

St Matthews Catholic Primary School



Love, Learn and Shine Together with Jesus.

	Main Points discussed	Action
Present	Rev D Ronnie, Mrs C Sergeant, Mrs C Sime, Mrs T Gaskell, Mr M Edwards, Mrs A Dunbar, Mrs J Evans, Miss P Regan, Ms M Black, Mrs L Chamberlain Mrs T Cunliffe – Clerk	
1. Welcome and Opening Prayer: 2. Absences and apologies: 3. Declaration of personal interests for any item on this agenda: b) Specific to this meeting c) Confidentiality Review if all up to date on Governor Hub Roles and Responsibilities	Chair Welcomed Governors to the meeting and opened meeting with a prayer. Apologies were given from Mr A Doyle and Mr D Gidman. Letter to be sent to Mr A Doyle regarding attendance to meetings. Governors deliberated on their current LA Governor CP, who has missed the last six meetings, and reached a consensus to send a letter notifying him of his immediate removal from the governing body of St. Matthews. Mrs. M. Murphy, the parent governor whose term has recently concluded, will be offered the position of LA Governor. There was no declaration of interests declared. The Chair reminded the governors the significance of confidentiality during meetings while fulfilling their responsibilities as governors. BM confirmed Governor Hub had been updated accordingly with governor's details. Governor's roles and responsibilities had been agreed, HT asked Governors to offer some dates for them to visit school.	HT to liaise with M Chute regarding letter. Governors to arrange dates.

Attendance	An attendance record of Governors for Governor meetings is now documented and included in the agenda for each meeting.	
4. Chair's emergency decisions:	Chair confirmed there were no emergency decisions to be discussed.	
5. A.O.B:	Dates for Governor visits to school to be arranged. HT mentioned that the school needs to appoint additional governors and outlined the existing vacancies. The Chair noted that other schools where he serves as a governor have also faced challenges in recruiting governors. HT inquired whether the governors would be agreeable to the school reaching out to The Archdiocese for assistance in recruitment. The Chair responded affirmatively, provided that the Parish Priest is willing to approve it. HT will reach out to the parish priest to update him on the school's forthcoming actions to recruit governors.	HT to contact Archdiocese and Parish Priest regarding recruitment of governors.
6. Approval of previous minutes and any matters arising Dec 25:	The previous FGB Meeting did not achieve a quorum; therefore, no decisions were made, and any outstanding queries were postponed to this meeting for governor approval. Reports were dispatched to the governors, and BM requested that any inquiries be directed to her; however, none were received. Governors approved minutes	
7. Safeguarding - SCR:	A copy of the school's SCR was provided to the Chair for review.	
8. Parental complaints /SARS/ Social Media impact on School:	HT provided a short update, mentioning that she and Deacon Ronnie had a meeting just before this one with the solicitor from Hill Dickinson. The number of complaints from parents feels particularly overwhelming at the moment, and many parents are dissatisfied with the outcomes, seeking to escalate their complaints further. As of now, there are 5 Subject Access Requests (SARs) and 3 Freedom of Information requests being processed against the school. Parents appear to be acting unreasonably, requesting items that are not suitable for a SAR, among other things. HT stated that if these requests persist, she will bring the matter to the attention of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).	

9. Head Teachers Report / Including Budget:	Governor Question Can school seek support form an external company? HT confirmed that the school had been provided with the name of an external company. BM verified that the school is currently utilising Judicium, which can assist and support in redacting items as necessary. The process of gathering information is taking a bit longer due to the staff's already busy workdays; therefore, the BM will request an extension of time. HT provided governors with an update concerning the social media posts and the interactions among community groups. Complaints have increasingly become more personal, primarily directed at the HT. The advice sought from the priest, with the HT's agreement, was that a letter would be sent out from the Parish Priest to remind parents of the impact social media can have on staff, the school, and students, as well as the personal repercussions of such posts. The school maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding this matter. BM informed governors that the school has received numerous messages and phone calls from parents expressing their support and their discontent with what they had read. HT provided feedback regarding the recent residential ski trip for schools. Mark presented the Governors with the initial version of the video he compiled, showcasing the children having fun during their ski trip. Every parent received a personalised video featuring their child while they were at the residential. The updates sent to parents were effective. HT provided an overview of the HT report to the governors before the meeting. Update from the data dated 8th December 2025 was sourced from INSIGHT. HT clarified that the statistics data from INSIGHT has demonstrated greater impact. Data indicates that the demographics of school have evolved. • N.O.R. – 379 • Minority Ethnic Background - 17.2% vs National 38.4% • EAL – 13.7% vs National 23.4% • Pupils with SEND – 32.7% vs National 18.3% • Homegrown Pupils – 89.4% • FSM – 29.3% vs 24.7% The Chair highlighted that the rise in minority background groups provides schools with greater justification for recruiting additional governors from minority ethnicities. The governors concurred. HT's analysis of applications for the September 2026 intake reveals a significant rise compared to September 2025. This suggests an enhancement in the school's reputation and an increase in parental confidence. September 2026 - 97 Applications / September 2025 – 78 Applications The school has been actively promoting itself through various means,	BM to follow up
--	---	------------------------

including banners, meetings, phone calls to parents, and organised parent walkarounds. The parent walkarounds have been well-received, taking place at various times during the school day to highlight all facets of school life.

Staff Absence

Short-term absences continue to negatively affect the operation of the school.

Governor Question - Is this issue primarily related to support staff?

The Head Teacher confirmed that it involves a combination of both support and teaching staff.

Despite the constraints on releasing leaders and staff, a variety of external support and quality assurance visits have still occurred from SIL, the Local Authority, and Lisa Littler, the network coordinator. The ongoing implementation of Maths Mastery from Reception to Year 3 is establishing a strong foundation.

SEND

Eighteen High Needs Funding Applications were submitted; unfortunately, the school was informed that due to concerns regarding the supporting evidence provided, only three applications are currently being processed.

The Head Teacher explained that she has challenged the decision and submitted additional evidence. The school is awaiting confirmation on whether the applications will now be processed.

HT to chase applications.

Governor Question - Regarding how much the school could potentially lose if the funding is declined. The Head Teacher stated that the total amount of the applications is approximately £200,000. Consequently, the LSA -advertisements that had been posted have had to be reviewed and extended until the school receives confirmation on whether funding will be allocated. This situation will also impact the level of provision and the specialist resources that the school desperately needs to address the ever-increasing complex needs.

The school has identified approximately 40 more pupils for a potential SEND pathway

- Inclusion Mark re-inspection conducted on January 16, 2026 - The feedback was highly complementary and extremely positive. One quote shared by the assessor was, 'Every Child, every chance, every day.' The Head Teacher expressed that she believes this quote perfectly encapsulates St Matthew's. HT told governors report is on governor hub however please do not share until finalised.
- Update on the status of the DfE School Based Nursery Capital Grant. A considerable amount of effort has been made to advance the proposal; however, after a conversation with Michael Boland from The Archdiocese, it was confirmed that financial assistance for the identified shortfall cannot be

secured at this moment. Once round 3 applications are available, an application will be submitted, and discussions will proceed further. HT will keep the governors informed.

During Mr. Boland's time at school, HT gave him a tour, and he was taken aback by the condition of the school's toilets. He expressed that he believes the school lacks sufficient toilets for the number of pupils. Consequently, he has organised for a surveyor to visit the school and conduct an assessment. He condemned one of the staff restrooms.

Staffing and Staffing Changes

The ongoing absence of staff is affecting staffing levels and the continued development and consistent operation of the Rainbow Room provision, which is essential for ensuring that pupils receive the steady support they need. Miss McWilliam puts in significant effort to manage this provision while also handling her other responsibilities

Governor Question

Does School have HLTA's

HT Explained no, however, the school is using alternative options, including the role of apprentice teacher school currently has one and is hoping to have 2 in September and an apprentice support coach.

The most effective pathway for apprentice teachers has been through Hope University. This initiative promotes the development of home-grown staff.

- **Miss Houghton Yr4 Teacher left at the end of autumn term.**
- **Mrs Grey started her role as Admin Assistant in January**

Teacher Workload

The workload of teachers remains a significant focus for the school. As part of this initiative, school have investigated and implemented resources aimed at minimizing planning time while ensuring high-quality teaching. The Head Teacher provided an overview of the Primary Quiz and Chalkie AI, emphasising that these tools should not be utilised for every lesson and must be approached with caution. These resources are reasonably priced. Governors were demonstrated how these tools are utilised on the smart board.

PPA has been coordinated so that the same year groups are on PPA together, either in the morning or afternoon, ensuring that the same lessons are delivered with the same quality as all other lessons. The school is reassessing the feedback policy to ensure an appropriate balance is achieved.

Finance & Budget

The Head Teacher updated the governors regarding the school's financial status. A monitoring report was shared with the governors on the governor hub prior to the meeting. The school remains dedicated to consistently reviewing and being cautious with its expenditures. As

the end of the financial year approaches, the school is confident that it will maintain a small surplus by year-end, approximately £20,000. The school utilises Jenny Donegan's expertise to assist with financial matters, and the Head Teacher noted Jenny's strength and the extensive experience and knowledge she brings, which is a tremendous support.

Staff absence insurance claim remains ongoing, school have asked to settle.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) will be distributed to schools in preparation for the upcoming financial year, and the Head Teacher will review these as per the usual process for planning.

Wrap Around Care Provision

Continues to be popular, managed by the school. Managing payments and outstanding debts remains a persistent issue. The historical debts incurred by previous administrative staff are currently being addressed by the new Business Manager.

Curriculum, Teaching and CPD

Schools are implementing the Week A and Week B model. Handwriting is emphasised in both Week A and Week B as a non-negotiable requirement to ensure consistency every day. There is a continued focus on adaptive teaching, with staff receiving modelling and coaching to keep lessons responsive. CPD is focused on enhancing teaching through 'The St Matthews Way'. A formal booklet is in development to create a model that is effective across all year groups. Student teachers in the school are assisting in freeing up teachers to catch up with identified students.

Behaviour

The policy regarding relationships and behaviour is consistently reviewed. Continuous feedback is collected from staff, and regular updates and reminders are provided to parents, as two-way communication is essential. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) suggested keeping corridor doors closed, which has significantly influenced the environment, as these doors help contain the children and this practice has now become a standard behaviour among them.

Exclusion updates

School is following through with the policy. These are very complex children. HT gave overview of incidents and explored the various methods the school has employed to collaborate with parents in order to prevent exclusions. This includes making phone calls home when a child's behaviour is escalating, prompting parents to engage in discussions with the child or visit the school to help manage the situation. Parents have generally reacted positively to these efforts.

Fixed term exclusions
X 3 pupils – Year 4
X3 pupils – Year 6

Assessment

HT provided an update to the governors, explaining that last year the school distributed 'At Risk Letters' regarding phonics. These letters informed parents about the specific areas their children needed to improve, which has successfully motivated parents to get involved and has had a positive effect. This year, a letter has been sent to EYFS and Year 6, detailing the scores their child received in recent assessments, along with guidance on how to support their child and what actions parents should take.

Extra Curriculum

Remains popular, and the school is reviewing the policy and gathering the voice of the child to foster the development of additional clubs.

Religious Education

Mark notified the governors that the school will be participating in the Cafod Fundraising event 'The Big Lent Walk' for the first time this year. The dates for the Holy Communion have been communicated to parents, and the staff calendar has been updated accordingly.

Deacon Ronnie inquired if there are any children who will not be making their Holy Communion.

Mark confirmed that a Google form will be distributed this week to collect this information.

Family Support

Pastoral support for pupils and families remains a key priority for school, MB gave overview and highlighted key points.

- Translator in school
- Funding for parents (Basic Skills)

Attendance

SENCO provided an overview to the governors. Attendance has seen a slight improvement in 24/25, increasing from 94.6% to 94.8%. Fewer students have missed between 15 and 18 days; however, there has been an increase in the number of pupils with persistent absences.

Unauthorised absences have also risen slightly.

A Google form will now be sent via email to parents, enabling them to select the date and time for an absence meeting. This aims to

minimize the number of cancelled appointments or instances of parents not attending.

The Education Welfare Officer has conducted home visits.

Governor Question How many current PA'S?

SENDSCO - 68

Safeguarding/Child Protection

Documentation on the Governor Hub includes notes indicating that the school has updated its signage. All data, including information on vulnerable children, is being reviewed. Regular meetings will continue, with Louisa (BM) responsible for taking minutes.

Safe messages have been communicated concerning social media.

MGL has conducted lessons with KS2, and the school is in the process of organising a parent session that MGL will facilitate as a workshop for parents.

Governor question: Will the new phone laws affect the school?

The Head Teacher explained that they are hopeful it will, and they are working in accordance with the school's policy and new laws.

Premises Health and Safety

BM has informed the governors that both she and the site manager hold regular meetings. Annual inspections are scheduled for April 2026. Significant progress has been made in enhancing the playground area; however, they face financial constraints regarding the completion of necessary tasks. The Health and Safety button recently added to the desktop has been effective in enabling staff to report tasks that require attention, and a robust system is in place for the site manager to take action and notify staff once the task is completed. Health and Safety training is scheduled for April 23, 2026 (inset day), following the Health and Safety audit. BM and the site manager have addressed the actions from the audit, with two outstanding items: locating a contractor for double glazing audits and securing a contractor to service the evacuation chairs. BM is still in the process of finding a suitable contractor.

**10.
Local Authority
Papers:**

Not discussed will be put on next agenda.

**11.
Governors
Forum:**

Not discussed will be put on next agenda.

**12.
Governor
Training:**

BM inquired whether there is a training table for governors to complete.

HT acknowledged that it would be beneficial for the school to have one.

13. What we celebrate from this meeting:	BM will organise this, and it will be included in upcoming agendas moving forward. The governors concurred that the successful ski trip was indeed a cause for celebration and expressed their enjoyment of the video. They also acknowledged the tremendous effort put forth by the staff, who are dedicating their personal time to support the pupils and the school. The Head Teacher and Chair recognised that this hard work does not go unappreciated and wished to extend their gratitude to the staff for their ongoing commitment.	BM to create training table.
14. Policies for Approval:	HT confirmed that the policies will be presented at the next FGB Meeting for ratification. The Chair and Head Teacher expressed their appreciation to the governors for their attendance at tonight's meeting. Meeting finished At 5:40pm	

