requests.</li> <li>• Governors had suggested that the staff wellbeing survey could be re-evaluated during the year to ensure that staff feel listened to.</li> <li>• Attendance is currently 96% which is above the school target and remains above the national average of 95%. Although the school would like to see attendance reach pre-pandemic levels of 97% governors were heartened that the strategies the school had put into place were influencing attendance.</li> <li>• The Finance Policy was ratified by the FGB.</li> <li>• The Governor Visit Policy and Governor Allowance Policies were ratified by the FGB.</li> <li>• The Acceptable Use of ICT Policy had been updated and was approved by the FGB.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mobile Phone Policy had been updated and following questioning by governors had been approved by the FGB.</li> <li>• The HTPM had been set for the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025</li> <li>• The Pay &amp; Reward Policy had only just become available from HR Connect but would be approved at an extraordinary FGB meeting prior to the Pay Committee meeting – date to be confirmed.</li> </ul> |
|  | <p><b><u>Date and time of next meeting</u></b> – Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 6.30 pm via TEAMS.</p>  |

Signed..... Chair/Vice Chair

Date.....