

**Holbeach Primary School**

**Non-confidential minutes of a meeting of the Governing Board of  
Holbeach Primary School  
held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 at 6.30 p.m.**

**In attendance**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Governor Type</b>	<b>End of Office</b>	<b>Present</b>
Ross	Baptie (RB)	Co-opted Governor Chair of the Resources Committee	26/11/2027	Yes
Emma-Jane	Boyd (EJB)	Parent Governor	18/10/2027	Apologies received
Tom	Bulpitt (TB)	Headteacher Ex-Officio	-	Yes
Katie	Drew (KD)	Co-opted Governor	27/03/2027	Apologies received
Glenys	Englert (GE)	Co-opted Governor Vice Chair of Governors	18/09/2027	Yes
Sharon	Farnley (SF)	Co-opted Governor Chair of Governors	06/04/2027	Yes
Charlie	Killick (CK)	Staff Governor	17/01/2027	Yes
Sylvia	McCloskey-Quigg (SMQ)	Parent Governor	01/12/2026	Yes
Tom	Orpin-Massey (TOM)	Parent Governor	05/01/2029	Yes
Steven	Orpwood (SO)	Co-opted Governor	06/07/2026	Yes
Ben	Pitcher (BP)	Local Authority Governor Vice Chair of Governors Chair of the Curriculum and Standards Committee	19/03/2029	Yes
James	Ransom (JR)	Parent Governor	05/01/2029	Yes
Miriam	Baguley (MBy)	Governance Professional	NA	Yes

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from EJB and KD. Apologies for late arrival were received from SMQ.

RESOLVED: that the apologies of EJB and KD were accepted, and the absences were consented to.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations, in addition to those already registered, were made.

**3. GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

### **3.1. Resignations**

- SO – Co-opted Governor – effective 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025

SF, on behalf of the Governing Board, thanked SO for his support and contributions over the past seven years, particularly for his oversight of maths in his link role.

### **3.2. Appointments**

None.

### **3.3. End of Office**

None.

### **3.4. Vacancies**

- Two Co-opted (including the vacancy created by SO)

Governors noted that it would be preferable to fill the remaining vacancy with a candidate from the local community, but a notice could be placed in the school newsletter to attract interest through the parent body.

RESOLVED: that the resignation of SO was received.

SMQ joined the meeting at 6.42 p.m.

## **4. NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH AND 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025**

The non-confidential minutes of the meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 were circulated to the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the non-confidential minutes of the meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 were approved to be signed as accurate records of the meetings.

## **5. MATTERS ARISING**

### **Schoolhouse strategic plan update**

TB advised that there were no updates on the position reported to the previous Full Governing Board meeting, and LA activity appeared to have paused after the initial wave of disposals. Fiona Gavin (FG) had also not been in contact to assist with the development of a proposal regarding the schoolhouse. Friends of Holbeach (FOH) were very keen to develop the schoolhouse as a community space and were seeking guidance from TB on creation of a plan for submission to the LA.

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## **6. CHAIR'S ACTION**

None.

## **7. CHAIR'S REPORT**

- Review of link roles to ensure alignment with school priorities (with TB, GE and BP).
- Monitoring of compliance with statutory requirements in relation to SATs.
- Supporting the development of SLT. Phil Morriss (PM), Deputy Headteacher, would attend Governor meetings on a more regular basis. Future meetings to include feedback on the first summer holiday club, and a presentation on wraparound care.

TB reported that staff were enthusiastic about developing the club, which was now almost at full capacity. The success of the initiative would be analysed to determine whether it should become a regular event.

Governors asked if those pupils who were at a particular disadvantage would be able to access the club. TB said that the club had been designed for working parents in the first instance, with costs being covered by fees. However, the long-term goal was to include as many pupils as possible, and grant funding might be available to support this.

Governors asked about the development of the wider SLT, including the appointment of a SENDCo. TB confirmed that an existing member of staff had been appointed as SENDCo on a three-year fixed term contract. The current SENDCo would support the transition. Plans to support nurture groups were already well advanced.

RECEIVED.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Governors noted that the following Committee meetings had been held.

NB. All Governors were members of both Committees and were invited to all meetings. Full feedback of meetings would not be provided, and minutes would be circulated for information where available.

- Resources 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025
- Curriculum and Standards 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

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## **9. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

TB presented the Headteacher's report which had been circulated to the meeting and reported in detail on the following areas. Questions were invited.

- School Improvement Partner (SIP)
  - Under the Lewisham Learning School Improvement Framework, the school had self-assessed as 'core', which recognised that the school was 'good'.

- SDP. There were three main areas of development focus, discussed in order of level of progress made.
  - Phonological awareness. While parental engagement had been high, this could be developed further through additional workshops in Key Stages (KS) 1 and 2 in addition to the Early Years (EY).

Governors asked if a lack of parental understanding about phonological awareness could impact engagement. TB said a clear explanation was provided and parents were very supportive.

- Maths. Subject leadership was getting stronger, and the impact of this was expected to follow the trajectory of English as a subject.
- Development of in-class provision for pupils experiencing difficulties with social interactions and communication, and emotional regulation. Progress in this area was expected to accelerate with the appointment of the new SENDCo. Relationships with other schools as part of the 'Delivering Best Value' scheme were beneficial and supported the development of teachers, structures and strategies.
- Quality of Education.
  - Outcomes in English and maths were subject to regular monitoring by subject leaders. Staff meetings were often used for planning and monitoring of assessments. Year 6 (teacher assessed) writing had been moderated, and assessments were deemed to be accurate and teachers well prepared.
  - External moderation, although typically conducted on a four-yearly basis, was staggered across subjects, ensuring that at least one subject underwent moderation each year.
  - Culture week had taken place. A singing assembly was also scheduled where artwork created during culture week could be viewed.
  - OPAL. The school had achieved the gold award and would continue to follow the programme for the next two years to support staff training. The programme had enabled pupils to develop their confidence and independence and work cooperatively across year groups.

It was noted that staff were very positive about the OPAL programme. Pupils were engaged and were learning about conflict resolution without the need for adult support. Governors also highlighted that wrap around care was of high quality and similarly contributed to pupils' confidence and independence.

Governors discussed the need for further work on developing respect for property and proper care of items. Issues were linked to a small group of pupils and were being addressed through assemblies and sanctions.

While the student council suggested increased adult supervision could reduce conflict, TB noted that the current staff-to-pupil ratio was adequate, indicating a need for more staff training. The challenge was to find the right balance: ensuring staff were skilled while still allowing pupils the room to develop.

TB said a pupil voice exercise would be carried out to fully understand the issues.

- Special events.

Governors asked about the success of the Year 6 secondary school taster day. TB said the LA offer had improved and supported a better transition for vulnerable pupils. Governors suggested that parents should be encouraged to

visit secondary schools across more than one year to support improved decision making.

- CPD.
- SEND.

In response to a query about the rationale for the SENDCo appointment, TB explained that although external recruitment was not supported by the budget, the appointment process had been rigorous. TB noted that the successful candidate was an outstanding teacher with the broad range of skills necessary for this key position. While the dual role as the Early Years lead would have an impact, staffing in this area was very strong, which would facilitate the new SENDCo to make a broad impact across the school. The outgoing SENDCo would provide support for one day per week for the next academic year.

TB highlighted plans for reform of EHCPs set out in the Schools White Paper, noting the potential impact on finances if high needs top up funding was removed. The number of EHCPs achieved represented a great deal of work to ensure pupils were properly supported in a mainstream school. Half of the EHCPs in the school were Band F, which indicated a special school placement would be appropriate if a space was available or parental choice was different.

- Staffing.
  - Staff changes for the autumn term. The staff team were well prepared for the start of the new term.
  - Staffing was being managed through strategic use of fixed term appointments. ECT appointments may be necessary for 2026-2027.
  - The decision had been made not to restructure the Year 4 classes for 2025-2026 as in the previous two years so as not to reinforce the perception of good/bad classes. Communications developed over the last two years had ensured parents were well informed.
  - SBM vacancy. Gareth Hudson would remain in the Bursar role for the next two years while RB supported changes to the administration team to ensure roles were distinct and work clearly allocated. It was hoped that an SBM could be recruited through an apprenticeship scheme at the appropriate time.

In response to questions, TB said that improving the admissions process was part of the efficiencies being worked on with RB.

TB to follow up on the method of paying for class photos.

- Data and outcomes.
  - Attainment data. No further updates to that reported to the Curriculum and Standards Committee.
  - The Multiplication check demonstrated the progress being made in maths. Parents were provided with heatmaps showing areas of weakness. There was no pass mark; the focus was on making and measuring progress.
  - Key Stage 2 outcomes were predicted to be similar to last year. Writing at Greater Depth was slightly down on the previous year.
  - The school roll was stable; 58 pupils were joining Reception in September 2025.
- Pupil Attendance and Punctuality.

- Current attendance for pupils of statutory age to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 was 93.9%, which was below national average
- Persistent Absence (PA) 19%. The Attendance Officer was providing advice on how to manage PA. The greatest driver of PA was SEND, in particular those with EHCPs where the school environment could be overwhelming. Two pupils were on part-time timetables and only attended in the mornings, with a consequent impact on attendance overall. There was also an element of EBSA which was being supported. A final group of concern was pupils who were disengaged from education. Work was ongoing to improve follow up and robustness of procedures to hold parents to account.
- Staff attendance had improved. There was low long-term absence. Sickness absence reviews were being conducted when required (one ongoing).
- Health and Safety including Premises.
  - TB to provide a copy of the site inspection to KD and GE.
  - Summer works meeting due to be held 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025.
  - Fire panel replacement to be funded by the LA.

Governors discussed what measures could be taken to reduce heat in the building during hot weather. TB said it was possible that grant funding would be available for the installation of air conditioning units. However, this would be limited by the school's listed status and would have an impact on energy consumption.

Health and Safety Link Governors suggested logging room temperatures as evidence in support of any grant applications, as this was an issue mentioned at Health and Safety Committee meetings.

- Staff mental and emotional wellbeing. Following positive actions, there had been a general improvement in this area.
- Finance.
  - Benchmarking indicated utility expenditure was comparable to a three-form entry school.
  - Special thanks were offered to RB for his support in dealing with the LA.
  - TB to meet with an LA representative before the end of term to talk through concerns around utility charging and the dispute that was ongoing.

TB to follow up on links provided by TOM regarding grant funding.

- Wrap around care and enrichment. Club leads were enjoying their roles.
- Confidential section. See confidential minutes.

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## **10. PUPIL PREMIUM STRATEGY STATEMENT**

TB advised that a review of the impact of the strategy to the end of the current three-year plan would be carried out and information uploaded to the website.

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## **11. TACKLING RACE INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION**

Work during the summer term had focused on pupil voice. Pupils had contributed to the design of a questionnaire to help the school understand how well the curriculum represented them.

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## **12. STANDING ITEMS**

### Safeguarding, Behaviour, and Safety

- TB reported that some pupils had witnessed an incident outside of school where there had been a knife. Although it had not been shown in a threatening way, pupils had made a report to school leaders and were displaying some anxiety. TB would be attending a safeguarding strategy meeting.
- Cybersecurity to be added as a standing item to future agendas.

### Premises and Health and Safety

- No urgent or reportable incidents.

### GDPR

- No urgent or reportable incidents.

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## **13. POLICIES**

The following policies, which had been subject to revision after review by the Resources Committee, were re-presented for approval. Minor changes were highlighted.

- Business Continuity Plan
- Asset Management Disposal Write-Off Policy
- Financial Management Policy
- Premises Management Policy
- Debt Management Policy
- Staff Expenses Policy
- Cyber Response Plan
- Health and Safety Policy

TB advised that the Pay Policy had not yet been issued by the LA. It was likely that the performance related pay element would be removed.

Governors agreed to defer approval of the Statement of Behaviour Principles subject to detailed review by SF, GE and BP to ensure it was consistent with the Behaviour Policy

RESOLVED:

- 1) to defer approval of the LA model Pay Policy to the next meeting

- 2) to defer approval of the Governors' Statement of Behaviour Principles to the next meeting
- 3) to approve the policies as presented.

#### **14. GOVERNORS' REPORTS**

It was noted that detailed feedback and written reports from Link Governor visits had been provided to the Curriculum and Standards Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

- Link visit dates for the next academic year to be agreed early in the term to ensure there was sufficient time for visits to be completed.
- SF to carry out a safeguarding visit by 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025.
- Maths and website compliance. SO to provide a handover to successor.

RECEIVED.

#### **15. GOVERNING BOARD ITEMS**

- Annual Skills Audit.
  - Link roles for 2025-2026 to be allocated following analysis of results by BP, GE and SF.
- Governor Training.
  - TOM had completed the 'Introduction to Governance' LA training and had carried out a link visit.
  - Governors to add any training completed to the record via the link on all agendas.
  - Reminder of the LA training programme.
  - SF to arrange annual safeguarding training with Lucia Bernardi, LA Safeguarding in Education Officer. Governors were invited to join staff refresher training on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.
- LA/Clerk's information. None.

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#### **16. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

- FGB – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 6.30 p.m.
- Meeting dates 2025-2026 circulated.

Governors agreed to move Resources Committee meetings to Thursdays (dates to move by one day).

Governors discussed the possibility of moving the summer 2 FGB meeting to a date post publication of the SATs results. Final date to be agreed pending availability.

RESOLVED: to approve the 2025-2026 meeting dates, with the revisions as agreed.

#### **17. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**



- Wraparound care presentation – PM
- Governors' Statement of Behaviour Principles approval
- Cybersecurity toolkit (MBy to provide to TB)
- Complaints Procedure – TB to review
- Charging and Remissions Policy

**18. ANY URGENT OTHER BUSINESS, AGREED WITH THE CHAIR IN ADVANCE**

Use of AI tools

Governors asked about the use of AI tools by the school, in particular the use by teachers and administrators of commercially available tools to simplify tasks that may include personal data or intellectual property. Governors were concerned about data breaches, particularly those arising from reconstructed pseudonymised data, and unanticipated consequences arising from the use of a relatively new technology.

TB advised that the school was being supported by RB, who was a consultant in AI.

RB noted that a starting point was to assess what problems were being faced, and, if AI was part of the solution, how the risks could best be managed.

RB said that his work at the school included:

- development of an AI Policy, which was explicit about where the technology could be useful, but also where risks could increase, and consideration of privacy issues/redaction of data
- upskilling of the administration team
- training provided to teachers to support planning and ease workload.

TB provided assurance that where AI was currently used, it did not involve personal data.

Collecting pupils from school premises procedures

Governors asked about the details of childminders available on the school website and their registration with Ofsted. TB agreed that childminders who were not registered with Ofsted should not be signposted, but that the onus was on parents to make the required checks.

TB said that collection from school was consent based. Information on those authorised to collect pupils was rigorously collected and enforced.

Summer fair

Governors were asked to volunteer at the summer fair.

RESOLVED: draft AI Policy to be circulated for discussion.

Meeting closed 8.40 p.m.

**CHAIR'S SIGNATURE:.....**

**DATE SIGNED:...../...../.....**