



MINUTES

PENKETH SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY – SPRING TERM 2025

Focus: Finance

Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 5.00pm

PRESENT:

Mrs Claire Lawton (Headteacher)
Mrs Claire Roper
Mr Jake Smith
Ms Carla Bonner

Mrs Carolyn Williams (Chairperson)
Mrs Kathryn Bullivant
Mr Steven Hennessey

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Maria Warburton (LA Minute Clerk)

Part One – non confidential business

1 Welcome

The chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Absence and apologies

Apologies have been received from Mr Carroll, Ms Lucido and Miss Browne.

3 Declaration of personal interests for any item on this agenda

Governors were asked to declare any interest they may have, pecuniary or otherwise, relating to this meeting. No interests were declared for any item on the agenda.

4 Chair's emergency decisions

There were no emergency decisions.

5 Governing body membership

There are two co-opted governor vacancies.

6 Previous full governing body minutes, matters arising and action log

- a) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 and discuss any matters arising

AGREED: The minutes from the previous meeting held on 4 February 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chair.

- b) Action log
A governor highlighted that the tracked changes are still showing on the Bad Debt Policy.

ACTION: The headteacher to remove tracked changes from the Bad Debt Policy.

The following action was carried forward:

ACTION: C/F: The headteacher to arrange a staff wellbeing audit in the summer term.

All other actions have been completed.

7 Headteacher's report

- Scorecard (business aspect)
The headteacher informed governors that she attended the TCAT business meeting at Penketh South Primary with the chair. The first page highlights the improvements since the autumn term. A number of actions highlighted in red have since moved to green and amber.

Action tracker: The headteacher informed governors that she has almost completed her induction. There is still some training to do on finance and she is waiting for the new finance director to become more established to complete.

The admin and premises restructure has been completed. They have appointed a new caretaker and are awaiting the DBS check to be completed. They have appointed Ben Cubin (caretaker) and Grace Shaw (admin).

The SCR is now on track. The headteacher informed governors that she has had training for iAM Compliant.

The health and safety action plan continues to be monitored (they have monthly visits). They are waiting for a new fire panel to be fitted; this needs to be done when the children are not in school (they are trying to arrange a date for that just after Easter).

The 5-year plan has been completed with Paul Sinnott. The remedial works to the pirate ship and play equipment should be sorted soon along with the flooring in Year 1 and Year 2 (this was mentioned at the business meeting).

Catering: They have discussed this previously. A member of staff left, and they appointed a new cook from Broomfield's kitchen (Kelly Cherritt). The catering has improved a little. They have now started a new catering menu.

The headteacher confirmed she can now access Risk Mate.

With regards to the archive risk in general – a group of assessments are to be revised together. GDPR tasks are to be completed.

Classes: There are now twenty nine pupils in Year 4 and a new pupil is expected this week. They are nearly full in most classes with just one or two places. They are ensuring that parents know where they are, and they want Penketh South to be their first choice.

Health and Safety: There are still some actions to complete.

HR: There has been a small increase in the number of people that have had more than one absence in the past twelve months – this is not a concern. The long term absence relates to two members of staff. If a trigger is hit for attendance the headteacher completes a return to work interview initially, followed by a HR meeting to resolve any issues if the member of staff hits an attendance trigger.

Maintenance on iAM Compliant: They receive a report each week and the school is usually between 90% and 95% compliant (occasionally they have to wait for a contractor). The chair acknowledged that there has been some improvement with more green areas; changing the structure with the new caretaker should improve that even more.

IT structure: This is a new section, and all primary schools are green (ie: meets the defined standard, is in warranty and fully supported). The headteacher reported that she met with the IT lead to discuss replacing some IT when needed. They are coming into school to ensure that everything is showing on the asset register and they will then create a 5-year plan moving forward to replace items.

As part of a trust they are working on a digital strategy and the trust is keen that in five to ten years all the children will have access to an iPad 100% of the day to enhance teaching, ie: for geography to access a map. They are equipping the children to be able to use the iPad for learning for life and be able to use that technology when they move on to college and university.

A governor asked if they will be able to take the iPads home. The headteacher explained that ultimately that is the plan, and they are working with trusts in other areas that already have that in place. A governor highlighted that an issue during Covid is that some families do not have access to the internet.

The headteacher informed governors that it is about putting that in place – for one family during Covid they paid for a dongle. Mrs Roper added that SIM cards can also be used.

The headteacher reported that other plans are for digital signage above a door in the main entrance. A standard TV with a fire stick links to Trilby TV which shows educational signage, ie: internet safety day or templates for sports day, etc. This is played on a loop. School messages can be played, and it looks more professional. Ultimately they would like something on the big wall at the back of the hall with an interactive display of children's work.

Catering: They are still in a minus; however, it is improving. They have changed the menu and have had the children involved in that. They have some ideas coming up for VE Day in May (a celebration of 80 years). World Book Day was really successful, and they also held a Willy Wonka event as well. The uptake for school meals is slightly better. The chair acknowledged that the service has improved by being more efficient and managing resources and the increase in the uptake for school meals. The headteacher informed governors that the new kitchen cook has some ideas for future events, etc.

GDPR: Nothing to report.

Complaints: The headteacher reported that they had one complaint in October. There has also been a more recent complaint which is more or less resolved; governors will be updated on that.

Governance: The dates of birth and some email addresses are missing from the database. The headteacher informed governors that she has given the Penketh South email address in case it involved any complaints, rather than personal email addresses.

ACTION: The headteacher to speak to TCAT about having to include the date of birth for governors.

Declaration of Interests: These are not complete.

ACTION: The headteacher to check up on the Declaration of Interests (not being complete).

Website compliance: They had the information for reading, writing and maths combined but not greater depth; this is now on the website.

Risk Register: There are no major risks.

The headteacher mentioned that having a WhatsApp group would be useful to circulate information to governors if Ofsted announced their visit and to find out who could attend. The headteacher assured governors that it would be used for emergencies and is a quick way to ensure that governors are aware of information as quickly as possible.

Governors agreed they were happy for the headteacher to arrange the WhatsApp group.

AGREED: **Governors agreed to the headteacher arranging a WhatsApp group (for circulating important information to governors and arranging attendance, etc).**

ACTION: **The headteacher to arrange a WhatsApp group for governors.**

8 SEND update (standard agenda item)

Mrs Roper informed governors that EHCPs have risen to 4.38% with eleven EHCPs now in place and they are slightly closer to national averages; one more child would take them over the national figures.

They have a whole range of funding bands across the EHCPs from the top of the funding level to no funding. They are conscious that a child with an EHCP with a considerable amount of funding is moving to another provision in September (they are awaiting confirmation of that).

Another child is looking for a change in placement and also a child in nursery has been given a place at Green Lane School in September. There is some movement, and the register will change again. With some EHCP children they are looking for additional funding as needs change, ie: as they move through KS1, and they do provision maps for those children. One boy in nursery is currently staying at the school but will need a huge increase in funding when they come full-time.

More EHCPs are being filed for other children which have been done by parents, and they are awaiting the outcome of those. They have recently held a parents' evenings and redone learning plans which they have shared with parents. Mrs Roper reported that Liz Richards (TCAT lead practitioner for SEND) is coming into school on Monday to do more work with her around their systems before the SEND peer review on 2 May 2025 which is carried out by the LA by a team of two or three representatives.

Ms Richards has been through the action plan once and as a result more actions were put in place. Mrs Roper explained that she has also put a progress tracker in place (visible on one page) to track progress and look at attendance both historically and now, and to look at interventions and whether these are effective. Mrs Roper added that she will meet with each teacher and talk through each child: what they are doing, any other concerns, and any other children in the class that have been flagged. They have created a form to help staff keep track. The headteacher informed governors that it is a more formal process.

The chair reported that Mrs Bullivant came into school for her link governor SEND/inclusion visit on 4 February 2025 and her report has been uploaded to Governor Hub.

Mrs Bullivant stated that the information was the same that Mrs Roper reported at the previous meeting and what they are working towards which have just been mentioned and interventions and actions they are putting in place. The school is as compliant as it can be. They did not have child voice; however, TCAT have not sent through the results of the many surveys that have been sent to parents. Three surveys have taken place this year with no results from those.

Mrs Roper reported that she meets with the headteacher every other week with a SEND focus, and they go through the SEND register and discuss it. This week they looked at children and whether they needed to be on the register. They discussed some children not having learning plans and learning passports. The headteacher explained that a learning passport would be for a child that has a learning loss – this is a need in the class and is the same for every lesson, for example, they may need to sit at the front to see the board more clearly.

A governor asked about a recent survey sent out by TCAT. The headteacher explained that a parent survey was sent out on 3rd March by Arbor to all parents. As part of the survey, they choose from a list which school their child attends. In a series of questions, it mentions the academy, and parents may think that means the trust rather than their school. They received an email last week from the trust with a breakdown of each school and the number of responses. Penketh South Primary had not had any responses. The headteacher informed governors that she asked for the link to be put on the newsletter with an explanation to parents about what they needed to do. Parents have had another reminder today; however, the uptake has not been good across the trust. The survey closes on Monday.

A governor mentioned that if parents do not receive feedback from a survey they will not complete another.

ACTION: **The headteacher to contact TCAT after the Easter break to ask when the results of the survey are coming out to share with parents and act on it.**

A governor reported that they were only able to choose one year group which is an issue if you have more than one child in the school. Another governor highlighted that some questions are not applicable, ie: transition, if their child is in another year group. This type of question should be directly aimed in a survey to parents whose children have just started school, and asking the question in February is not timely when their child started in September. The headteacher suggested that she could arrange a survey to reception parents in October.

ACTION: **The headteacher to feedback parents' concerns to TCAT.**

The headteacher to consider arranging a survey to reception parents in October.

The chair thanked Mrs Roper for providing the detailed SEND information and also thanked Mrs Bullivant for her link governor report.

9 Policies

The headteacher informed governors that these are formalised policies from TCAT.

- **Attendance Policy (TCAT policy)**
A meeting is being held with the attendance lead at Bridgewater High School on Monday to look at their attendance procedures. A new member of the office staff is starting, and they did not want the new procedures to come until then to ensure they have the capacity. There are some parts of the policy that they do not do, and they will check with the attendance lead how to put those procedures in place. They send letters to parents for those under 90% attendance and TCAT have asked that they also send letters for those children between 90% and 95%; they do not have the capacity to do that at the moment until a new process is put in place.

A governor asked if the letters could be generated automatically. The headteacher explained that TCAT have templates and procedures in place – they need to mail merge the letters. They use Arbor and the information goes to the LA and the DfE – they receive live information about attendance. They also use the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) and put their assessments into Insight. All of these give different ways to look at the information.

The headteacher added that she also meets with the attendance lead for the LA each half term and they send out Notice to Improve letters.

- **Suspensions & Permanent Exclusion Policy (TCAT policy)**
Some schools are doing suspensions at school rather than at home so that learning is still going on. This is not something they do with primary children as it may be more traumatic.

A governor asked about the Attendance Policy which has procedures that they are not currently doing as a school – therefore are they adopting the policy. The headteacher explained that it is a set TCAT policy. It can be amended; however, the headteacher suggested that they leave the policy as it is until they work through it at the meeting with TCAT so that it is there for reference. The policy can then be brought back for further approval if required.

A governor asked if suspensions are dealt with by TCAT. The headteacher explained that they are dealt with by her, but they go to TCAT and the LA to monitor. Where there has been five days of suspension it goes to the LA.

AGREED: Governors agreed to adopt the Suspensions & Permanent Exclusion Policy.

- Looked After Children's Policy
This is for information and is a set policy.

AGREED: Governors agreed to adopt the Looked After Children's Policy.

- Intimate Care and Close Contact Policy
The headteacher reported that the policy is not yet finished and will come back to governors at a later date. Some of the practices in school have changed – parents have agreed to nappies being changed; therefore, the policy needs to be more explicit.

10 Finance

- End of year accounts
- Monthly management accounts

The headteacher reported that Laura Atherton (budget officer) is unable to attend the meeting and has sent her apologies.

Revised Budget 2024-25

The headteacher reported that a new finance officer (FEO) has been appointed by the Trust; he does not have an educational background but has worked at Manchester Airport for 20 years. He has already met with all the finance cluster managers. The last budget they received was up to December 2024 and they have been advised that they will receive the end of February 2025 this week. It is difficult to know what they can spend and what budget is remaining and are having to ask TCAT if they have got the funds before they spend it. The new finance officer has said that the information will be live in the near future, and they will be able to see where they are up to, ie: to be able to authorise purchase orders online, etc.

The headteacher read Ms Atherton's script to governors:
The end of year 2023/24 surplus was £26,000 and this increased to £87,000. This was used for the revised budget for 2024/25.

National insurance increased to 15% and the earning threshold lowered which brought an £11,000 increase cost to the school. They expected the government to fully fund; however, they only included 80%. This resulted in a £500 pro rata cost to the school.

SEND income has increased by £12,800 for additional EHCP funding received in December 2024 and is based on the LA funding pack for 2025/26.

The nursery allocation has been changed to reflect the take up for funded paid places.

They have included the income for Mrs Roper in her lead practitioner role of £2,100.

They are also in receipt of sickness absence insurance of £4,000 relating to last year's insurance cover. A member of the teaching staff went on long term sickness absence at the beginning of the spring term, and they have now just received that.

A governor asked if they have looked at the cost for sickness absence insurance and if they are receiving value for money for that, ie: is it worthwhile. The headteacher informed governors that they have signed up for it again today. Insurance premiums rise if a member of staff is off sick; however, they feel that they need to have something in place.

Expenditure: The teaching staff budget has reduced.

Educational support staff: There has been an increase in TA hours to support the ratios in the nursery.

Premises staff: A new structure is in place from March 2025 which includes a new starter and with adjusted hours for the site manager.

Support staff: They have factored in 3.5% for the staff pay award.

Overall, they have saved £5,900 across the whole staffing budget.

Curriculum: The budget remains the same.

Civica agreed to write some reports so that they can still report by cost centre instead of detail code. This will not impact the level of details that the DfE receives as the detail code reports will be submitted to them. If governors wish to see further details around the spending in each budget line it can be shared on request.

They have a revised surplus position of £46,700 which is 3% of income.

Catering: The amounts percentage incurred for the number of training days and stock has been adjusted. There was a £1,200 surplus by the end of January. A governor commented that pupil sales average per day of those buying meals has increased and the cost of buying has reduced. It could be that the demand goes up in winter for a hot meals.

A governor asked from a school's perspective if they feel they are in a better position with the budget. The headteacher explained that they feel frustrated as they do not know where they are up to as they have not seen the budget since December.

For the iPad spending for another class, they will fund half via the PTFA and the other half from other funding. When they know what needs to be spent for digital signage they will feel in a better position. Two experienced teachers have left, and they have rearranged the structure in the office so it is all affordable. Moving forward they will consider how they can gain more money, ie: from link club funding as this could be taken in-house. They do not make use of the field, and this could be hired out more. Mr Sinnott has confirmed that the field is solely theirs – they allow next door to use the field and need to consider if there should be any charges.

A governor asked who pays for the maintenance of the field. The headteacher confirmed that they pay for it to be cut. **A governor asked** if the children from the other school are using the field do they have that risk. The headteacher acknowledged that it is a concern, and St Vincent's is also looking to be a designated provision - children could be at risk of running off and running to Penketh South. A governor mentioned that there is no fence to stop them getting into the brook.

A governor asked if Penketh South ever uses the whole of the field. Mrs Roper explained that they have never known that the field belonged to them. A governor added that when they moved to TCAT it was found that the brook was owned by the LA. The chair informed governors that they will have that detail in the land transfer which TCAT could check. They can carry out an assessment about legal obligation and St Vincent's using the field.

ACTION: **The headteacher to look into the ownership of the school field and if risk assessments need to be carried out and legal obligation.**

11 Report bad debts (standard agenda item)

There are currently no bad debts. Mrs Roper informed governors that they had to warn some nursery parents that they would stop the additional hours if they do not pay, and they did that. Since then, they review this monthly and do not let the debts accumulate as they did previously. They now have a Bad Debt Policy in place.

ACTION: **Remove this as a standard agenda item.**

12 Health and Safety (including link governor feedback)

- Actions from Health & Safety Compliance
- Report from Health & Safety Governor – (Mr Smith)

Mr Smith reported that he has filled out the pro forma form from his visit and has not yet uploaded this to Governor Hub. He attended the daily walk with the site manager – his routine is clear and is linked to some policies and he has good appreciation of the priorities of the school versus the 'nice to have', ie: the flooring.

They walked around the pirate ship and equipment and discussed the drainage problems – he understands his role and is using iAM Compliant which helps him to understand if he is fixing something or a third party is involved.

Mr Smith reported that the site manager mentioned the locking and opening of the school which he is well aware of – if a new person is starting it is about ensuring that this is done correctly and they discussed if a process is needed for a new person coming in, ie: a checklist.

ACTION: The headteacher to ask the site manager to create a check list for the new starter.

Mr Smith explained that they discussed the field and the problems with the fence and trees. The site manager stated that the field is not the issue, and it relates to the school next door – he tends to work around this with his equivalent in post there.

Mr Smith informed governors that there was no mention on the walk round about any guidance from TCAT about the site manager's role – does he know what is expected of him. The headteacher explained that he attends hub meetings every half term and she is able to access what is discussed and see the Power Point from the meeting.

The headteacher added that she meets with the site manager most weeks and they know what is coming up, ie: the bin situation is changing at the end of the month (they are required to have a different bin for food waste). Communication needs improving and it is about ensuring that he comes to her with any issue. The new caretaker comes with a wealth of experience and certificates and has had a lot of training and various roles.

Mr Smith mentioned that there was an issue a few years ago with COSHH and he said that everything was in place for that. He asked if there was anything else he needed in order to do his job and he said he needed a leaf blower.

The headteacher informed governors that they now have bins for recycling, general waste and food waste. They are paying £1 per week extra as they are using a different company to empty those bins – however, as part of that cost they will sanitise and clean the bins each week.

ACTION: Mr Smith to send his link governor report to the headteacher.

13 Buildings and Premises

- Car park issues:
The headteacher reported that the car parking issues remain ongoing. They have spoken to the local PCSOs who are understaffed and have advised they will come to school when they can.

They have explained that the issue is more to do with the nearby roads around the school rather than their private land.

They will be having an EV charger installed as the trust received a grant for this. They need to put extra lines on the surface in the car park to mark this off.

The headteacher explained that she has asked for edging and wording to make it clear that it is their car park. The headteacher added that she would like to install a mini zebra crossing as the children come past the school and cars are going down the side of the building to access the school next door. This would serve as a visible reminder. The headteacher explained that it is for road safety and reminding the drivers. They are also considering installing signage in the shape of a child saying not to park which they could place in different areas of the car park. A governor added that they need to ensure that they are proactive in addressing the issue with parents as well.

The headteacher explained that there is also a scheme called Safe Street which involves closing a road at certain times which the school would have to man. A governor mentioned that an issue with that is if an ambulance needed to access the care home. The road provides access to two schools, a care home and houses.

- Drainage update:
Mr Sinnott has been to school and looked around and it is the farm that is causing the problem.
They had a bad flood over the Christmas period which caused the playground to be flooded. They are limited to what can be done. A governor mentioned that the brook is blocked the entire way down.

14 Safeguarding and welfare (including link governor feedback)

- Safeguarding visit (C Williams) – 24.2.25
Mrs Williams informed governors that the visit was arranged to look at the SCR. There have been huge improvements and greater consistency in terms of how it is done with TCAT as well. The governing body is carrying out its statutory responsibility in relation to the SCR and it is also regularly checked by TCAT.
- Safeguarding Review Report
The headteacher informed governors that it was an intense visit with three representatives. The recommendations are something that the school is already working on:
 1. Ensure there is a clear paper trail from referral to impact when pupils receive short term and targeted interventions
The headteacher explained that sometimes this is an ongoing matter which does not always involve data.

2. Keep under review the time given to staff to deliver supportive interventions or consider where capacity could be increased from the wider non-teaching team

The first recommendation links into support staff and considering capacity.

3. Consider advising parents, pupils, and staff again what SENSO is and what its purpose is

The headteacher explained that with regards to the SENSO monitoring and filtering – each Monday she receives a report to say if there is a breach, ie: typing in a word that is inappropriate (that word might be part of another word). If it is a child it tends to be a spelling mistake. It is about having the systems in place.

4. Provide time for the PSHE and computing lead to meet so that they have clarity on what is covered by each reading online safety

The PHSE and computing lead clarify online safety and ensure what is being taught and there is not too much overlap. The headteacher informed governors that she also added the online safety part onto the website with links and Operation Compass.

The chair highlighted that there are a lot of positives from the report including their strengths as a governing body. It is good to have a TCAT safeguarding review yearly as well as the LA's external review. The school has consistently come out strong which is to be noted. They are always looking for continuous improvement. There were no substantial recommendations, just minor adjustments.

A benefit of the TCAT reviews is this is having the opportunity to go to other schools and take part in their reviews. Mrs Roper informed governors that she had the opportunity to go to Dallam Primary School a week later.

15 Behaviour and Attendance (including link governor feedback)

- Fischer Family Trust (FFT) attendance document:

The headteacher informed governors that the information has been downloaded from the FFT which provides an overview of attendance. This is currently at 95.6% and is broken down into year groups. Where a red spot is shown, ie: for Year 6 – this equates to one child who is currently working at home with a tutor. They complete attendance for that child as a 'C' code, when working with the tutor it is a 'B' code. Reception had an outbreak of chicken pox. A great deal of information is included in the report.

A governor asked if parents still say that their child is not at the compulsory school age. The headteacher explained that they treat them in the same way as the other children. Mrs Roper added that it happened in the past, but not so much now. A governor commented that parents can now defer their child if they feel they are not ready for school.

The headteacher informed governors that they are generally above the national average for attendance and some weeks they have done really well.

They are considering promoting attendance via a chalk board which would be visible as the children are very competitive. A governor suggested they could upload the information to the digital board to remind parents as well.

A governor commented that it is good that the rewards are done for each class with prizes for the class.

The headteacher informed governors that they are aware that Year 6 has not had prizes often and they will consider how they can do this taking into account that the figures are being affected by one child.

16 Governor actions

The headteacher reported that Mr Smith has been into school to carry out a health and safety walk round. Ms Bonner is coming into school on Friday to look at maths and Mrs Bullivant has been into school for a SEND link governor visit. Any remaining link governors visits should take place before the end of the summer term. They will look at arranging dates in advance for the next academic year for link governor visits for governors to work towards.

ACTION: Dates to be arranged in advance for the next academic year for link governor visits.

17 Governor training

The chair informed governors that she attended the seminar at Priestley College and uploads any training she attends to Governor Hub.

The headteacher suggested that governors access the National College for training opportunities and search under 'Governance'. The chair added that there is also training available for link governor roles.

Ms Bonner confirmed that she has completed all the training required of her from TCAT.

ACTION: Ms Bonner to advise the headteacher if she is not set up on the National College or is not able to access it.

18 Any other business

There were no other items.

19 Future meeting dates (Tuesdays at 5.00pm)

Summer (1): 20 May 2025 (finance focus)
Mrs Williams and Mrs Roper gave their apologies. It was confirmed that Mr Hennessey will chair the meeting)

Summer (2): 15 July 2025 (curriculum focus)

PART ONE OF THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.55pm

SIGNED
Chairperson

DATE

