Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Brent Knoll School held at the School on Wednesday 26 March 2025 at 6:00 pm

Membership (Instrument 2.3.15) PG x 3, LA x1, Staff x1, Head x 1, Foundation x 3, Co-option x 3. Total 12	Initials	Designation	Term of Office End date	Attendance
Mr. Paul Shaw	PS	Headteacher	Ex-Officio	Present
Ms Ebony Douglas	ED	Co-opted Governor	25 06.2028	Present (R)
Ms Gina Evans	GE	Staff Governor	20/02/2028	Present
Mr. Simon Whitlock	SW	Co-opted (Vice Chair)	22/05/2025	Apologies
Ms Catherine van Rooyen	CVR	Parent Governor	31 /10/2026	Apologies
Ms Cheryl Cowie	CC	Parent Governor	16/11/2025	Apologies
Ms Laura Deitz	LD	Parent Governor (Chair)	02/07/2027	Present
Vacancy		Local Authority		
Mr Tom Russell	TR	Foundation Governor	26/11/2028	Present
Ms Molly O' Hanlon	MO	Foundation Governor	26/11/2028	Present
Ms Irene Ferrero Anthony	IFA	Foundation Governor	28.03.2027	Present (R)
Vacancy		Co-option Governor		
Also				
Stanley Carnall	SC	Observer	N/A	Present
Charlotte Levey	CL	Observer	N/A	Present (R)
Mr. Mike Garrick	MG	Clerk	N/A	Present

No	Item
1.0	**<u>Welcome , Apologies for absence and any Changes to the Business of the Meeting</u>**
1.1	The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in particular Stanley Carnall and Charlotte Levey, invited observers.
1.2	Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Catherine van Rooyen, Cheryl Cowie (CC) and Simon Whitlock . There was no change to the business of the meeting.
2.0	**<u>Declaration of Interest and Register of Interests</u>**
2.1	**Declaration of Interest:** No declaration of interest was received in any item appearing on the agenda of this meeting.
2.2	**Register of Interest**: Molly O' Hanlon (MO) reported that she had changed job roles at the Department for Education and would therefore complete and submit an updated Register of Interest form.
3.0	**<u>Governing Body Membership</u>**
3.1	**End of Term of Office before the end of the Spring term 2025 :** It was reported that the term of office of Simon Whitlock (SW) ends on 22 May 2025. It was understood that SW was willing to be put forward for a further term
3.2	**Vacancies :** It was also noted that there were currently two vacancies on the governing body as follows : ▪ 1x Local Authority ▪ 1 x Co-option Governors agreed to consider appointments to the vacancies later in the meeting.
3.3	**DBS Checks:** The governors were reminded that they are legally required to undertake a DBS check., the check must be renewed every 3 years. Newly appointed/elected governors were

	required to contact the school within 21 days to arrange for the DBS application process to be started.
4.0	**Minutes of the last meeting and Any matters Arising**
4.1	**Minutes:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2024 had been circulated. After consideration, the Minutes were AGREED as a true record and approved for signature by the Chair .
4.2	**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising that were not being covered elsewhere on the agenda of this meeting.
5.0	**Financial Management**
5.1	**Budget 2024/25- Update :** A copy of the report on Finance had been circulated.The Head advised that the position remained consistent with the forecast provided in the Autumn term, there had been no significant change. The projected outturn was for a £1.2 million carry forward into the 2025/26 financial year.
5.1.1	It had been necessary to increase the agency supply budget due to staff sickness at the start of the academic year. However, significant savings were made by filling several permanent LSA vacancies with long term supply. There was an on-going issue relating to the overcharging for utilities (Gas and Electricity), the matter was being actively pursued by the Bursar with the LA and the suppliers. MO was also helping by referring on information/access to resources for recovering of funds. The school was also applying for additional funds to meet the costs of providing universal free school meals for primary aged pupils. Measures were also in place to closely monitor spending including the tightening of departmental budgets.
5.1.2	Information was provided about the spend on premises maintenance and planned improvements, including the replacement of some CCTV cameras, provision of shade sail , air conditioning work and fire alarm panels. The planning for future developments included creating a 6th Form area , provision of new screens, introducing an electronic sign-in at reception and purchasing a digital/ electronic asset register .
5.1.3	The school was reviewing the services of suppliers of therapies, in particular for speech and language currently being provided by the NHS. Governors were also advised about internal staff training and the focus on building internal expertise. The Head reported his participation in the Special Schools bests value steering group. He also reported that Brent Knoll and Watergate were now offering SEND outreach services to other schools.
5.1.4	Brent Knoll had successfully applied for the early adopter's scheme for Breakfast Clubs. The viability of the scheme was being looked into, 8 responses for places had been received so far and a decision would be made shortly about whether the school can make the scheme work.
5.1.5	**Q** Is there a medium- and long-term plan for the staffing ? The Head stated that the current balance between supply and permanent staff was working well for the school. Most of the staff were currently at the top of their respective pay scales. However, in the long term, vacancies as they arise would be filled by teachers earlier in their career and therefore at lower points on the pay scale. The impact would be a lowering of costs . Information was provided about the savings being made by covering LSA permanent roles with agency supply which yield savings in terms of the 'on-costs.' Governors were advised that the school was in the middle in terms of the benchmarking against other similar schools.
5.1.6	The Head felt that although, there had been some variances, the outturn was in line with the original budget plan. After consideration, the governing body noted and AGREED the financial. Update.
5.2	**Plan for 2025/26 and 3-Year projection:** It was noted that the outturn for 2024/5 and the proposed budget for 2025/26 would be considered by the Pay and Resources committee and also presented for agreement at the next full governing body meeting. The deadline for the approved budget to be submitted for 2025/26- and 3-year plan to Lewisham was 15 June 2025,

	this could be extended to 30 June for those schools required to provide a ddeficit recovery plan.
5.3	**Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS):** The completed School Financial Value Standards document had been circulated. The Head advised that the draft document had been prepared by the Bursar , School Business Manager and himself . It was signed off by the Chair and submitted to the LA by the required deadline. The document was also presented to the Pay and Resources committee , after consideration the governing body **AGREED** the SFVS
6.0	**Headteacher's Report**
6.1	The Headteacher's Report and School Improvement Plan had been circulated. The Report included a summary of the key achievements and challenges in the term so far . Also , school data on admission ; attendance , safeguarding , report on behaviour , the use of the Pupil Premium grant , school performance , curriculum development ; staffing ; review of performance management outcomes ; staff training and continuing professional development ; parental engagement, mental health and wellbeing and future proofing.
6.2	The Head advised that staffing had been the biggest challenge, absence in particular. He stated that new and robust HR arrangements were in place to support return to work, occupational health referrals and follow-up looking at long- and short-term illness/sickness absence.
6.3	**Q** What were the reasons for the absences and was it more than expected ? The Head stated that there were four teachers away due to sickness; flu and stress were the main reasons. He spoke also about the support in place to help staff with their mental health and wellbeing. .
6.4	**Q** Is the support having a positive impact ? The Head reported that staff had been made aware of the information about the sources of help and support available to them .Staff were also supporting one another .
6.5	**Q** There are 2 teacher vacancies , why did they leave ? The Head advised that one arises from a long-term absence now resolved and the other was teacher experiencing difficulties, who resigned.
6.6	Information was provided about the success of the school Newsletter ; discussion took place about whether there was a need to also provide hard copies. The Head AGREED to make a small number of hard copies available at the school Reception desk.
6.7	Reference was made to the change in the appraisal process based on the Teacher Standards, the Head provided details of the process including the observations and feedback across the academic year. Details were provided about the weekly meetings on Attendance, Safeguarding and Behaviour and the introduction of the use of CPOMS to record Safeguarding and Behaviour incidents..
6.8	A copy of the School Improvement Plan (2024-25) had been circulated . Attention was drawn to the progress made on each priority including the committee and link governor monitoring. Reference was made to the curriculum development and the selection of Brent Knoll as the Special School Music lead in Lewisham. The success of GE in developing the music offer at the school was commended. Reference was made to engagements in the community including pupils participation in the Lewisham Schools Orchestra. *ED joined the meeting at 6:45pm*
6.9	**Q** When will the teacher vacancies be advertised? The Head stated that the advertisement would go out later in the week. Applications were open to special school teachers and also those in main stream.
6.10	**Q** Any internal candidates expected ? The Head stated that an application from the apprentice teacher was possible.
6.11	Parental Engagement continued to be strong. The school would be trying different things to

	improve and extend the engagement including development of a Parent Teacher Association (PTA).
6.12	A copy of the Ofsted Report and debrief notes had been circulated . It was noted that it was an ungraded Inspection. The Head felt that the Inspection went well . Governors noted that the evidence gathered by the Inspectors suggest that the school's work had improved in all areas since the previous Inspection . The school's next inspection would be a graded Inspection, and the Inspectors may return within the next 18 months to 2 years. .
6.13	**Attendance:** The Head reported the meeting of the Attendance Panel earlier in the day. He was happy with what the school was doing to improve Attendance, reduce absence and improve punctuality. There were tighter controls on approved absences in line with the new statutory requirements. Information was provided on the systems of fines implemented via the LA . The Head reported that referrals for fines were considered on a case-by-case basis.
6.14	**Q** Is there discretion to approve some absences? The Head stated that this was limited, for example, to religious observance and for exceptional circumstances.
6.15	**Q** Has the school considered two week breaks at half term ? It was noted that this was done in some Bromley schools in the Autumn half term . Discussion took place about the challenges this would present particularly for those families with more than one school aged child. He could give consideration to the possibility but felt that this may not be suitable for the school.
6.16	The governors thanked the Head for his Report .
7.0	**Ofsted** A copy of the Ofsted report on the Inspection undertaken in November 2024 had been circulated and information and feed- back was considered as part of the earlier item in the Headteacher's Report.
8.0	**SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)** A copy of the SEND guidance for governing bodies had been circulated and access to the Department of Education guidance was provided prior to the meeting. The purpose of the guidance was for governors to understand their role and responsibilities in relation to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. The Head reminded of that these responsibilities were covered in the work of the committees and the link arrangements. He advised that details of the school's SEND offer was provided on the school website.
9.0	**Committee Reports & Link Governor Reports**
9.1	**Joint CFC and T& L Committee Meeting:** Report back from the meeting held on 11 March 2025 . The first draft of the (unapproved) Minutes of the meeting had been circulated – copy in the meeting file on the governor's area of the school website. The governors agreed to note the points covered at the meeting most of which had also been covered in the Headteachers Report.
9.2	**Pay and Resources:** Report back from the meeting held on 4 March 2025 . The first draft of the (unapproved) Minutes of the meeting had been circulated – copy in the meeting file in the governor's area. The governors agreed to note the points covered at the meeting which were also covered in the earlier item on the School Finance.
9.3	**Link Reports:** Reference was made to the time spent by the Chair with the Senior Leadership discussing the operation of the school with a smaller team ; the check -in with the Head with regard to wellbeing; also looking at the operation and structure of the governing body including , increase governor engagement ; avoiding duplication and improving the effectiveness of the governing body.
10.0	**Safeguarding & Health & Safety**

10.1	**Safeguarding report**: A safeguarding report was circulated, which included details of referrals to outside agencies , details of interventions, the number of Child in Need cases , there was 1 child Looked After, and 3 children with special guardians. Details were also provided of the numbers of strategy meetings and requests for information.
10.2	Safeguarding training**:** It was noted that EM was scheduled to undertake DSL refresher training on 27 March 2025. Also noted that governors were required to update their training on safeguarding annually. Reference was made to the online training undertaken by governors in the Autumn term.
10.3	Single Central Record: The School Business Manager , Headteacher and CC had attended Single Central Record training.
10.4	**Health & Safety (H&S) Report :** A report had been circulated. Details were provided about accidents and incidents , maintenance, and improvement to the premises., staff training; H & S priorities and the H & S of Self-Assessment Audit in which the school achieved a 98% score. A statutory compliance review undertaken by the LA with Premises Manager resulted also in a score of 98%. The fire risk assessment undertaken in November 2024; the risk level was found to be low to medium. There were two recommendations (use of extension cables in offices and replacement of ceiling tiles). The required actions were taken.
10.5	Governors were informed that the Head, and the other members of the SLT attended training on screening for knives. The Head advised stated that as he would be updating the Behavior Policy and also looking at the ' Lock Down' / Intruder on site procedure.
10.5.1	**Q** Have there been any weapons incidents ? The Head stated that there had been nothing of concern. He advised of the role in the work of the safer neighborhood officer who would speak to pupils about contextual safeguarding issues . It was noted that these visits would no longer continue as Lewisham have created Hubs so that officers can be called when needed .
10.5.2	**Q** Are there any pupils that a vulnerable to post code violence ? The Head felt that this was not an issue, the vulnerability of some was to being influenced by others.
11.0	**Chairs Action** An update was provided on the Chair's Action taken since the last ordinary full governing body meeting.
12.0	**Policy Review** There were no policies to be reviewed. The Head reported the need to update the Business Continuity Plan to include the Lockdown procedures. These procedures would not be published . The Behaviour Policy was also being updated to include a section/ appendix on screening for weapons.
13.0	**GOVERNING BODY PROCEDURES, ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION FOR GOVERNORS**
13.1	**Governors Training** : Details of governors training available from the Local Authority in the Spring 2025 had been circulated . Governors were encouraged to attend training regularly.
13.2	**Governors Newsletter from the Local Authority:** A copy of the Spring term's Newsletter had been circulated. No matters were raised for consideration.
14.0	**Dates & Times of future meetings** It was noted that the next meeting of the full governing body was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 25 June 2025 at 6:00 pm

	The observers and staff governor left the meeting at 7:10 pm
15.0	**<u>Any other business</u>**
15.1	**Governor vacancies : End of Term of Office before the end of the Spring term 2025 :** The term of office of Simon Whitlock (SW) ends on 22 May 2025. It was understood that SW was willing to be put forward for a further term. The Chair proposed that SW be re-appointed to a further term (4 year) ending 21 May 2029 . After consideration the governing body **AGREED** the re-appointment.
15.1.1	**Co-option and Local Authority vacancies :** Information/profiles of Charlotte Levy and Stanley Carnell (SC) had been circulated prior to the meeting**.** After discussion the governing body **AGREED** to appoint Charlotte Levey to the Co-option vacancy and to recommend to the Local Authority (LA) that Stanley Carnell be appointed as the LA governor.
15.1.2	The Clerk advised that the recommendation to the LA would be sent on to Governor Services to take forward for agreement. It was likely to take time and there may not be an outcome before the next meeting. It was **AGREED** that subject to the decision from the LA that SC be appointed as an Associate Member .
15.2	**Change to the Instrument of the governing body :** There was discussion about increasing the size of the governing body in particular to increase the number of Parent Governor places. The Clerk advised that a change to Instrument of Government would be required. He gave a brief summary of the process; it was **AGREED** that he would send the necessary information and process on to MO to be reviewed. The governors also asked that an item be included on the agenda of the next meeting.
15.3	**Sixth Form : Creation of a Sixth Form Area :** Three quotes for the necessary work had been received , a price comparison breakdown had been circulated. The Head advised the requirement was to adapt an area previously used as changing rooms . He took the governors through the proposal. The Head recommended that the quote from Electro (£26196.50 plus VAT) be accepted on the grounds that it was the most appropriate and best value for money in terms of meeting the school objectives. The Head undertook to check that school's scheme of delegation for the levels at which tendering would be required. Subject to this , the governing body **AGREED** the funding of this project
15.4	**Solar Panels :** There was a question about the solar panels on the roof of the school. **Q** Does the school receive any income from the solar panels? The Head stated that when the issues relating to the energy has been resolved, then this would be looked into.
15.5	**Retirement of the Clerk :** It was noted the retirement of Mike Garrick, Clerk to the governing body. Mike was thanked for his service to the governing body. Governors wished him well for the future.

		Action	**Who**	**When**
	A 1	**Governor Appointments :** ▪ SW : Co-option re-appointment ▪ CL : Appointed as Co-opted governor	Clerk	ASAP
	A 2	**SC :** Recommended for appointment as LA details to be sent to the LA	Clerk	ASAP
	A 3	**Change of Instrument of Government :** Guidance to be sent to MO . Item to be included on the Agenda of the next FGB	Clerk & MO	By next FGB
	A 4	**Sixth Form :** Funding for the Work : Agreed subject to tendering rules being checked .		