MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD OF ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL N8, WHICH TOOK PLACE AT THE SCHOOL AT 6.00 PM ON WEDNESDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 2026

Name	Category of Governor	Additional Information	Term of office	Present/ Apologies/ Absent
Venetia Brown (VB)	Foundation, LDBS	Chair of Governors	19.02.2023 – 18.02.2027	Present
Eileen Clark (EC)	Foundation, LDBS		21.05.2025 – 20.05.2029	Present
Angela Loulopoulou (AL)	Foundation, Deanery Synod	Vice-Chair of Governors	11.06.2024 – 10.06.2028	Present
Karl Reimer (KR)	Foundation, Deanery Synod		09.03.2024 – 08.03.2028	Absent
VACANCY	Foundation, PCC St Mary's			
Javi Punzano (JP)	Foundation, PCC St Mary's		09.04.2025 – 08.04.2029	Present
Kristian Hewett	Foundation, Incumbent		Ex-officio	Present
VACANCY	Elected parent			
VACANCY	Elected parent			
Jane O'Brien (JO)	Headteacher		Ex-officio	Apologies
Harriet Frohock (HF)	Elected staff		22.01.2025 - 21.01.2029	Present
VACANCY	Local Authority			
Debbie Butcher (CHT)	N/A	Consultant HT	N/A	In attendance
Duncan Beardwell (DB)	N/A	Acting HoS	N/A	In attendance
Veronica Haidar (Clerk)	N/A	Clerk	N/A	In attendance

PART ONE

1. OPENING PRAYER, WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 KH opened the meeting with a prayer.

1.2 The CoG welcomed everyone, and in particular KH who had recently joined the GB. All those present introduced themselves.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from JO. Apologies accepted.

2.2 KR was absent.

2.3 The meeting was quorate.

2.4 Governors agreed that in the future, they would note apologies, rather than accept them.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 None, other than those recorded in the Governors' register of interests. Governors were reminded to update their declarations of interest on Governor Hub.

4. ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

4.1 **Dr Venetia Brown** indicated that she was willing to serve as the Chair of Governors for a further year. There were no other nominations. She was ELECTED.

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4.2 **Dr Angela Loulopoulos** indicated that she was willing to serve as the Vice-Chair of Governors for a further year. There were no other nominations. She was ELECTED.

5. CONSULTANT HEADTEACHER'S VERBAL UPDATE

5.1 The CHT gave a verbal update. The following points were highlighted.

5.2 The building work to bring the school onto a single site had not been completed by the deadline of 28th August, despite repeated assurances that it would be. As a result it had been necessary to delay opening the school by two days at very short notice.

5.3 There continued to be a long list of areas where further work was needed, including to floors, ceilings, painting and decorating and work on the outdoor areas. In addition, the surface of the playground had been severely damaged during the works and would now have to be replaced.

5.4 The contractors, ASH, had accepted liability for this and had agreed to carry out the work on behalf of the school. The project managers at the Blue Iris Partnership were aware of these issues, and the head of the construction team was due to visit the school later in the week to discuss how and when the work would be completed.

5.5 In the mean time, the contractors were coming in after school hours and at weekends to continue the work. The current aim was for everything to be completed by the end of the half term break in October.

5.6 In a separate incident, there had been a break in the school's water supply earlier in the day as a result of a burst water main in Crouch End. This had, however, occurred towards the end of the school day and children had been able to stay until the normal time. It had, however, meant cancelling a planned consultation evening for parents.

5.7 Governors noted there were currently 270 children on the school roll.

5.8 As well as overseeing the ongoing building work, members of the SLT had been doing a lot of work with staff on developing a set of shared values. These included: honesty and communication; kindness; co-operation; positivity; well-being and belief. A document setting these out was displayed. Governors noted that all members of staff had been invited to contribute. The CHT offered to share the document on Governor Hub once it had been finalized.

5.9 **ASKED** how it was working having all of the school on a single site, the CHT said it was wonderful to have everyone together and she could see the green shoots of what the school could become. All the same, there were a number of teething difficulties, for example around timetabling and how people worked together.

5.10 One major change was that all class teachers were now expected to teach and support all children in class, including those with SEND, rather than relying on one-to-one teaching assistants. In practice, this meant providing real time adaptations in lessons and scaffolding so that each child was able to access the learning. This was taking some time to get used to.

5.11 Teachers were being provided with a programme of support and ongoing CPD to enable them to master the techniques needed to be able to work with all the children in the class and help each make good progress relative to their starting points, including those with SEND.

5.12 The CoG had visited the school the previous day to meet the SENCO and learn about how SEND children were being supported under the new school structure. She offered to visit again to observe the CPD being provided to staff.

5.13 The CHT said that a skills audit had been carried out among the school's TAs to assess strengths and areas for further development. This had been plotted against SEND needs, the interventions staff were expected to provide and the additional skills and training that would be required.

5.14 It would then be used to develop a programme of training and upskilling for support staff to enable them to improve their practice. The CHT had asked the SENCO to attend FGB meetings going forward, so she could report directly to governors about inclusion and the work that was being done to promote it.

5.15 A survey of parents had been completed at the end of the summer and the results uploaded to Governor Hub. The CHT had analysed and responded to the survey over the summer break and provided feedback to parents.

5.16 **ASKED** how many returns there had been, the CHT said there had been 34 in total. Many of the comments were fair and she planned to respond with information about possible improvements in line with the principle of "you said, we did".

5.17 Looking ahead, the CHT was aiming to carry out snap polls of parents throughout the year on particular aspects of school life, and a longer and more detailed survey at the end of the summer term.

5.18 The school improvement partners from HEP and the LDBS were both due to visit the school the following week and would visit classes, talk to children, look at work in books etc and then provide the SLT with feedback about the quality of teaching. This would be followed by a meeting in October to compare notes and agree next steps.

5.19 To avoid duplication, one visit would focus on SEND provision, inclusion, early years and KS1 and the other would focus on KS2, school data and attainment.

5.20 **ASKED** if teachers would be provided with feedback following the visits, the CHT said they would.

5.21 There had been a number of complaints from parents towards the end of the previous academic year. All the same, most parents remained supportive of the school and had been understanding about the difficulties that had arisen around the building works and decision to delay the re-opening of the school.

5.22 That said, there continued to be some unhappiness, for example about school uniform requirements and the ongoing work to address persistent absence and poor punctuality.

5.23 Staff were continuing to meet every fortnight with the EWO and a table had been drawn up to track individual children and identify where issues were improving, worsening or remaining much the same. This then allowed each case to be followed up in detail and action plans put in place as required. It was noted that in some cases, there were valid reasons for poor attendance i.e. children with medical conditions.

5.24 A governor highlighted that there had been considerable unhappiness among some parents about the lack of communication from the school over the summer about the building work and the very short notice given of the decision to delay the return to school.

5.25 This had left some having to find child care at the last minute or take unscheduled time off work. It had been particularly frustrating that the school had provided assurances the school would open on time until the Friday before it was due to do so, and only reversed the advice at that point.

5.26 A further concern was the decision to ask parents to drop their children off at the school gate, rather than accompanying them into the building, including even the youngest. In both cases, it was felt that the school's communication with parents could have been better.

5.27 DISCUSSION. Staff expressed regret about the delayed return to school. Governors noted that the school had been managing a very difficult situation, and had received repeated assurances from the LDBS and others that all the building work would be completed in time for the school to open as planned on 8th September. The fact that this was not possible had only emerged the previous Friday, and staff had then informed parents as soon as they could. Staff had also found the situation frustrating, stressful and unacceptable.

5.28 **ASKED** if all the children the school had been expecting to return in September had done so, the CHT said that most had, although there were a few who had not re-appeared and who had possibly left or gone abroad.

5.29 Governors thanked the CHT for her report.

Item		Action	Who	When
5.12	a.	Visit the school to observe staff CPD for supporting SEND children.	**CoG**	**14.10.26**

6. MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING ON 14TH JULY 2026

6.1 The minutes of the FGB meeting on 14th July 2026 were APPROVED, subject to the following addition at item 10.27: "DISCUSSION. Governors considered that, in the future, the school could look for an alternative provider for school residentials that was nearer and less expensive for parents and expressed considerable concern that some children would be able to go on the trip and others would be disappointed. It was hoped that, by seeking a closer and cheaper venue, more families would likely be able to cover the costs without needing financial assistance."

7. MATTERS ARISING

7.1 Matters arising were as follows:

7.2 Item 5.4: Review Link Governor roles. Link governor roles were discussed and agreed later in the meeting. For details, see item 9.4 below. **Complete.**

7.3 Item 5.10: Explore with the Chair of the Greig Trust whether they could help with the refurbishment of the school house. Governors noted that the school House had not yet been vacated and that it was therefore too early to consider this. **Closed.**

7.4 Item 11.1: Circulate the Financial Management Policy to governors for approval. **Complete.**

7.5 Item 13.2: Organize a parent election. The parent election was ongoing. It was hoped that new parent governors would come forward and join the board later in the autumn term. **Complete.**

8. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

8.1 Instrument of Government. The Instrument of Government was unchanged from the previous September. It was APPROVED.

8.2 Scheme of Delegation. The Scheme of Delegation had been amended to reflect the decision to disband the GB committees. It was APPROVED.

8.3 Governors' Code of Conduct. The Governors' Code of Conduct was APPROVED. Governors were reminded to confirm on Governor Hub that they agreed to abide by it.

9. GOVERNOR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 GB Workplan 2026-27. A proposed workplan for the GB had been circulated prior to the meeting, which was based on a version in use at St Michael-at-Bowes Primary School, and was designed to work for the 'circle' model for organising the work of the GB.

9.2 It was agreed that the Inclusion Strategy should be brought to the November meeting, rather than the October one, which would have a finance focus. Another suggestion was to move the governor self evaluation and skills audit to the June meeting so the results could be reported in July.

9.3 It was APPROVED, subject to these changes.

9.4 Link Governor roles. The CHT had reviewed the link governor roles and proposed adjusting them to better meet the needs of the school. The following roles were APPROVED:
Link Governor for Curriculum, Achievement and Disadvantaged children – Eileen Clark
Link Governor Safeguarding, Prevent, Filtering & Monitoring, Attendance and Looked-after Children – Venetia Brown
Link Governor for SEND, Inclusion and Allergies – Venetia Brown
Link Governor for Health & Safety and Sustainability – Javi Punzano
Link Governor for Mental Health, Well-being and School Food – Angela Loulopoulos
Link Governor for RE, Collective Worship and SIAMS – Kristian Hewett
Link Governor for Finance and Resources - TBA

9.5 The CoG said she would look for a governor who would act as the link for finance and resources. The clerk was asked to update Governor Hub with this information.

9.6 Governor visits. Governors were advised of the importance of making regular visits to the school, so they could confirm for themselves what they were being told by school leaders.

9.7 It was agreed it would be helpful to put in place a Governor Visits Policy. The CHT offered to share the version used at St Michael-at-Bowes Primary School.

9.8 Governors heard that best practice regarding IT security was for them to be provided with school-based email addresses to use for school business. DB offered to investigate this possibility and let governors know.

9.9 Governor recruitment. The need to organize a parent governor election had been discussed earlier in the meeting. Aside from this, there were currently vacancies for a PCC-appointed foundation governor and a Local Authority governor.

9.10 The CHT offered to contact LB Haringey about whether they could propose a new candidate to fill the vacancy for an LA governor. KH offered to give some thought to people who might be suitable for the foundation governor vacancy.

9.11 It was agreed there was a particular need for governors with a strong finance background if they could be found.

Item		Action	Who	When
9.2	a.	Add an item on the Inclusion Strategy to the November meeting and a re-run of the governor skills audit to the June meeting.	**Clerk**	**14.10.26**
9.5	a.	Look for a governor to serve as the link for Finance and Resources.	**CoG**	**14.10.26**
9.7	a.	Share the Governor Visits Policy from St Michael at Bowes for use at St Mary's too.	**CHT**	**14.10.26**
9.8	a.	Explore the option of all governors having school-based email addresses.	**DB**	**14.10.26**

11. SCHOOL AIMS, VISION AND VALUES

11.1 Governors considered the school's vision statement and values of friendship, compassion, hope, wisdom, community and endurance, which had been approved in 2023. It was agreed that they continued to reflect the aims and aspirations of the school for staff and pupils and should remain as they were.

11.2 The CHT said she would include them in the work she was doing on the school development plan and that they also linked to the Home School Agreement.

12. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND SELF EVALUATION

12.1 The CHT said she was still working on the School Self Evaluation Form and was hoping to complete it ahead of the half-term break.

12.2 The School Development Plan 2026-29 was displayed. Governors were reminded that it was a 'live' document and would therefore continue to evolve as the school moved forward. The CHT offered to share it once she has completed the first draft.

12.3 The headline priorities for the year ahead included:

Curriculum and Teaching
- Introduce and embed changes to the RE curriculum
- Further develop teaching staff to ensure consistent pedagogy to meet the needs of all children

Inclusion
- Create and implement an inclusion strategy for the school
- Further develop the skills of teaching support staff

Attendance and behaviour
- Refine the school's attendance strategy to improve overall attendance
- Promote the school in the local community
- Further develop the school's work on racial equality

Achievement
- Improve the attainment of all children and close the attainment gap between pupil premium and non pupil premium children
- Focus for 2026-27 – whole school writing and fluency in maths

Personal development
- Secure children's understanding of justice and responsibility
- Embed planned spirituality throughout the curriculum
- Embed children's understanding of British values.

12.4 In addition to this, there would be separate objectives for EYFS and for Leadership and governance.
12.5 The SDP would be further developed with specific actions under each of the main headings. These would be RAG-rated to enable school leaders to track progress and enable governors to hold the school to account.
12.6 Any costs linked to the school's objectives would also be included.
12.7 In addition, curriculum information for each subject would be added with links to each of the subject action plans and also to teachers' performance and appraisal objectives.

Item		Action	Who	When
12.2	a.	Share the SDP with governors.	**CHT**	**Asap**

13. POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

13.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy had been updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. It was APPROVED.
13.2 Staff Handbook. The Staff Handbook had been updated by members of the SLT. It was NOTED.
13.3 The following policies were DEFERRED to the next meeting: Financial Management Policy; Staff Discipline, Conduct & Grievance Procedures; Whistle-Blowing Policy; Teachers Appraisal policy; Teacher Pay policy; Staff Absence Policy; Health and Safety Policy and the ECT policy. The Clerk was asked to add them to the agenda.

Item		Action	Who	When
13.3	a.	Add school policies to the agenda of the next meeting as noted above.	**Clerk**	**14.10.26**

14. CHAIR'S ITEMS

14.1 Governor training. The CoG underlined the importance of governors completing training to enable them to meet their responsibilities. In particular, there was a need for everyone to do safeguarding and Prevent training.
14.2 Relevant courses were provided through the LDBS, HEP and via the National College:

- London Diocesan Board for Schools: https://ldbs.co.uk/governor-courses/
- Haringey Education Partnership: https://haringeyeducationpartnership.co.uk/governor-training/
- London Grid for Learning: https://lgfl.net/Training
- National College: all governors had been sent a link for accessing the National College and were asked to let the SBM know if they did not have it.

14.3 Information about the governor training programme for the current year on Governor Hub: https://app.governorhub.com/g/stmary'scofeinfantschool/docs/6a96f4a7ad90ddc41eeb9b9e
14.4 The CoG underlined the importance of training in understanding school finance and had circulated a document with examples of questions to ask school leaders about the budget.
14.5 Staff awareness of the GB. Governors were encouraged to think about how they could raise their visibility among staff and parents, including through link governor visits and attending school events.
14.6 There was also a need to make it clearer what the role of governors was i.e. to provide strategic direction and hold school leaders to account, but not to get involved in the operational running of the school.
14.7 One decision the GB had taken was to upload the minutes of FGB meetings to the school website i.e. to increase transparency about what governors discussed and decided.
14.8 A further suggestion was that the GB could provide a paragraph or two once every half term for the school newsletter, with information about what they had been focusing over the preceding weeks.
14.8 Another suggestion was to reinstate the Governor Board at school with photographs of governors and information about their role.

Item		Action	Who	When
14.7	a.	Arrange to upload the minutes of FGB meetings to the school website	**CHT/ SBM**	**14.10.26**
14.9	a.	Reinstate the Governor Board at school with photos and information about the GB.	**CHT/ SBM**	**14.10.26**

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Nursery provision for babies. DB reminded governors that income from the provision of nursery places for babies had been included in the school budget. However, if the places were to be made available this year, the school would need to register with Ofsted before the end of September. The next opportunity to do this would not then arise until Easter 2027.

15.2 The difficulty for the school was that there was a need to assess the need for the places before going ahead with the arrangements to provide them, but very little time to do this.

15.3 DISCUSSION. Governors noted that extending the nursery provision to younger children was a key element of the strategy for returning the school to a balanced budget, as long as the places were taken up. At present, St Mary's was the only school in the local area offering places for 2-year-olds and nor was any other school offering places for younger children. This would therefore put the school in a unique position locally.

15.4 One element of the site consolidation project was to create a separate area for the nursery which was completely separate from the main school and had its own entrance and outdoor area. This meant it could be kept open throughout the year, even when the main school was closed for the holidays.

15.5 **ASKED** what the break-even figure was for the baby room, DB said the school was planning to start small with a maximum of six places. The provision would break even with four children.

15.6 Governors noted that the two-year-old places were already full and that three families had expressed an interest for January.

15.7 **ASKED** how the school was planning assess the demand for places for babies, DB said the first step was to canvass parents to see if they would be interested and then extend this to friends or other families in the area. A governor suggested displaying a banner outside the school advertising the provision with a QR code parents could use to contact the school and express an interest.

15.8 Following a further brief discussion, governors authorised DB to go ahead and gauge interest locally, without committing the school to anything specific at this point.

15.9 External Governance Review. The CoG said that HEP were planning to provide a model for conducting an external governance review. She offered to provide further information as soon as this became available.

15.10 Completing the review would likely be a helpful way for the GB prepare for the next Ofsted inspection. In addition, governors were invited to join any of the sessions HEP was offering to help the school prepare for Ofsted.

15.11 **ASKED** if there was a further update on the recommendations from the External Audit carried out by Helen Burge at the start of the year, the CoG said it was important not to lose sight of this. It was agreed an item should be added to the agenda of the next FGB meeting in October.

15.12 Bowling Green. Governors noted that some small parcels of land between the bowling green and the school had recently been acquired by the Greig Trust.

15.13 **ASKED** what they were intending to do with the bowling green, and how this might affect the school, the CoG said that the immediate plan was to preserve it for the future, until a longer term use could be agreed for it.

Item		Action	Who	When
15.8	a.	Assess the demand for baby places among local families.	**DB**	**Asap**
15.11	a.	Add an item on the findings of the External Audit carried out in February.	**Clerk**	**14.10.26**

16. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

16.1 None.

17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

17.1 The dates of future meetings were noted as follows:

Full Governing Board

- Wednesday 14th October 2026 @ 6.00 pm
- Thursday 19th November 2026 @ 6.00 pm
- Wednesday 9th December 2026 @ 6.00 pm
- Wednesday 27th January 2027 @ 6.00 pm
- Wednesday 24th February 2027 @ 6.00 pm
- Tuesday 23rd March 2027 @ 6.00 pm
- Wednesday 26th May 2027 @ 6.00 pm
- Tuesday 15th June 2027 @ 6.00 pm
- Wednesday 14th July 2027 @ 6.00 pm

The meeting closed at 8.06 pm

Signed: ……. Date: ……
Chair of Governors.