

Brookland Infant and Junior Schools
Minutes of the meeting held at Brookland Infant and Junior Schools on Tuesday 11 March
2025 at 6pm

LA GOVERNOR

*Lucy Tobin

PARENT GOVERNORS

*Samantha Jayasekera-Heffer (Infant)
Kate Blumhof (Junior)

HEADTEACHERS

*Brenda McCafferty (Infant Headteacher)
*Jenny Aylen (Junior Headteacher)

NON-VOTING OBSERVERS

Amy Hurst (Infant DHT)
*Cara Christie (Junior DHT)

STAFF GOVERNOR

*Jenny Catley

CO-OPTED GOVERNORS (12)

Gabi Symons- (Junior Teacher)
Aimee Lipton (Infant Teacher)
*Farnoush Bikdeli (Junior Support)
*Michael Farhi
*James Clare (Vice Chair)
*Lisa Weinbrenn
*Laura Pincus (Chair)
Nick Astaire
*Jeff Harris (Infant parent)
Judith Bernstein
David Lee
*Daniella Jackson

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Sapna Shah
*Clare Rosen

25/17 **Welcome**

All Governors were welcomed to the meeting.

25/18 **Acceptance/ non-acceptance of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Sapna Shah, Amy Hurst, David Lee, Judith Bernstein, Nick Astaire, Aimee Lipton, Gabi Symons and Kate Blumhof.

25/19 **Declaration of pecuniary interests**

No Governor present declared a pecuniary interest in the business to be discussed.

25/20 **Part I minutes of the meetings held on 29 January 2025**

Part I of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2025, circulated prior to the meeting, were received and noted by Governors subject to the following amendments:

P2, Matters, not maters

P4, sentence to be amended to read "Y6 percentages were updated"

P6- add Breakfast Club rather than BC.

25/21 **Matters arising**

The Chair confirmed that she had emailed Lime Bikes and she was seeking further clarity about whether the exclusion zone was still operating.

The IHT confirmed that a Staff Governor election had taken place. Jenny Catley had been successful and re appointed for another four year term, ending on 4 February 2029.

Governors were reminded to complete their blurbs from the Curriculum Tea.

Action: All Governors

25/22 Headteachers' verbal updates

Infant Headteacher

The Infant Headteacher provided an update on various ongoing issues. There were continued challenges with staff absences, particularly long-term ones. The DHT was still absent and had not yet made a full recovery; Governors extended their well wishes to her. However, one staff member had returned to work, which was a positive development. The absences were putting a strain on both staff and the school budget, though insurance coverage was in place, it was not enough to fully cover the costs.

In terms of progress, the IHT reported that several pupil premium meetings were held with all staff. These meetings highlighted the strong understanding staff had of the children and their progress, particularly those who had been at the school since nursery. It was noted that each child was different, and progress manifested in various ways, which was encouraging.

The IHT shared the introduction of a new teaching toolkit in January, which was followed up with some staff insets. This initiative demonstrated the wealth of expertise present within both the teaching and support staff at the school.

The results of a parent questionnaire, which had been distributed before Christmas, were also discussed. There were 96 responses, and the IHT had summarised the general comments. One of the key findings was that "community" was frequently mentioned as a positive aspect of the school. Only one parent indicated they would not recommend the school, while the majority expressed satisfaction. A significant concern raised was related to school meals, with requests for fewer desserts and lower sugar content. The IHT planned to address some of these points in upcoming newsletters, including suggestions for healthier meal options, such as a "Recipe of the Week" section and confirmed that there was no sugar in desserts.

Regarding homework, a few parents had inquired about the school's approach. The IHT explained that research suggested that homework at that age did not add significant value but was set to help children prepare for the next stages of education. It was noted that while homework was not meant to become a point of contention, it varied depending on the child, and there was always something they could do. The IHT also acknowledged that communicating with parents on this issue was important. It was suggested that the school clarify that homework was optional, which the IHT agreed to consider.

Michael Farhi joined the meeting at 6.35pm.

The issue of traffic around the school was raised again. The school had been doing what it could, but it was not feasible for staff to patrol the roads. However, the school would continue to remind parents of safe practices and where to direct concerns if needed.

There were a few concerns about parent engagement (some parents wanting daily 1-1 feedback), with some feedback indicating that parents were not volunteering to help with events etc. The IHT pointed out that there were no major concerns, though there were suggestions to

improve communication. One idea was to include a set of questions in the newsletter that parents could ask their children to get more insight into their day.

The IHT also discussed the results from the previous year's parent survey, which were available on the school website. One question asked parents about their knowledge of the role of governors, and 44.2% responded that they understood what governors did. It was questioned if this was an improvement from the previous year.

The IHT was thanked for her updates.

Junior Headteacher

The Junior Headteacher updated the group on the progress of the School Development Plan (SDP). A mid-year review was being prepared and would be available soon. The JHT also noted the recent Literacy Focus Week, which provided an opportunity for students to enjoy independent writing. In addition, a group of students had attended a women's football match at Wembley, which was part of the school's focus on extracurricular activities. Other events included chess, football, and one-off sporting opportunities.

The school had also hosted 20 students from UCL who came to train on PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) practice, as they were specialists in this area.

The JHT provided updates on specific SDP threads:

- Handwriting: A new structure had been introduced to improve writing skills, and it was already making a difference. This structure was different from the Infant phase and would be revised for introduction in September, based on the Little Wandle framework, which aligned with the phonics system in the Infant School. Joined-up writing would be introduced in Year 2 for children who were ready.
- Reading for pleasure: The school had held a whole-school meeting on this topic, which was very well received.
- Healthy Schools: The school had renewed its Bronze Healthy School status, which involved significant work. Despite the school actually operating at a gold level, the Bronze status still had to be renewed.
- Computing: The JHT thanked Lucy Tobin for her continued support for the new ICT hardware and resources, noting that the school had become ambassadors for TTS and Learning Resources, trialling various products and providing feedback. This included items such as B-bots, coding toys, and sensory toys. The improvements to the computing suite had contributed to enhanced teaching in that area. A thank you to Deloitte for their support would be included in the next newsletter, with the hope that this might encourage other donations.

In terms of environmental sustainability, the school had an ongoing gardening project with UCL, which would be launching in September as part of the science curriculum. It was suggested that Dominic Rose be contacted for further collaboration on sustainability.

The JHT acknowledged the challenges caused by staff absences, which had been a concern.

The Chair noted that reporting on the school's budget had been shifted from March to May, which meant that this meeting was lighter in content than previous ones. Governors were invited to let the Chair know if there were any items they wished to discuss at future meetings. There was a suggestion to hold some training or presentations during the next meeting.

The JHT was thanked for her updates.

25/23 Staff governors' reports

It was noted that there had been several recent activities and events. The term had been busy, and the school had celebrated International Language Day, with pride in the diversity of over 40 languages spoken by students. This was a celebration of the children's heritage and cultural backgrounds. The school also celebrated World Book Day, which included a parade where students dressed up as their favourite book characters. Furthermore, the infants performed at the Barnet Dance Festival the previous evening, which was a valuable experience for the children to be part of such an event.

The JHT reported that the Arbor project had been completed and successfully transitioned. The system was now being used for various administrative tasks, including booking parent evenings.

25/24 **Committee reports** (including risk)

The Chair was thanked for her policy spreadsheet.

Finance committee

The meeting was now scheduled for 20 March.

Safeguarding Committee

The meeting had been rescheduled for 20 March. A date for the next safeguarding visit also needed to be scheduled.

Curriculum committee

The Curriculum meeting took place on 10 February, where the assessment policies for both the Infant and Junior schools were reviewed, as well as the music and curriculum plans. The Junior School Self Evaluation Form (SEF) was discussed, and the Infant SEF would be reviewed at the next meeting.

Personnel Committee

The meeting was scheduled 21 March, with some policies needing to be reviewed.

Strategy Committee

The Strategy Committee meeting was scheduled for June. A discussion was held regarding ideas for the July meeting. Some suggested topics included adaptive teaching and a discussion of data. However, the data topic needed to be narrowed down. Comparisons with last year's data were also planned, with a focus on context, trends, and comparisons.

It was noted that there were several governor training sessions available on the National College and Governor Hub platforms, which could be useful for the governors. It was agreed that data would be shared on-screen at the meeting, and the group would explore what information was useful for governors to be looking at.

The IHT pointed out that there was currently no statutory requirement for any data comparison at Key Stage 1. While the school still collected this data, it was not shared by the government. The focus would be on the school's own data and tracking, with an emphasis on understanding each child's position in their group.

There was a brief discussion about the National College and School Bus platforms merging. The accounts no longer had all the features they once did. The Junior DHT was tasked with checking whether the school was registered on both the Infant and Junior systems. If the subscription issue needed to be addressed sooner, Farnoush Bikdeli offered to assist.

Regarding value-added data, it was noted that the school conducted a baseline assessment in Reception during the first six weeks, but it was unclear how this data would be interpreted to predict value-added progress by Year 6. The Government was also changing the baseline assessment process, though the school would continue to track its own data and calculate value-added from their internal records.

Premises committee

A recent premises meeting was held, during which several policies were reviewed. Nick Astaire and the Caretaker had conducted their usual walk-around of the school. The school had also appointed a new Assistant Caretaker, Eric. Recruitment had been a challenge, but the school was pleased to have filled the position. The cleaning contract was reviewed, and adjustments were made as necessary.

In terms of overall risks, it was noted that the budget remained one, and staff absences continued to be a concern.

25/25 Wellbeing

The wellbeing of students and staff continued to be a focus. Clare Rosen noted that she had had a productive conversation with Simon Greenhouse during the curriculum tea, and it was confirmed that a number of placements and interventions would continue. Additionally, several new nurture groups were running for specific children. Simon Greenhouse was also providing additional mentoring support.

The Junior School has introduced a "wellbeing hour" for staff, giving them an extra hour outside of their regular duties to focus on wellbeing and complete tasks that they previously did not have time for. The staff at the school were very supportive of each other, and a strong sense of camaraderie had been fostered.

It was noted that as part of the school's charitable work, the children in Year 5 created Christmas gifts for Age UK Barnet.

It was noted that Clare Rosen would be stepping down at the end of the year. Governors extended their thanks for her dedicated service over the last eight years.

25/26 Policies

There were no policies to review.

25/27 Whistleblowing

This was to remind Governors of the process.

25/28 Governor visits

The Chair noted that she and Jeff Harris had attended the whole school meeting where they had discussed Reading.

James Clare and the Chair held an assembly about the role of Governors in the Junior School.

Jeff Harris had completed a visit in DT where he enjoyed seeing different age groups work together, learning from one another and showcasing their work.

The Chair noted that she would be completing a link visit for Computing the following week.

Lucy Tobin had attended a school trip to the Postal Museum and Micheal Farhi would be attending the trip to the British museum.

25/29 **Chair's correspondence**

There was nothing to report.

25/30 **Governor support and development, and report of the link governor**

It was confirmed that the Chair had circulated the relevant links to courses etc.

25/31 **Report of the Director of Education and Skills** (if available):

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/wwc-home/information-for-schools/school-governors/meetings-and-reports.html>

The report had been circulated.

25/32 **Any Other Business**

Safer Recruitment Training

It was noted that this was recommended for renewal every three years. There was no formal time frame set out in KCSIE. It was suggested that the Personnel committee add this to the Recruitment Policy to stipulate the desired time frame.

Governors were also reminded to confirm their declarations on Governor Hub.

25/33 **Dates of committee meetings**

- Finance: 20 March 2025
- Safeguarding: 20 March 2025
- Curriculum: 19 May 2025
- Personnel: 21 March 2025
- Strategy: 9 June 2025
- Premises: TBC

25/34 **Dates of governing body meetings**

Dates of future meetings were confirmed as:

- Tuesday 13 May 2025 at 6pm
- Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 6pm (unlcerked)

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.