



Minutes from the Full Governing Body Meeting

Held on Tuesday 24th June 2025 at The ACE Centre Nursery School

Present	Catherine Hayward (CHa) – LA Governor & Chair Rob Horsfall (RH) – Co-opted Governor Cheryl Huntbach (CHu) – Co-opted Governor James Robinson (JR) – Co-opted Governor Sasha Gruhn (SG) – Parent Governor Phoebe O'Donnell (POD) – Parent Governor Lynn Jenkins (LJ) – Headteacher Zoe Wakefield (ZW) – Staff Governor
Apologies:	Rachel Caseby (RC) – OCC Governor Services Officer
Absent:	
In attendance	Hazel Sheridan (HS) – Governance Professional

The meeting started at time 6:00pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Rachel Caseby.

2. Notification of any urgent business

2.1. There were no items of urgent business raised.

2.2. It was suggested and agreed that due to the time constraints of this meeting (full discussions needed for items 13 and 14 below), that any questions relating to the reports submitted for this meeting are put onto Noticeboard on Governor Hub where they will be answered. Questions and responses will be added to Appendix 1 of these minutes.

3. Appointment of Co-opted Governor

3.1. JR temporarily left the meeting while his appointment as a Co-opted Governor was discussed. CHa informed Governors that she had a very useful conversation with JR prior to this meeting where the possible conflict of interest that his spouse was a member of staff was discussed. JR was very open and transparent about this matter and fully understood that he would need to leave a Governing Board meeting if anything confidential relating to staff was discussed.

3.2. A discussion took place and Governors agreed that a robust process had been undertaken in fully exploring how the conflict of interest would be managed. JR would bring a lot of strategic skills to the Governing Board and Governors felt confident in appointing him.

Decision: Governors agreed to appoint JR as a Co-opted Governor.

ACTION: HS to add JR to Governor Hub and ask the SBM to set up a school email address, do a DBS check, a Section 128 check and add his details to Getting Information About Schools (GIAS).

Catherine Hayward

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ACTION: HS to send introductory information to JR and a list of mandatory training to be undertaken.

4. Declarations of pecuniary interests

JR declared that his wife was a member of staff. There were no other declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2025 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2025 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Previous actions were:

- 5.1. Item 3.1 HS to add CHu to Governor Hub and send emails with links to useful documents and mandatory training. HS to ask SBM to initiate DBS and Section 128 checks, add details to GIAS and set up school email address - completed.
- 5.2. Item 3.1 CHa to arrange induction meeting with CHu - completed.
- 5.3. Item 5 HS to send approved minutes of 25th March 2025 to CHa for signature, then to LJ for filing at the school - completed.
- 5.4. Item 5.18 HS to note actions from items 5.3, 5.8, 5.9 and 5.14 carried forward for next FGB meeting agenda – on agenda, item 6.
- 5.5. Item 6.3 LJ to check with SBM where EYPP is shown in the budget - EYPP is not reported separately on the Budget Monitoring report, it is estimated/paid within the funding payments, not separated out. There is nothing shown in pupil premium because the nursery school does not receive Pupil Premium. Action completed.
- 5.6. Item 7.3 ZW to share previous advertisement with Governors and SG to use for advertising flyer - completed.
- 5.7. Item 7.4 LJ to add child's characteristics to the Attendance Support Programme - completed.
- 5.8. Item 8.2 HS to note review plan as agenda item for the next FGB meeting – on agenda, item 14.
- 5.9. Item 10.1 RH to check the mitigation recorded on the risk register regarding the surplus of places available for 3 to 5-year-old children and amend if necessary – risk register updated after the last FGB meeting and an updated copy is filed on Governor Hub. Action completed.
- 5.10. Item 11 HS to note Link Governor roles as discussion item for the next FGB meeting on 24th June 2025 – on agenda, item 9.
- 5.11. Item 11.2 LJ to check that additional smoke detectors have been installed and report back to Governors - work completed on 28th May 2025. Action completed.
- 5.12. Item 11.3 LJ to post replies to further questions on the Headteacher's report about the Curriculum monitoring on Governor Hub Noticeboard – Action carried forward. (Please also refer to Appendix 1, questions 3 and 4.) **Governors agreed** that for future meetings questions about FGB reports should be raised with the author of the document at least two days before the meeting; this will give the author time to respond before the meeting.

Catherine Hayward

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Questions raised and responses will be included as an appendix to the meeting's minutes.

ACTION: All Governors and HS to note.

- 5.13. Item 12.3 : LJ to circulate questions for a parent survey to Governors in a different format - completed.
- 5.14. Item 12.3 RH to look at survey questions and suggest any questions for inclusion to Governors for their approval - completed .
- 5.15. Item 13 HS to note SEND Information Report and Public Sector Equality Duty Statement for approval at the next FGB meeting – on agenda, items 11.1 and 11.2 respectively.
- 5.16. Item 13 CH to publish Behaviour Principles Written Statement on the website - completed.
- 5.17. Item 14.1 HS to note Admission to Local Authority Nursery Schools Policy for FGB meeting on 24th June 2025 – on agenda, item 12.1
- 5.18. Item 14 HS to send approved policies to CH for signature, then to LJ for school records and update the policy register - completed.
- 5.19. Item 16.2 HS to draft agenda for 24th June 2026 with items noted at this meeting and send to CHa for approval before circulating to Governors – completed.

ACTION: HS to send approved minutes of 13th May 2025 to CHa for signature and then to LJ for school records.

6. Confidential minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The confidential minutes of 13th May 2025 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. Previous actions and updates can be seen in Part 2 (confidential) of these minutes.

7. Actions carried forward from meeting held on 25th March 2025

- 7.1. Item 2.2.1 CHa to arrange a date for the Strategic Plan Working Party to meet during term 5. A date could not be arranged in term 5 and CHa will arrange for term 6. It was clarified that the strategic plan will be informed by the expansion project and LJ will use the strategic plan when drafting the School Development Plan (SDP) for the next academic year.
- 7.2. JR agreed to be the Link Governor for Strategy. CHa has started to complete the strategy template and will discuss matters with JR before the Strategic Plan Working Party meeting. Governors agreed to meet on Monday 7th July at 6pm at the nursery school for approximately one hour.

ACTION: HS to add meeting to Governor Hub calendar and add JR as Link Governor for Strategy.

ACTION: CHa to complete strategy template document and discuss with JR.

Q1. What timeframe will the strategy plan cover?

A1. It will be for three years, i.e., 2025 – 2028 starting from September 2025.

- 7.3. Item 9.4 SOL to arrange a MS Teams/Zoom meeting between FGB members and a colleague who can inform them what to expect at an Ofsted inspection – LJ has

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contacted a Governor at Comper regarding an online meeting with Governors and is waiting to hear back from them.

ACTION: CHa will contact Governor at Comper to arrange a mutually convenient date for the online meeting.

- 7.4. Item 10.1 SOL to arrange safeguarding visit with LJ for term 5 – CHa will check the SCR on Monday 19th May and CHu volunteered to undertake a safeguarding monitoring visit as soon as possible – monitoring visit completed and SCR checked.
- 7.5. Item 13.1 CHa to look at dates for a Governance Action Plan meeting – action carried forward.

ACTION: CHa to send possible meeting dates to discuss the Governance Action Plan to Governors after the Strategic Plan Working Party have met.

8. Headteacher's report

- 8.1. The Headteacher's report and the following supporting documents were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and are filed on Governor Hub:
- Health and Safety Monitoring Report with updated actions
 - Maintained Nursery Visit report
 - Safeguarding review
 - Budget monitoring notes
 - Budget Profile Summary
 - Budget Profile Ledger Level (plus the same document with comments added)
 - Budget Monitoring Potential Actions
- 8.2. Governors were reminded that any questions can be raised via the Noticeboard on Governor Hub as the main focus of this discussion needed to be on the financial situation of the nursery school following a drop in pupil numbers, and therefore a reduction in funding received.
- 8.3. LJ explained that when the budget forecast was agreed in March 2025 figures were based on having 31 children at the nursery school. St. Mary's Primary School is opening a nursery class from September 2025 and all the children at The ACE Nursery School who have siblings already at St. Mary's Primary School will now be going to the St. Mary's nursery class in September. These children were all at The ACE Nursery School for 30 hours per week so there is a significant impact on income.
- 8.4. There are currently 25 children due to be at The ACE Nursery School for 30 hours per week and 14 children for 15 hours per week from September. This will mean a drop in income for the autumn term of £20K and c£53K for the financial year. Governors were asked to note that these figures do not include additional funding that may have been received such as K-funding and SEND funding. LJ has a good relationship with the Headteacher of St. Mary's Primary School and has confirmed that they will have a termly intake, which means there could be a termly impact on The ACE nursery school.

Q2. How do these numbers translate into full-time equivalents (FTE)?

A2. The drop in numbers translates going from 26 FTE children down to 18.

Q3. Could there be an increase in the number of children coming to the nursery school in September?

A3. LJ replied that the number could rise, however the situation is currently very fluid.

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- 8.5. Marketing strategies are being used to advertise the nursery school and what it has to offer to attract more parents to choose The ACE Nursery School for their child and therefore increase revenue. Posters and flyers have been circulated in the local area. Cara Webster (CW), Receptionist, is keeping a list of where posters and leaflets have been distributed. CW will be making reels to be published on the nursery school's Facebook and Instagram pages from early July. The reels will concentrate on the school environment so no pupils can be identified in compliance with safeguarding and data protection regulations. LJ confirmed that marketing strategies comply with the school's Social Media Policy.

Q4. Can the development of the Forest School be included in the reels as this will be a very good facility when it is up and running?

A4. Yes, it can be included. Governors were asked to send any further suggestions to CW.

- 8.6. It has been identified that with nursery school pupil numbers so low, there is an opportunity to mitigate the loss of revenue by having provision at the nursery school for disadvantaged 2-year-olds without the need to increase staffing levels. (This provision would not be in competition with The ACE Centre Ltd as their RI Ofsted outcome means they cannot take disadvantaged 2-year-olds.) If eight vulnerable 2-year-olds were to be at the nursery school for 15 hours per week during the autumn term this would generate an income of c£15K. LJ suggested that she could ask The ACE Centre Ltd if they could contact parents who may be interested in such provision and give them the nursery school contact details.

ACTION: LJ to ask The ACE Centre Ltd to contact parents who may be interested.

Q5. The nursery school staff are very experienced, however are they set up / ready to work with 2-year-olds?

A5. LJ confirmed that one member of staff is very experienced in provision for this age group and another staff member has expressed an interest.

Q6. Would the provision for 2-year-olds be separated from the other children?

A6. The younger children will start and end the day in their own provision area with the dedicated staff. However they will integrate with 3-year-old children during free-flow time and the dedicated staff for 2-year-olds will be with them.

Q7. Is there a limit as to how many disadvantaged 2-year-olds could be taken on?

A7. LJ explained that the garden classroom would be used for 2-year-old provision and, with the space available, up to 12 children could be accommodated. However, to keep the ratio of staff to children compliant without employing more staff and to be at a comfortable level for now, the ideal number would be eight.

Q8. Is there an end point for disadvantaged 2-year-old provision?

A8. When the children attend the nursery school there is not an end point for such provision.

Q9. Are there any downsides to providing for disadvantaged 2-year-olds?

A9. There were no immediate downsides to this provision. Any impact on staff from additional safeguarding and SEND needs would be closely monitored. This would not pose a threat to The ACE Centre Ltd, there is space available, a member of staff is already experienced in this area and it will be a strength if the expansion project goes ahead.

Catherine Hayman

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Decision: Governors agreed for the written request to be submitted to the OCC Early Education Funding Team for ACE Nursery School to be allowed to admit disadvantaged 2-year-olds using Section 27 Governor Powers.

8.7. Budget forecast:

Q10. Half of the Learning Resources budget has been spent in the first three months of this financial year. Has this been taken into account for future spending?

A10. ZW confirmed that this has been taken into account and only a couple of orders for resources are placed during the year.

8.8. Staffing: LJ informed Governors that a Supply Teaching Assistant has been contracted for five full days (Wednesdays during Term 6) to support two high level additional needs children, who both have funding and are entitled to 15 hours. Both children are on a reduced timetable. £900 has been spent on supply staff.

8.9. Governors thanked LJ for her comprehensive, detailed report and for achieving the key priorities.

9. Link Governor roles

9.1. Link Governor roles were discussed and it was agreed that they reflect the Governors' individual strengths and experience. Roles were agreed as follows:

CHa: Curriculum (with SG) and Assessment; SEN and Vulnerable Children; Sustainability and Climate Change; and Website.

CHu: Equality, Inclusion and Community; Staff Wellbeing; and Safeguarding.

JR: Strategic Planning.

POD: Finance.

RH: Filtering and Monitoring; Cyber Security; Health and Safety; and Governor Training and Development.

SG: Attendance; Curriculum (with CHa).

9.2. CHa and SG will be conducting a monitoring visit for Curriculum and Assessment on 2nd July 2025.

9.3. RH agreed to be the Link Governor for Cyber Security as it linked in with Filtering and Monitoring. As Link Governor for Governor Training and Development, RH will be contacting Governors about training needs that have been identified (please also refer to item 10 below).

9.4. Governors noted that with all the changes and challenges the nursery school has and continues to face, there should be a Link Governor for Staff Wellbeing. CHu undertook to take on this role. Whilst Governors have to complete their statutory duties it was important that staff were not adversely impacted or overwhelmed. Providing staff concerned with the monitoring visit template with areas to be looked at and questions, submitted in advance of a mutually agreed visit date, will help with this.

ACTION: HS to amend Governor Hub to reflect Link Governor roles as stated above.

Catherine Hayman

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10. Board Evaluation results

- 10.1. CHa has compiled the results of the Board Evaluation from Governor Hub with development opportunities and training that may be required, mandatory training already completed, skills gaps for recruitment of new governors and the impact of governance. Links to relevant information and training are also in the document. The report is filed on Governor Hub and was made available to Governors before the meeting.

ACTION: Governors to notify CHa of any information that needs to be changed and any queries.

11. Documents for publication on website

- 11.1. SEND Information Report: **Governors approved** the SEND Information Report for publication on the website.
- 11.2. Public Sector Equality Duty Statement (PSED): CHa reviewed the PSED and no changes were required. **Governors approved** the PSED for publication on the website.

ACTION: CHa to publish the above documents on the nursery school's website.

12. Policies for Approval

- 12.1. Admission for Local Authority Nursery Schools: OCC has not yet published this policy for admissions from September 2025.

ACTION: HS to circulate Admission for Local Authority Nursery Schools 2025 to Governors when it is available.

13. Expansion project

- 13.1. This item is confidential and noted in Part 2 of the minutes.

14. Action review plan

- 14.1. This item is confidential and noted in Part 2 of the minutes.

15. Any other business

- 15.1. Governors Poster: CHa is compiling a poster of Governor' photos and names for display in the nursery school so parents can see who the Governing Body are. CHa will also be holding a 'Meet your Chair' session at the school to take place immediately after an afternoon session ends; the date for this will be confirmed after the parent survey has been sent out.

ACTION: All Governors who have not sent their photo to CHa to do so as soon as possible.

ACTION: RH to email CW to circulate the parent survey.

16. Next meeting date

- 16.1. The next meeting will be the first of the new academic year.

ACTION: HS to inform Governors of the date for the FGB meeting in September.

The meeting closed at 8:16pm

Hazel Sheridan

Catherine Hayman

Signed (by Chair): Date.....



Sent to Chair/Head on 26th June 2025 and FGB on 30th June 2025.

APPENDIX 1

Questions asked and answers to the safeguarding governor monitoring visit on 6th June 2025

Q1. Could you give an example of the elements in the staff induction checklist?

A1. During the monitoring visit and using years of experience of safeguarding, safer recruitment and managing staff, I assessed that there is a comprehensive and robust induction checklist in place which covers policies, procedures and health and safety matters, which will ensure that staff know what they need to do in order to keep children safe and what to do if they have a safeguarding concern.

Q2. How is induction monitored to check that it supports new staff to understand their role and obligations?

A2. The Head ensures that policies and processes are shared with new staff and will only sign off the induction checklist when she is confident that the member of staff is fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. This is monitored by daily briefings, weekly safeguarding meetings and through continuous dialogue so that staff know what they need to do regarding raising a safeguarding concern in a timely manner through the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Questions raised and responses regarding curriculum monitoring (item 5.12 above)

Q3. Ofsted identified that the quality of implementation wasn't as strong in children's independent play. What impact have you seen due to the changes to the environment?

A3. The impact of quality implementation due to environmental changes have been:

- **Enhanced Engagement with Learning Areas**

Children are now utilising the learning areas more purposefully. The evolving enhancements have been thoughtfully designed to reflect prior learning, enabling children to make meaningful connections and engage in deeper exploration.

- **Empowered and Responsive Staff**

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the curriculum's intention, implementation, and impact. They are confidently and independently adapting learning areas to align with planning, next steps, and the evolving interests of the children, fostering a more dynamic and responsive learning environment.

- **Improved Behaviour and Independent Learning**

There has been a noticeable reduction in low-level behaviour. Children are more engaged and are applying what they have been taught during independent play, showcasing their learning through purposeful and self-directed activities

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- Q4. Lynn (and all governors) - it's good to see that staff wellbeing remains high, but it's uncomfortable to read that governor visits add to workload. Within the context that there is a requirement that governors monitor the SDP and statutory duties, how could the Board manage this to minimise additional pressure on staff?**
- A4.** This was answered in item 9.4 above.

Questions raised and answers about Headteacher's Report (item 8 above)

- Q5. Regarding the new offer model - what implications will this have on staffing levels, work patterns, and staff workload & wellbeing?**
- A5.** The new offer model is built around the number of staff we have on any given day. We calculate how many children we can book in based on number of staff and ratios i.e. with teacher in session, each adult is worth 13 child places! Thus, staffing patterns will not necessarily need to change - unless we decide that it would be sensible to change patterns to meet parent need. Staff workload and wellbeing should not be impacted - admin staff will provide registers incorporating attendance patterns which can easily be done on MIS Integris system. To be honest, from a child development perspective, it has always been believed and recommended that children attend daily, rather than attending for 2.5 days, then not attending for 4.5 days, as for a three year old that is a long, and can be unsettling, time gap. But the landscape is such that we are in a competitive market and need to be responding to the needs of working parents. Many nursery schools nationally are following suit.
- Q6. I was thinking about the short-term actions and the impact this might have on staff working patterns and ratios eg if a parent wanted to change from 5 morning to 2.5 days this would lead to a change in the number of children in the sessions involved.**
- A6.** No this won't impact on staff as the office staff have a tool to work out how many places are available each session, according to number of staff, and then parents are able to book an available pattern of sessions - if numbers reach staff ratio numbers, parents will not be able to book that session.
- Q7. When we talk about the 'new offer model', are we referring to purely the flexibility to choose how to take any funded (or other) hours? i.e. not limited to mornings or afternoons. I presume Catherine is referring to the expanded new offer only to be developed from September?**
- A7.** The new offer model is the short term action - offering parents a choice of sessions rather than mornings/afternoons only. The expansion project refers to expanding our age range to 2-5 year olds or 0-5 yr olds which is a medium term/long term strategy. We now have another consideration on the table! The short-term strategy to take disadvantaged funded 2 year olds from Sept (please refer to finance report 'Potential actions to mitigate loss of income').

Question raised regarding School Development Plan (SDP)

- Q8. Really positive to see lots of actions RAG-rated green. How confident are you that the amber actions can be achieved by the end of the year? Should we be recognising that the outdoor environment project is a long-term action so it's naturally going to remain amber this year?**

Catherine Hayman

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- A8.** Yes , this is one of the actions that will be carried forward as a priority for the SDP 2025-26.
- Q9. Have you been able to identify any opportunities for collaborative projects with a particular focus on closing the gap and supporting children with SEND? Would this action include ZW's networking with other SENCOs in her training?**
- A9.** Yes, we have been embedding a joined up , collaborative approach with other maintained nursery schools with focus on SEND. Due to capacity MNS Heads are not currently working on collaborative projects but will support each other through termly visits to each others' schools led by School Improvement Partner, Karen Locke.
- Q10. Attendance - Are there any particular groups of children whose attendance is poorer? Could further information be added to the register e.g., SEND/EAL/gender etc. so that governors can monitor the attendance of specific groups more effectively?**
- A10.** Yes, this has now been done - columns identifying groups have been added to Attendance Support Programme document

Catherine Hayman

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ACE Centre FGB minutes 20250624

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Final Audit Report

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