**Fulfen Primary School**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in the School**

**on Tuesday 8 July, 2025 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Mr. Boardman (Chair), Mrs. Davies (Headteacher), Mrs. Ballett, Mr. Field, Mrs. Poxon, Mrs. Roughley, Mrs. Copper, Mr. Ritchie, Mrs. Wright

Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)

Mrs. Sturch (SLT)

Mrs. Hawkins (School Business Manager)

Mr. Notman (Guest)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Governor** | **Role** | **Term Starts** | **Term Ends** |
| Mrs. Ballett | Co-opted | 05.07.25 | 04.07.29 |
| Mr. Field | Co-opted | 24.05.22 | 23.05.26 |
| Mrs. Poxon | Co-opted | 07.10.22 | 06.10.26 |
| Mrs. Roughley | Co-opted | 12.03.24 | 11.03.28 |
| Mrs. Witcomb | Co-opted | 24.11.22 | 23.11.26 |
| GAP |  |  |  |
| Mrs. Davies | HT | NA | NA |
| Mr. Boardman | LA | 05.04.22 | 04.04.26 |
| Mrs. Copper | Parent | 29.11.22 | 28.11.26 |
| Mrs. Dingle | Parent | 25.01.22 | 24.01.26 |
| Mr. Ritchie | Parent | 25.01.22 | 24.01.26 |
| Mrs. Wright | Parent | 29.11.22 | 28.11.26 |
| Mrs. Kilgallen | Staff | 23.07.22 | 22.07.26 |

**1 Welcome and Introductions:**

Governors were welcomed to the final Governing Board meeting of the academic year by the Chair. A warm welcome was extended to Mr. Notman who was attending tonight’s governance forum in a guest capacity to share with attendees some thoughts on the link governance structure and key responsibilities/accountabilities associated with this role, the importance of leadership roles on a Governing Board (for example, the Chair) and the expectations surrounding some of the designated categories on a Board constitution.

Beyond this bespoke presentation, the usual strategic areas of governance were considered with all documentation circulated in advance of the meeting. There was also an opportunity in this final governance forum of the year to celebrate the many successes that have been realised by the School community over the course of the last 12 months as well as looking to the future and the key priorities that will need to be addressed. The engagement levels were high throughout the meeting with Governors having the time to reflect on the strategic updates they received and to ask questions/seek points of clarification as appropriate. It was clear Governors are fully invested in their roles and associated core competencies.

The meeting was quorate.

**2 Apologies:**

**Resolved:** That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Mrs. Witcomb, Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Kilgallen.

**3 Governing Board Matters:**

Before Mr. Notman shared his presentation, the usual range of governance matters were considered.

**Membership**

Although there are no Governor terms of office set to expire in 2025, it was noted that the Board is still carrying one Co-opted Governor vacancy. Governors were asked to consider any network contact they might know who could complement the skills and attributes of the existing membership and to share this nomination with the Chair/Vice-Chair. If nobody is put forward, this vacancy will be carried until such time that an appropriate skill set can be found.

**Resolved:** That Governors act on this directive.

**Confidentiality**

Governors were informed that all discussions that take place at this meeting should remain confidential to the meeting. This also relates to the use of social media with Governors needing to exercise the necessary degree of caution when using social media platforms in relation to their Governor role.

**Register of Interests**

Now the Board has transitioned to Governor Space, there will be a need to declare any business/pecuniary interests on this new online platform. It is anticipated all relevant declarations will be logged before the first meeting of the Autumn Term with the Vice-Chair to check a full audit is in place. Once the information has been successfully logged the School website can be updated.

**Resolved:** That Governors ensure their declarations are up to date before the first meeting of the Autumn Term.

In addition, no declarations of interest were made by Governors in respect of any specific items appearing on tonight’s agenda.

**Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct is available on Governor Space for reference purposes. This document will be revisited in the Autumn Term with Governors confirming their ongoing compliance with the protocols listed in this document.

**Instrument of Government (IoG)**

The IoG is a constitutional document that has not changed since the last governance forum.

**Compliance**

The only compliance-related theme was a reminder that Governors have been invited to a Safeguarding L1 CPD session at the start of the Autumn Term. Many Governors have already confirmed their attendance with a follow up sessions to be organised for those Governors who cannot attend this training input. Mrs. Sturch was thanked for facilitating this opportunity for Governors.

The Vice-Chair was thanked at this point for all of the work she does behind the scenes to ensure the administration requirements around governance are monitored and kept up to date. This due diligence has been applied effectively over the course of the last 12 months and will continue to be exercised into the new academic year.

**4 Governance Presentation:**

Mr. Notman was at this point in the meeting invited to share his presentation with Governors. The presentation covered the following key themes:

Theme 1 – The function and purpose of governance.

Theme 2 – The various Governor roles – i.e. Chair; Link Governors; Parent/Staff Governors.

Theme 3 – Self regulation – The Code of Conduct.

Theme 4 – Communication protocols.

Specifically:

**Theme 1**

Mr. Notman covered the Ofsted directive in this area and the three key functions of governance as laid out in the Maintained Schools Governance Guide. He added how effective governance should dovetail seamlessly with strategic leadership, accountability, getting the right blend of people involved and regular evaluation to monitor and improve the quality of governance practices. He added that for governance to be effective at Fulfen, Governors should 1) act with integrity, objectivity, honesty and in the best interests of the School and 2) be open about the decisions they make, the actions they take and be prepared to explain these decisions/actions to interested parties.

**Theme 2**

Mr. Notman confirmed some of the qualities of an effective Chair – i.e. the ability to lead effective governance; to build the team; to build a professional relationship with the Headteacher; to improve the School and, finally, to lead the business ensuring that statutory requirements and regulations are met. He added that the Chair plays a pivotal role in setting the culture of the Governing Board.

When it comes to Link Governor roles, Mr. Notman confirmed as a minimum the School should have a Link Governor for Safeguarding and SEND. Other roles can be appointed to reflect the School’s strategy and School Improvement Plan (SIP). Governors were informed as to the main functions Link Governors should be looking to perform with an indication given as to why Link Governors should be looking to report back their key findings within a Governing Board forum. Mr. Notman added at this point that Link Governors are not acting as a teacher or inspector but as a source of support and challenge to the school leaders.

Finally, some additional clarity was given around the Parent/Staff Governor roles – i.e. Governors operating in these roles should be offering a parental/staff perspective to issues being discussed and should not look to represent the parent/staff body or act as a spokesperson. To carry this further, Parent Governors need to remain impartial, especially when posing challenging questions with an example of a possible question shared. Mr. Notman gave further exemplification through one of the slides as to how these roles should work out in practice – i.e. when it comes to making strategic decisions; maintaining confidentiality; reacting to parents wishing to make a complaint and ensuring any conflicts of interest are managed appropriately in meetings.

**Theme 3**

Governors were informed that the Code of Conduct serves a number of purposes. It is a self-regulation tool; it reflects all that has been discussed; it can be used as part of Governor induction to lay out expectations; it should be reviewed annually and, finally, the Chair should use it when conducting Governor performance reviews.

**Theme 4**

Communication is the catalyst to effective governance. It is key to all effective and productive relationships. Mr. Notman made one or two final comments in this area – i.e. that ‘even when we do not agree, we at least understand intention’ and ‘ambiguity can lead to assumption’ – two reflection points for Governors to take away.

Mr. Notman was thanked for his informative and insightful presentation. The Chair commented on the fact that Governors had heard a lot of information at tonight’s meeting which they will need to reflect on before the next meeting – particularly when it comes to the repurposing of the link governance structure, the scheduling of visits and the rota for sharing feedback throughout 2025-26. The Chair added that there will be an opportunity to reflect on this presentation at the Autumn Term 1 Governing Board meeting with Governors to bring their thoughts and suggestions for future action to this governance forum.

**Resolved:** That Governors take note of this action.

Mr. Notman gave his leave of absence from the meeting.

**5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on Tuesday 13 May, 2025 (including Confidential Appendix) be approved as an accurate and true record.

**Resolved:** That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection.

A copy of the Minutes will be retained for audit purposes and signed by the Chair via electronic or hard copy signature.

**Resolved:** That the Chair add his signature to the ratified minutes.

**6 Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting:**

The action matrix from the May set of Minutes was reviewed. The following progress update can be reported:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Minute** | **Action** | **RAG** |
| 2 | It is assumed the Chair did approach a number of Governors to ascertain their future intentions in relation to the role. | GREEN |
| 3 | It is unlikely the university student option in relation to Governor recruitment will not be followed up at the present time. | GREEN |
| 3 | Link governance will be reviewed at the Autumn Term 1 Governing Board meeting, primarily to ensure appropriate roles and responsibilities are in place for 2025-26. | AMBER |
| 4 | The March Minutes were made available as a public record. | GREEN |
| 4 | The ratified March Minutes were signed by the Chair. | GREEN |
| 5 | The Safeguarding CPD input has already been referenced in these Minutes. | GREEN |
| 9 | The Alcohol and Drugs Policy was tabled at tonight’s meeting. | GREEN |
| 12 | Discussion around the blood kit was again deferred to a future meeting. Success planning was covered off later in the meeting. | AMBER |

It is envisaged the outstanding actions will be progressed in advance of the next governance forum.

**Resolved:** That the Vice-Chair ensure progress is made in each of the identified areas.

**7 Reports:**

**Chair and Vice-Chair’s Actions**

The Chair/Vice-Chair confirmed they had taken no actions on behalf of the Governing Board since the last meeting.

One additional point that was shared were the ongoing teething problems the School is experiencing when it comes to using the Governor Space online platform. Having been in touch with Entrust, the Vice-Chair confirmed that staff who work in Governor Services are happy for any functionality issues linked to Governor Space to be escalated through to them in support of the ‘go live’ date (01.09.25).

**Resolved:** That Governors action this request as appropriate.

**Link Governor Reports**

Two Link Governor reports were shared with Governors at tonight’s meeting.

The first related to a Link Governor visit by Mr. Ritchie on 03.02.25 which involved the Governor and designated staff representative reviewing the training around COSHH that they had accessed in January. The School’s COSHH file was reviewed with next steps agreed. Mr. Ritchie informed Governors this visit had been an interim step towards strengthening the School’s system of control in this area.

The second Link Governor report again involved Mr. Ritchie which had taken place on 21.05.25. He reassured Governors that the action points as agreed at the February meeting were reviewed with some excellent progress made. Mr. Ritchie commended the staff representative for her focus and diligence on this important subject.

As a final point around COSHH, Mr. Ritchie informed Governors that one document he had come across (Hazardous Substances – MA – 2005) is excellent reference material which he felt could be something that could be turned into a policy and presented at a future governance forum for formal ratification – watch this space.

Beyond the two formal reports, Mr. Ritchie added that he has also recently completed a site/premises walk with Mrs. Hawkins. He reassured Governors that there was nothing of concern to share with Governors other than a possible future engagement with a neighbour over a site access issue. Governors can expect an update on this matter at the next scheduled forum.

**Headteacher’s Report**

The Headteacher’s Report had been shared with Governors in advance of the meeting. The Report was taken as read with the Headteacher sharing a strategic overview of the Spring Term in terms of how key priority areas have been progressed. Governors welcomed the way some of the data metrics were shared with them, particularly the way the data is lined up against comparative benchmarks where they are available. The Report is also useful as a reference document when Link Governors are carrying out engagement visits in school – more than anything else to triangulate what they are hearing meetings, what they are reading in documentation and the reality on the ground at a local level.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors noted the staffing update, particularly the number of staff on or about to begin maternity leave and sought the necessary reassurance that an appropriate level of mitigation has been put in place for the new academic year.

The Headteacher confirmed that steps have been taken through recruitment to ensure a robust and stable workforce is in place for September. Governors were reassured that any new staff members will receive the coaching/mentoring they need to thrive within the Fulfen teaching and learning environment. The Headteacher went through the staffing for each year group and acknowledged that whilst preference has been taken into account as much as possible, some staff have been moved between year groups/Key Stages to support an individual’s professional development as well as making sure pupils get the best deal when it comes to their academic/pastoral development.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors also sought assurance that the SLT is happy with the quality of Subject Leads in school in terms of securing the necessary curriculum intent.

The Headteacher felt that even taking account of the impact summaries within the shared narrative, Governors can see clearly how each of the core curriculum areas (including PSHE) is being driven forward. The Headteacher added that the ‘leading aspect’ goes beyond Maths, English and PSHE with other leaders in school also delivering impact in the wider foundation subjects – so crucial to embedding intent, implementation and impact within a broad and balanced curriculum. Science was given an example of where a similar impact is being seen with a new Scheme of Work and staff training securing additional momentum in this area.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors asked why the Central Education contract (PE-related) has been terminated from 18.07.25.

The Headteacher explained quite simply that the SLT has increasingly become dissatisfied with the level of service received from this external provider. In the past few years there has been limited support including no visits and no monitoring-based activities.

Governors were informed that the School is entering a new one year arrangement with a service provider that is used by many schools across the County – Progressive Sports. The SLT aims to use the next 12 months as a trial period before potentially firming up a longer-term arrangement.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors asked some questions around whether other schools have been contacted to get their view on the service offered by Progressive Sports and also whether the new arrangement will be more costly than the legacy arrangement.

The Headteacher confirmed some due diligence has been carried out in the background before settling on Progressive Sports. Equally, the costs of the new provider will be higher with the Headteacher feeling this issue could be counterbalanced if the level of service received drastically improves.

**Governor Challenge:** As a related point, Governors sought reassurance that taking into account the business proposal to integrate the Sports Coach into the Fulfen Club, with the appropriate costings to follow, vulnerable pupils will not be put at a disadvantage.

The Headteacher was clear with Governors that if this proposal goes ahead and there are many benefits that will secured as a result, the School will still offer 5-10 free places for Pupil Premium children (Monday-Thursday) as part of the Sports After School club offer. Governors were pleased to see as an inclusive school the SLT is taking strategic decisions that benefit all pupils. Governors were also reminded that alongside this sporting offer, the free teacher run clubs will still continue from September. As a final point, Governors were given the timeframe when this business proposal will be agreed, implemented and communicated to the parent/carer community.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher be thanked for her informative update.

**Safeguarding Report**

Governors received a Safeguarding Report for the Summer Term with a verbal overview shared by Mrs. Sturch. Some of the key lines of enquiry in relation to the update can be reported as follows:

* Governors noted that their Safeguarding CPD session has been booked in for 01.09.25.
* The areas for development (i.e. additional support for volunteers for school trips and the Pupil Wellbeing Survey) were noted.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors asked how pupils will be expected to engage with the survey (i.e. whether the feedback will be anonymous) and whether any feedback from the survey will be shared with the wider school community (i.e. parents/carers/Governors).

Mrs. Sturch responded on both points, confirming she would reflect on how key trends/patterns in the survey can be shared.

* It was confirmed the Neglect based CPD has been deferred to a later date.
* The current level of vulnerability was shared. Whilst the number of pupils on the SEND Register and accessing EHCPs are below National benchmarks this does not mean that challenges still exist – i.e. ongoing issues with funding; a system lacking capacity; ongoing issues trying to secure alternative/specialist provision for pupils with complex needs; the administrative burden that needs to be enacted before any additional support can be paid; the fact the School has to find the first £6K from its own budget to support vulnerable pupils, etc. This is an area in a state of flux with external reform likely and no doubt further implications for educational providers on the ground.
* Attendance metrics are holding up well with the impact of some attendance related strategies clearly being seen. Mrs. Sturch reported that pockets of challenge still remain with leaders using the whole toolkit at its disposal to support this Key Performance Indicator (KPI). Governors were reassured that as well as focusing on the individual pupil, there is also the need to tackle parents attitudes as part of a broader cultural piece – particularly if parents/carers have had their own negative experiences in this area and need to understand more fully the intrinsic benefits of having their children in school and accessing the curriculum on a daily basis.
* The benefits of running CPOM-related training in February with all staff was shared. Mrs. Sturch reported to Governors some data around the number of incidents that have been logged on the system over a defined period and how they broke down into top level categories. She talked about how the data can build a chronology; bow it can drive action if a particular trend/pattern is identified; how the data is used in Safeguarding meetings to plan follow up activities; how the functionality within the system can support the data analytics used by leaders; how CPOMS can really capture the voice of the child which is crucial for Safeguarding to be effective and, finally, what next steps are planned in this area to further empower staff when it comes to keeping the whole School community safe.
* Governors welcomed the impact the system is having on monitoring and decision-making in this critical area of school life.
* Finally, Governors were informed that whilst there are changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, these changes are largely minor and of an administrative nature. Where there are updates which will be shared with staff in September, Mrs. Sturch confirmed they relate to updates to the online safety section (i.e. disinformation, misinformation, conspiracy theories); generative AI; alternative provision and the role of the Virtual School Heads in kinship care. Governors noted these points.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Sturch be thanked for her informative update.

**8 Policy Ratification:**

There were four policies tabled for formal ratification at tonight’s meeting. They were:

* Alcohol and Drugs
* Complaints
* Disciplinary
* Charging, Remissions and Debt Recovery.

**Resolved:** That all policies be ratified with immediate effect.

**9 Finance Update:**

This was the point in the meeting when Mrs. Hawkins shared the latest budgetary update with Governors. To support her verbal update, a number of documents had been uploaded to Governor Space which included the Asset Management Plan; a Finance Report as at 08.07.25; the Scheme of Delegation and, finally, an updated Income and Expenditure Report as at 02.07.25 which included budget forecasts/actuals for the next two financial years (2025-26 and 2026-27).

The main budgetary headlines can be reported as follows – ***see Confidential Appendix.***

**10 Link Governor Roles and Responsibilities:**

It was agreed Link Governor Roles and Responsibilities will be reviewed at the Autumn Term 1 Governing Board meeting.

**11 Trip Inclusivity:**

**Governor Challenge:** Governors had raised a challenge specifically around the challenges of social mobility and whether the School was taking an inclusive approach to the provision of its school trips.

The Headteacher confirmed she had carried out some research in advance of the meeting with the following overview shared:

‘We looked into the Educational Visits guidance after you raised the issue about the accessibility of trips:

Because we offer a range of educational visits/residentials throughout KS2, the mandatory ‘outdoor adventurous activity’ that is included in the National Curriculum is covered with Basecamp (with a reduced cost of £30 for some families which they can pay in instalments) and Laches Wood. We support families with the payments of these and make sure all children can go. For example, we have requested funding from social workers and have paid out of our Pupil Premium pot. We also offer a day-only experience for children who do not want to stay overnight. Generally speaking, the majority of the children take part in these activities unless their parents have specifically opted out.

However, France is classed as an ‘optional extra’ and is not part of the National Curriculum which is why it is not subsidised heavily, although we do offer a 10% reduction to families eligible for Free School Meals. We also give them over one year to pay in instalments if they choose to. It is important for us to continue to provide this opportunity for the children to widen their cultural capital, which is an important focus throughout the Ofsted Handbook.’

Governors were satisfied with this response to the challenge raised.

**12 Succession Plan:**

The Governing Board has been looking at an appropriate succession plan for some time in terms of the leadership roles on the Board. Following a request for nomination, Mr. Ritchie had confirmed he would be interested in a possible Co-Chair model at Fulfen Primary School with some of the key leadership roles and responsibilities to be shared out in the Autumn Term. The Clerk confirmed there is nothing constitutionally that prevents this with this matter to be finalised in September. The Clerk did note that should this model be adopted and Mr. Ritchie/Mr. Boardman are nominated, the model will need to be revisited again on 24.01.26 and 04.04.26 when their terms of office naturally come to an end.

**13 Blood Kit:**

It was agreed the blood kit idea would be deferred to the Autumn Term for further discussion.  
  
**Resolved:** That the Vice-Chair ensure Link Governor Roles and Responsibilities, the election of Co-Chairs/Vice-Chair and the blood kit discussion are added to the Autumn Term 1 Governing Board agenda.

**14 Reflection:**

Governors were asked to reflect on ‘What have we discussed at tonight’s meeting that improves pupil outcomes?’

Reflections included the ongoing upskilling of Governors which will enhance the leadership and management section of the Ofsted inspection framework; the measures that are taken to safeguard the interests of the School’s vulnerable cohort; the due diligence around the School finances which put the School on a sustainable footing; the expertise of the team in supporting the School in challenging areas (i.e. the Stage 3 complaint); the focus on health and safety and site security; the updates on curriculum impact which directly motivate and inspire Fulfen pupils; the challenges that are directed at the SLT to ensure they are being held to account in key areas (i.e. the inclusivity of trips) and, finally, the fact the Fulfen child is put at the heart of the decision making process within this governance forum.

Governors were thanked for these reflections.

**15 Confidentiality:**

Governors were asked to identify if there were any items/materials, which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting, which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Governors were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda, which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

**Resolved:** That it be identified that the following item needed to be included as a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

* Minute 9.

There were no further items/materials identified for exclusion.

**16 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:**

The meeting schedule has been finalised for 2025-26 and can be confirmed as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Date and Time** |
| Autumn 1 | 30.09.25 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Autumn 2 | 02.12.25 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Spring 1 | 27.01.26 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Spring 2 | 24.03.26 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Summer 1 | 12.05.26 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Summer 2 | 07.07.26 (5.30 p.m. start) |

All that was left to do was for the Chair to thank all Governors for their attendance and contributions to tonight’s meeting.

The meeting was brought to a close by the Chair.

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**Chair Date**

**Fulfen Primary School**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in the School**

**on Tuesday 8 July, 2025 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Action Matrix**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Minute | Owner | Action Required | Action Update |
| 3 | Governors | Nominate individuals for vacancy on Board. |  |
| 3 | Governors | Complete declarations on Governor Space. |  |
| 4 | Governors | Reflect on Mr. Notman’s presentation and bring any thoughts to next meeting. |  |
| 5 | HT | Make May Minutes available as a public record. |  |
| 5 | Chair | Sign ratified May Minutes. |  |
| 6 | Vice-Chair | Progress outstanding actions. |  |
| 7 | Governors | Provide any feedback on Governor Space to Vice-Chair so it can be shared with Entrust. |  |
| 13 | Vice-Chair | Ensure link governance, election of Co-Chairs/Vice-Chair and blood kit is included on Autumn Term 1 agenda. |  |

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 30 September, 2025 at 5.30 p.m.**

Absent Governors to be informed.