# FLEET PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Part A Minutes and actions from the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 6pm onsite at Fleet School**

**ATTENDANCE**

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| Marcus Boyland **(The Chair)** | Yes |
| Don McGibbon (DM) **(Headteacher)** | Yes |
| Annie Balme (AB) | A |
| Rebecca Combes (RC) | Yes – Arrived at 18.08 |
| Abdul Al Mamun (AAM) | Yes |
| Ellie Melkuhn (EM) | A |
| Oonagh Pierce (OP) | Yes |
| Fabrizio Sidoli (FS) | Yes |
| Rehana Mishel Rahman (RMR) | A |
| Jason Cooke (JC) | A |
| Claire Price (CP) | A |
| John Showell (JS) | A |
| Sinead Costelloe (SC) | Yes - Arrived 18.05 |
| Lynley Benbetka (LB) | Yes |
| Sadia Rahman (SR) | A |

**Others present**

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| Debbie Barry - (DB) **(School Business Manager)** | A |

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| Becca Wall (BW) **(Deputy Headteacher)** | A |
| Jan Shelley (JS) **(Clerk)** | Yes |



# FLEET PRIMARY SCHOOL

**ACTIONS LOG**

| Date | Item | Action | By Whom | Status |
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| 08/07/25 | 8.2.1 | Link governor visits to be scheduled for 25-26 academic year, in accordance with FGB meetings. | DM and the Chair | Ongoing |
| 08/07/25 | 8.2.2 | All governor visits to the school to be recorded. | Governors | Ongoing |



FLEET PRIMARY SCHOOL

**PART 1**

| No. | ITEM |
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| **1.** | **Welcome and apologies for absence** |
| 1.1 | The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 6pm. Apologies had been received from AB, CP, JS and SR. The meeting was quorate. |
| **2.** | **Declaration of interests for the meeting or otherwise** |
| 2.1 | No declarations of interest were made for the items discussed. |

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| **3.** | **Notification of Any Other Business** |
| 3.1 | No items were raised under any other business. |
| **4.** | **Pre-Meeting Discussion – New OFSTED Framework** |
| 4.1 | DM provided a detailed overview of the new Ofsted framework and explained that this represented the most significant overhaul he had seen in his career. Governors were informed that the changes were introduced following sector concerns about workload and the wellbeing of school leaders and were intended to reduce unnecessary paperwork and focus more on genuine impact in the classroom.<br>It was noted that Ofsted had moved away from the previous four judgement areas to a broader framework of up to eight strands, including safeguarding, inclusion, curriculum, achievement, attendance and behaviour, personal development, leadership and governance, and early years. Each area now carried its own judgement rather than a single overall grade. DM explained that safeguarding was now a binary judgement of either "met" or "not met", while other strands included descriptors such as expected standard, strong standard, needs attention and urgent improvement. Governors heard that "strong standard" represented very strong or near outstanding practice, while "needs attention" did not carry the same connotations as the previous "requires improvement".-<br><br>DM emphasised the centrality of inclusion within the new framework, with high expectations and effective support for all pupils being essential. Inspectors would look closely at how well the curriculum was taught and how successfully pupils used and applied their knowledge across learning. The new model also placed greater emphasis on national data comparisons. Governors noted that Camden and London had lower attendance than many parts of the country, which could present challenges when viewed solely through a national lens, particularly as attendance and behaviour were now grouped together. Inspectors would also look for strong personal development work, including building character, resilience and readiness for the next stage. Leadership and governance would continue to feature, alongside a sharper focus on early years as the foundation for later learning.<br><br>The Board discussed the greater nuance in grading, with DM explaining that each level required a clear set of criteria to be met. If one criterion was not met, the judgement moved to the level below. DM confirmed that inspectors had discussed a desire to refine the system further, though the extent of future changes was not yet known.<br><br>Safeguarding had become significantly more rigorous, with inspectors increasingly using scenario based questions. DM highlighted one example: if a member of staff were observed shaking a child, staff should report the concern directly to DM, as the allegation involved a member of staff and must follow the correct reporting line. The Board discussed split gender sessions in Years 5 and 6, and how inspectors might triangulate pupil voice across the school.<br><br>Governors asked about safer recruitment training, and it was noted that The |

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| | Chair, RW and DM had completed the training.<br>DM further explained that inspectors were likely to be in classrooms more frequently than under previous frameworks. In addition to observing phonics and hearing pupils read, they would follow a small sample of approximately six pupils throughout the day. The school could raise concerns where needed for wellbeing reasons, but in general inspectors were expected to see an authentic picture of pupils' experiences.<br><br>DM described the structure: for each judgement there were five levels—urgent improvement, needs attention, expected standard, strong standard and exceptional—each requiring all criteria to be met in order to achieve that level. He noted that across the eight strands, schools were asked to evidence a large number of statements, with around 64 indicators in total.<br><br>The framework emphasised the importance of early years, assessing whether the school was building strong foundations from the start. DM explained that for Fleet this focus was significant, particularly given its small cohorts and comparatively high proportion of pupils with SEND. Inspectors were looking to understand the school's impact over time, including in areas where progress might not be linear.<br><br>Inspectors would also expect evidence of a purposeful and respectful culture. The Board discussed the ongoing work on attendance and punctuality and how inspectors might look at this, including whether the school could demonstrate consistent and proactive strategies.<br><br>DM outlined the inspection day flow, including the initial safeguarding and SCR meeting. Inspectors would review training, recruitment checks and all documentation, and then quickly move into learning walks. They would speak with subject leaders, though not necessarily all of them, depending on the focus of the inspection. Books and work samples would be looked at in context but not through large, formal book looks.<br><br>Governors discussed the role of staff and the importance of staff being able to explain the rationale behind their practice. DM explained that inspectors could ask questions of **any** adult in the building, not just teachers, and that all staff therefore needed to understand their role in supporting learning and safeguarding. New TAs, including those from agency providers, would need support to be inspection ready.<br><br>Governors noted that Fleet was likely to be inspected in the autumn term, as four years would have elapsed since the last inspection in October 2022. DM reflected on the advantages and challenges of this timing, particularly regarding early term routines and induction of new pupils and staff.<br><br>The Board discussed the role of subject leads. DM clarified that inspectors might not speak to every lead, depending on focus and capacity.<br><br>**Questions**<br><br>Question: Were inspections still expected to run for two days, and would the team size increase? |

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| | Answer: DM confirmed two days remained standard, with most schools currently seeing teams of three inspectors.<br><br>Question: Did the school have input into who answered questions on learning walks?<br>Answer: DM explained that the school could nominate a member of staff to accompany learning walks. Where three inspectors were present, different staff could be deployed. He noted that an SBM at another school had taken notes during walks, which had proven helpful.<br><br>DM commented that two Camden schools had recently undergone inspections under the new system and had found the process challenging, with both raising concerns about the delivery of the inspection and the impact on staff wellbeing. Inspectors themselves were undergoing training in the new approach, and DM noted that this had sometimes resulted in increased scrutiny and pressure during visits. Governors were informed that headteachers were now being offered a training programme by Stephen Hall (CEO of Camden Learning) to better understand the expectations of the new framework. |
| **5.** | **Minutes of previous meeting (2.12.25)** |
| 5.1 | The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and no comments were made. |
| 5.2 | **Report on actions**<br>It was noted that the action relating to discussions with the Chair of Governors at Rhyl had been completed. DM had spoken with the Rhyl Chair regarding curriculum standards and finance, and there had been constructive early conversations about partnership working.<br>DM reported that the community agenda item had been raised at the Curriculum and Standards Committee as previously agreed.<br>The Chair noted that approximately 61% of actions to date had been completed, which was considered positive progress. |



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| **6.** | **Committee Reports** |
| 6.1 | Curriculum and assessment<br><br>OP reported that the committee had spent time reflecting on how to strengthen its effectiveness and ensure fuller oversight of areas not routinely examined in depth. These included the school environment, engagement with hard-to-reach families, links with the wider community, and how parents were supported. The committee also considered ways to sustain pupil numbers and |

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| | agreed that this required ongoing monitoring.<br><br>It was noted that staff and pupil wellbeing continued to be an important focus. Governors discussed how both parents and governors could contribute practically to school life where appropriate. The committee acknowledged the ongoing difficulty of raising funds for site improvements, as most available funding tended to be linked to SEND related bids which did not always address whole school environmental needs<br><br>AB and FS had been exploring how a more cohesive whole site development could be achieved. Work was underway to involve an ex-parent architect to advise on how different elements of the site could be joined up and planned more strategically. Governors agreed that once a clear, phased plan was developed, it would provide a stronger basis for making applications to relevant charities. Breaking the work into manageable segments would also support realistic prioritisation. Amber would therefore be invited to support the Site Development Group in shaping an initial plan, and governors noted a helpful contribution from AB regarding existing templates that could support this.<br><br>The remainder of the committee meeting focused on curriculum development, the new writing curriculum, and attendance. No contentious issues were raised. |
| **7.** | **Headteacher's Report**<br><br>DM presented key contextual data:<br>● Number on roll (excluding Nursery): 191<br>● Free School Meals: 56%<br>● Pupil Premium (PP) (Reception to Year 6): 57%<br>● English as an Additional Language: 40%<br>● Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND): 27%<br>● Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs): 6<br>● SEND Support (ENGs): 10<br>● No exclusions this term<br><br>Three new pupils had joined Year 6 during the year, which was unusual; all were settling well.<br>SDP priorities included writing, oracy, Zones of Regulation, SEND progress and leadership development through partnership working.<br><br>DM presented an update covering the SEF, SDP, teaching and learning, curriculum developments, progress and attainment, attendance and punctuality, pupil mobility, staffing, safeguarding, SEND, site and premises, crossschool working, parental engagement, finance and wider updates.<br><br>The Board received an update on vocabulary and writing development. In response to a query about alternatives to Word Aware, DM explained that a number of approaches were being trialled which aimed to achieve similar |

impact with lower workload. Year 5 were currently trialling handwriting, spelling and vocabulary strategies before any wider rollout.

The Board heard that Zones of Regulation continued to be embedded across the school. Training had taken place for staff, and teachers were using a shared toolkit. Zones displays were in every classroom, and a calm space was available in the resource room for pupils who needed support with emotional regulation. Governors commented positively on the impact this was having on pupils' ability to move between zones and to articulate how they were feeling. DM reported that one new pupil had joined Year 6, bringing the total number of new joiners in that year group to three—a high figure for that stage of schooling. All three pupils were settling in well; two had moved from other Camden schools and one from South London.

Governors discussed pupil numbers and the school's identity, particularly in the context of increasing parental choice within the borough. It was noted that Fleet continued to maintain its numbers while some local schools had begun to dip. Governors considered how the school's offer was presented to prospective families during tours. DM explained that although the website was fully up to date, a full redesign was financially unviable at present. Governors explored whether someone within the community might support a low-cost or probono refresh, particularly of the landing page, to improve visibility of the school's ethos. It was noted that any long-term arrangement would require a provider who could offer ongoing support. Several suggestions were made, including exploring whether JC or a parent who was a web designer might be able to assist. This would be followed up at committee level.

The Board heard about ongoing work to strengthen links with local nurseries and early years settings. Staff from a nearby nursery had recently visited Fleet, and there was interest in building a similar link with Harmood.

Governors discussed pupil numbers and mobility. DM reported that from a funding perspective the school required classes of 30 and that realistically, pupil turnover meant that at least 25 new starters were needed to replace each cohort of 25 moving on. It was noted that some Camden schools' roll numbers appeared low due to their location near the borough boundary.
On attendance and punctuality, governors raised concerns about persistent lateness.

DM explained that the school continued to do everything possible to support families, including encouraging the use of breakfast club, making proactive calls home, and holding attendance meetings. Attendance had been particularly challenging this year due to extended leave, medical appointments and a difficult start to the autumn term. The Board noted that the number of local authority SISO visits had reduced to one per term. It was reported that some families experienced high levels of anxiety around illness, leading to increased absence. Medical appointments were often arranged early in the morning which, while positive for the family, still counted as a half day absence.

The Board discussed Camden guidance suggesting that children return midmorning for data purposes, although DM preferred pupils to return as early

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| | as possible for learning reasons. It was agreed that conversations with parents would continue to reinforce the importance of attendance even on days with appointments. Governors noted borough level issues, including Camden's comparatively high levels of childhood illness and persistent absence.<br><br>DM outlined the school's work to address attendance, including posters, calls, reminders and uncomfortable but necessary discussions with families. It was acknowledged that entrenched beliefs and parental attitudes could be difficult to shift. Governors discussed the wider impact of poor attendance, not only on the absent child but also on the learning of their peers.<br><br>A question was raised about persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils. DM confirmed that this was being monitored and that work with families continued. Governors asked whether progress could be mapped against attendance to support conversations with families. DM confirmed that this was possible and noted that absence often correlated with a range of other issues, such as overcrowded housing or wider family pressures.<br><br>The Board received further updates across other operational areas. Staffing remained stable overall, though DM noted one TA had been absent since Christmas. Safeguarding remained robust, with ongoing work across CP, CIN, Early Help and multiagency processes. Website and policy compliance were up to date. SEND continued to present a complex picture across EHCPs, ENGs and wider needs. Site and premises issues were being managed, including cleaning and site management. Work across the 135-partnership continued, and parental survey data had been reviewed.<br><br>Governors discussed the parent survey in more detail. A total of 66 responses were received, representing roughly half of families. Although most responses were overwhelmingly positive, governors noted the importance of understanding who was not responding—particularly hard-to-reach families. Paper copies and incentives were discussed as options for next year. The Board also heard that new Ofsted-aligned questions had replaced several previous items, and governors reviewed how these mapped across.<br><br>Trips, projects and workshops continued strongly, including increased participation in sports and new initiatives such as Street Tag and the NBA basketball programme. Forest School was currently paused for grounds recovery and would resume in summer. The Chapter One reading programme had been extended to Years 1 and 2. Staff continued to engage in professional learning, including attendance at the oracy hub. Ruth had returned from maternity leave. Heads across the partnership were planning collaborative enquiries for the summer term, the focus for Fleet's being to simulate the Ofsted "follow six pupils" approach.<br><br>The Board received an update on finance. It was noted that although an in-year deficit remained, the school was not expecting to end the year in overall deficit. Approximately £15,000 was forecast to remain in reserves, due to careful spending and additional income. Governors noted the importance of realistic budget setting and the difficulty of planning without clear early funding information from Camden. The school was not currently one of the highest-need settings for financial intervention. Langbrook Finance were |

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| | supporting schools, and upcoming sessions focusing on case studies would be valuable for identifying cost-saving strategies without compromising provision.<br><br>The school fund balance of £76,646.24 was noted. |
| **8.** | **Policies – from Policy schedule** |
| 8.1 | Governors considered the Food and Packed Lunch Policy. OP queried the consistency of the menu offered by the caterer, noting that certain options were not always provided even when listed. It was noted that a new ticking system had been introduced to reduce waste and to give pupils a more reliable choice of meals.<br><br>Governors also discussed allergy information within the policy. It was highlighted that the current version did not explicitly state that Fleet operated as a nutfree school. DM agreed that the wording would be amended to make this clear and to ensure consistency across all food related communications.<br><br>The Chair informed governors that the school had been selected for additional funding through a Government breakfast club initiative. This would provide per-pupil financial support towards staffing costs. Although the food itself continued to be provided free via Magic Breakfast, the additional funding would help sustain provision and could encourage higher attendance. Should uptake increase, pupils would be able to access a wider range of items within the programme.<br><br>The Food and Packed Lunch Policy, based on the Camden model, was approved. |
| **9.** | **Governance** |
| **9.1** | The Chair led a discussion on leadership arrangements and the future direction of the school in the context of falling pupil rolls, increasing levels of SEND, and ongoing challenges in recruitment and retention. Governors considered the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Rhyl, which ran until the end of the academic year, and discussed the models that might be considered moving forward. It was emphasised that no model under discussion involved school closures.<br><br>Governors explored the range of possibilities between collaboration and executive leadership, including the work already taking place across the 135-partnership. The Chair noted that both Fleet and Rhyl were keen to retain their own school identities while exploring ways to strengthen partnership working. It was confirmed that Rhyl shared similar concerns and aspirations as the 1-3-5 partnership.<br><br>The Chair summarised a presentation prepared by JC, drawing on earlier conversations with governors. It was acknowledged that the partnership had produced benefits but that the schools had not fully capitalised on opportunities for shared learning and efficiency. |

DM explained that formalising the leadership model could involve moving toward a structural partnership, which was distinct from federation. A structural partnership could allow for the sharing of tasks between schools, such as an SBM working across both schools or a split of HR and finance responsibilities. New staff could be recruited on contracts enabling them to work on either site. DM reassured governors that different school communities could maintain their own ethos while sharing resources and expertise.

FS sought clarity on whether resources could be shared without compromising school identity. DM confirmed this was realistic, noting that this type of sharing was increasingly common across Camden. Governors also discussed how premises staff might be used more effectively across the partnership, and how a structural partnership could create progression opportunities for staff.

**Questions**

Question: If a Fleet staff member were to lead English at Rhyl, would they be employed by Rhyl or Fleet?

Answer: DM clarified that staff would continue to be employed by Fleet, although some responsibilities could be shared.

Governors considered the implications of revised job descriptions for new staff, which might allocate responsibilities differently across the partnership. DM noted that while savings would not be immediate, efficiencies would emerge over time, particularly as vacancies arose through staff leaving or retiring. It was clarified that this would not constitute a hard federation model; schools would keep separate budgets and autonomy over curriculum.

AAM raised concerns regarding continuity for pupils, noting that children valued consistency in teachers. DM confirmed that, to minimise any disruption, any movement of staff between sites would be planned to take place at the end of an academic year rather than midyear.

Governors also discussed the consultation requirements associated with any structural change. It was noted that, while consultation would be essential, the process could be completed in as little as seven weeks if needed. The rationale for potential change centred on improving long-term financial resilience and operational efficiency, particularly within a context of declining rolls across Camden.

The Board also considered the benefits to Rhyl. It was noted that Rhyl and Fleet current share the cost of DM and that would continue under a shared arrangement, which could offer advantages for both schools. Governors discussed the need for clear definitions, including distinctions between a structural partnership and a federation. OP emphasised that federations typically required unified policies, whereas a structural partnership could allow schools to maintain autonomy while sharing practice.

The Chair stressed the importance of clarity before any decision could be made and confirmed that the March FGB meeting would dedicate substantial time to

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| | this issue. RW recommended holding a separate meeting if needed, and governors agreed that the March meeting should focus primarily on leadership models and partnership options. Papers would be circulated in advance.<br>DM agreed to raise key definitional questions with Prue Kemp-Barnes at an upcoming meeting to support the Board's preparation.<br><br>The Chair noted that around 60% of governors had completed the relevant training for this area of work and encouraged remaining governors to undertake the same.<br><br>It was confirmed that the March FGB meeting, originally scheduled for 24 March, would be moved to Wednesday 26 March. The Clerk would update diaries accordingly. |
| **10.** | **Any Other Business (previously notified)**<br><br>No items of Any Other Business had been notified in advance, and none were raised during the meeting. |
| **11.** | **Confidential items (either previously notified or highlighted during the meeting – e.g. named or identifiable individuals, commercial 'in confidence' matters, sensitive items not currently for public circulation)**<br><br>No confidential items were raised. |
| **12.** | **FGB meeting dates 2025-26**<br>**• 26.03.26**<br>**• 19.5.26**<br>**• 7.7.26**<br>**Finance & Staffing**<br>**• 18.3.26**<br>**• 24.6.26**<br>**Curriculum & Standards**<br>**• 13.5.26** |

| **Action** | **Who** | **Deadline** |
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| Explore low-cost or probono options for refreshing the school website landing page and prepare an options paper for committee | FS/Head | Next meeting |

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| Reschedule the School Inclusion Officer visit and continue targeted work on punctuality and attendance | Headteacher / FSW | As soon as possible |
| Develop a mixed mode (paper + online) parent survey strategy and consider a small incentive to increase participation | Headteacher | Summer term planning |
| Update allergy wording in the Food and Packed Lunch Policy to clearly state the school's nut free position-free position | Headteacher / SBM | Immediate, confirmation at next meeting |
| Prepare an options paper outlining leadership models postSLA (extend; end; structural partnership), including definitions, finance/HR implications, consultation requirements and timelines | Chair / Headteacher | Before March FGB |
| Raise questions about structural partnership models at the upcoming meeting with Rhyl (Prue KempBarnes)-Barnes) | Headteacher | Before March FGB |
| Diarise new March FGB meeting date (26 March) and circulate updated invites | Clerk | Immediate |
| Clerk to remove Bukky from GovernorHub | Clerk | ASAP |
| Review Skills Audit results and identify any training needs | Chair | Spring Term |

**MINUTES TO BE AGREED AT THE 26.03.26 FGB MEETING AND SIGNED ONLINE BY Marcus Boyland, Chair of the FGB.**