

**Didsbury CE Primary School
Local Governing Board Meeting
27th January 2026, 6pm
Minutes**

Present:

Emma Chamberlain	Head of School
Victoria Rippon	Executive Headteacher
Claire Christopholus	Trust Appointed Governor (Vice Chair)
Rev Mark Hewerdine	Trust Appointed Governor
Lee Jenkins	Parent Governor
Paul Good	Trust Appointed Governor (Chair of Board of Trustees)
Dario tom Dieck	Parent Governor
Sam Morgan	Staff Governor

Apologies:

Becky Silver	Trust Appointed Governor (Chair)
Alisan Hogg	Trust Appointed Governor

In attendance:

Pam Dunham	Governor Support Officer
Kath Breslin Burn	Governor Support Officer (shadowing minutes)

*Any text in **red italics** represents Governor question (Q); challenge (C); Trustee and/or clerk support (S).
Black bold upright represents decisions and actions.*

The meeting convened at 18:04.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Governors were welcomed to the meeting by the Vice Chair.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ms B Silver and Ms A Hogg.

The meeting was quorate, with eight Governors in attendance.

In the absence of Ms B Silver, Ms C Christopholus assumed the position of Chair.

2. DECLARATION OF A.O.B.

Governors had been invited to declare any items for any other business.

There were no items of AOB declared.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

a) Declaration of Business Interests

Governors were asked to declare any business, financial or personal interests in any agenda items. There were no declarations raised.

Governors were reminded that they should declare any interest which arose during the meeting.

b) Business Interest Form

Governors were asked to complete and sign the form on GovernorHub.

c) DBS Checks and Section 128 Checks

The Head of School confirmed that DBS checks were in place for all governors and that Section 128 checks had been carried out.

Rev Hewerdine reported that he was not completely sure if his were up to date. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the office staff had verified that checks were in place for all governors.

4. CHAIR'S ACTION

There had been no Chair's action taken since the previous meeting.

5. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2025, copies circulated previously, be approved, signed by the Chair and authorised for publication.

The Chair was reminded that meetings would normally open with a prayer. Rev Hewerdine duly led Governors in prayer.

18:09 Ms Morgan left the meeting to collect Dr t Dieck.

Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

ACTION POINT	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION FOR	UPDATE
1	Carried over: GSO would follow up with any governors who have not added their DBS check information on GovernorHub.	GSO	Completed
2	The lockdown procedures would be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Executive Headteacher would seek advice from Jeanne Fairbrother.	Head of School/Executive Headteacher	Completed
3	The Chair agreed to discuss school links with parish members.	Chair	Completed
4	The Governor Support Officer agreed to contact Mr. D. Tom Dieck, as he had failed to attend a couple	GSO	Completed

	of recent meetings and had not sent apologies.		
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18:12 Ms Morgan returned to the meeting with Dr t Dieck.

5	Governor Visits form to be added to the GovernorHub folder.	GSO	Completed
6	The Chair requested that governor's appreciation be passed on to the office team for their hard work in processing new joins.	Head of School	Completed
7	The Chair requested that the office team contact the local church to clarify the process and address any miscommunication regarding the school admission process.	Head of School	Completed
8	The GSO agreed to share responses that she had received last year, and these would be collated with any outstanding skills audits.	GSO	Completed

6. POLICY/RA REVIEW

▪ Educational Visit Coordination Policy

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that a few updates had been made to the previous policy. The updated version had been uploaded to GovernorHub earlier today. The Executive Headteacher apologised for the delay in circulating the policy to Governors and acknowledged that not all governors would have had chance to read it before the meeting.

ACTION 1: Carry approval of the policy over to next meeting.

Q: Is the previous version available anywhere? The Executive Headteacher advised that it may be on GovernorHub and undertook to locate it and advise governors of its location.

▪ Fire Risk Assessment

The Executive Headteacher reported that the Fire Risk Assessment had been completed and that the report had been uploaded to GovernorHub in advance of the meeting. The Executive Headteacher advised governors that the main issue highlighted was fire doors not being compliant with current standards. School had applied for funding from the Trust to rectify the issue and was awaiting a decision. The school may have to fund the improvements themselves if central funding was not approved.

Q: Can anything be done to mitigate the risks in the meantime? The Executive Headteacher advised governors that small changes could be made: making sure all fire extinguishers were compliant and improving signage for escape routes.

Q: How often are fire alarms tested? Governors were advised that weekly checks of the fire alarm took place, with full school fire drills being carried out termly.

Q: The Chair reported that she had had a meeting with the Chair of the board to discuss the agenda. Ms Silver was concerned about the implications of not being able to finance the required works – where does the liability fall in the event of something going wrong? Governors were advised that the Trust carries the overall responsibility.

The Executive Headteacher advised governors that the risk with the fire doors was centred on their ability to stop a fire spreading once the building had been evacuated. The last fire drill evacuation was completed in under 4 minutes and an actions list was created after every drill to find areas for improvement. Staff confirmed that the biggest problem was the limited outside space on site. Governors discussed whether or not a new muster point should be considered, potentially in Didsbury Park.

Q: What happens if the Trust turns down the application for funds? Mr Good advised that a reapplication should be made.

It was highlighted that the Pupil Premium Strategy was included in the policies for review. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that case sampling on pupils within this group, was conducted in line with the policy. With no questions from the Governors, the Pupil Premium Strategy was duly **APPROVED**.

7. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN & SELF-EVALUATION

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the School Development Plan (SDP) had been updated with information from the Autumn term and uploaded to GovernorHub in advance of the meeting.

The Executive Headteacher and Head of School updated governors on the increased focus on developing writing in pupils, particularly those in EYFS and KS1 as a result of increased Ofsted emphasis on this age group. The Executive Headteacher reported that good progress was being made in this area.

The Executive Headteacher and Head of School confirmed that multiple areas of the school curriculum were being updated, including Science, Music and Design Technology (DT). The Head of School confirmed that the new Science curriculum had been rolled out already. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the new music curriculum was being trialled in conjunction with WDCE. The DT Subject Lead (SL), confirmed that the old curriculum had been refined for each year group and that she was hoping the impact would be felt after the February half-term.

The Executive Headteacher advised governors that a quality assurance visit to EYFS had taken place and that the report had been uploaded to GovernorHub. The Executive Headteacher further advised that Fiona Robinson, the quality assurer, had provided great feedback, particularly on the indoor provision. The QA report further recommended that other schools visit DCE to observe their EYFS provision due to its quality.

The Executive Headteacher updated Governors on the work being completed across the Trust on assessment and attainment so that the Trust can monitor this more effectively across all schools. The Executive Headteacher advised that there was a particular focus on SEND pupils with a view to supporting their progress.

Q: There are lots of reports with projected data – is this the same information as goes in the CEO's report? Yes, this was to ensure all data can be accurately assessed.

Q: Is there a data overload for staff? The staff present reported that it does not feel overwhelming and that there was neither a duplication of data nor a lack of time to use the diagnostic tools for data entry.

Governors were given an update on behaviour and attendance. The Executive Headteacher advised governors that pupil behaviour received positive comments from every visitor.

The Executive Headteacher advised that there had been some difficulties with attendance data, due to the challenges associated with welcoming International New Arrivals to the school. The Executive Headteacher reported that these challenges make it appear that persistent absence was higher than in reality.

Q: Will Ofsted look at this data? Yes, although Ofsted would also speak to the SLT to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for persistent absence and how the school was working to manage it. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the school conducts a weekly review of persistent absence to monitor actions being taken and progress with affected pupils. Governors were advised that persistent absence has not historically been treated as a negative, provided the explanations for it were strong.

S: The GSO advised that another school in a similar position were producing two sets of data, one presenting the whole picture and one which illustrates how that school are managing situations it is within their power to influence.

Q: Are we in the Ofsted window? Are we on track to do well? The school would be in the Ofsted inspection timescale from November. The Executive Headteacher advised governors that the school was not in a position to judge the expected inspection outcome yet as so few schools have been inspected under the new framework. The Executive Headteacher reported that she was working with another school within the Trust on Ofsted readiness and that this would be of benefit to DCE. Governors were informed that those schools that have been inspected had reported a greater focus on Ofsted presence in classrooms and engaging with both pupils and staff. The Executive Headteacher reported that preparation for this was being completed with pupils on a very informal basis.

Governors discussed the Governor Visit Schedule for the remainder of the academic year. It was confirmed that Ms Hogg had completed a visit in the Autumn term, Mr Jenkins was scheduled for the Spring term and Ms Christopholus would attend in the summer term, date tbc.

Q: Do the focus areas of the Visits still align with Ofsted requirements? It was confirmed that they did.

Q: Do we know when a SIAMS inspection is likely to occur? The Executive Headteacher advised that it was likely to be in the academic year 2026/27.

8. HEAD OF SCHOOL'S REPORT

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the report had been uploaded to GovernorHub in advance of the meeting. Challenges for the school centre on budget constraints and pupil mobility.

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that current attendance was currently at 95.7%, against a target of 97.5%. Overall attendance often reduces in the Autumn term as a result of illness but was likely to increase by the Summer.

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that Kerry Dawson had visited the school to complete a Safeguarding Audit and advised governors that the final report had not yet been issued. An actions list had been generated and that implementation was already underway.

Q: Is there a reason behind the increase in safeguarding incidents? There has not been a true increase - a change in the way incidents, actions and follow-ups were logged makes it look like more separate incidents were occurring when in reality they were linked.

Q: Is the Head of School's report published on the school's website? No, it only appears on GovernorHub.

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the Pupil Premium Strategy and school budget had been uploaded to GovernorHub in advance of the meeting. The Executive Headteacher would be meeting with the Trust's CFO the following week and invited Governors to send through questions to raise with the CFO.

Q: What is the long-term plan for the budget? The Executive Headteacher advised that a plan was under development, with conversations happening at all levels since the Autumn term. The budget report was based on previous, lower pupil numbers on roll than currently and that this would aid future funding.

Q: Will this make a meaningful difference to the deficit? The Executive Headteacher confirmed that it would. Nursery and reception had been full since she joined the school and that the key issue for pupil numbers was those who leave for the private sector after KS1.

Q: Can anything be done to mitigate the budgetary effects of a low number of PP pupils on roll? Mr Good advised that this was unlikely, unless central government funding per pupil increased. The Executive Headteacher advised that the school was currently operating at the maximum staff: pupil ratio and that increasing pupil numbers would mean recruiting more staff. The school was also subject to physical space constraints so would be unlikely to be able to accommodate extra pupils.

Q: What is accounted for under 'Trading Income' in the report? Mainly before/after-school provision.

A discussion took place around the operational challenges of trying to reduce the financial losses of the Kids Club.

Q: Have parents withdrawn children because of the increase in price? Governors were advised that it was more the case that parents were using the service less, rather than withdrawing children completely.

Governors discussed whether the current levels of flexibility in booking a space at the Kids Club might make it more likely that parents view the provision as an option of last resort.

Q: Is there data available on the percentages of parents who block-book and those who book ad hoc? The Executive Headteacher undertook to contact the operator of the Kids Club to find out.

S: The GSO further advised investigating what other options were available locally.

Q: Do we get any government funding for the Breakfast Club? Governors were advised that this was still a pilot scheme and so nothing was confirmed for the future yet.

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the CEO Report had been uploaded to GovernorHub.

Governors were also advised that a Health and Safety Audit was due to take place on Thursday 29th January. The Executive Headteacher confirmed she would be reviewing the report with the CEO in advance of the half-term break.

The Executive Headteacher presented the proposed improvements to the EYFS outdoor provision to governors. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that they had received a quotation for the works from one company and were awaiting others. Governors were advised that this first quotation had been uploaded to GovernorHub. Governors agreed that this was a worthwhile project, in the light of greater Ofsted focus on EYFS provision and the ageing status of the current outdoor area.

A discussion took place around how the project might be funded and the available options for covering any shortfall. Rev Hewerdine undertook to contact a colleague in the Diocese to investigate if any funding could be made available there.

Q: How do we justify spending money on a project such as this rather than actioning things identified as a risk in the Fire Risk Assessment? Governors were advised that working on the action list from the Fire Risk Assessment comes from a central fund managed by the Trust. The EYFS project would fall under the curriculum budget.

Q: Is there anything Governors can do to help drive the project forwards? Not currently, however it was felt that there may be benefit in forming a committee to discuss the best way forward once all quotations have been received.

9. STAFFING & APPOINTMENTS

Governors were advised that no recruitment was currently taking place but that they were currently looking to fill a vacancy arising after Easter from within the Trust.

Q: How much time is the Executive Headteacher currently spending at DCE? The Executive Headteacher confirmed that she spends 2-3 days per week at DCE and ensures that she is present for all important visits.

Q: How sustainable is the school, and wider Trust, long-term? Mr Good advised that the DfE would still like to see academy trusts grow but that it was impossible to predict the future direction of travel.

Q: Can the school anticipate that the Trust will bridge any gaps in the school's budget? Mr Good advised the Board that the Trust would monitor all school finances centrally so that all schools within the Trust can benefit equally from funding. Mr Good further advised that the Trust CFO was looking in-depth at the financial picture across the whole Trust.

19:59 Rev Hewerdine advised governors that he needed to leave the meeting due to a prior commitment and was escorted out by Ms Morgan.

10. TRUST ENGAGEMENT & CEO REPORT

Governors confirmed that the CEO's Report had been received and read. The Head of School advised that it had been positively received in school.

11. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Governors noted that Stakeholder Engagement had been covered above under multiple agenda items.

12. FINANCE

Governors noted that finance had been covered above as part of multiple agenda items.

The Executive Headteacher advised governors that the Sports Premium details and PE spending tracker had been uploaded to the Finance folder on GovernorHub.

20:00 Ms Morgan rejoined the meeting.

13. COMPLIANCE & SAFEGUARDING

The Executive Headteacher confirmed that the Health and Safety Audit was due to take place on 29th January 2026, and that the report would be uploaded to GovernorHub for Governors to review once received.

ACTION 2: Add H&S Audit Report to GovernorHub once received.

14. LGB MATTERS

The Chair highlighted that the Governor Development Plan had been updated. Governors were advised that they should review their acceptance of the Code of Conduct on an annual basis. The Chair requested that anyone who was unsure of how to do this contact her for advice.

Q: Have enough Governors completed the Safer Recruitment training? The Chair and Mr Good confirmed that they had both undertaken the training. Governors were advised that this was

probably sufficient since they would not normally be involved in recruitment, though anyone interested was welcome to complete the training.

The Chair sought clarification on whether staff take part in any kind of feedback exercise. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that a questionnaire was sent out to staff on an annual basis, usually at the start of the summer term.

The Chair sought confirmation of when senior leaders would normally present to Governors. It was confirmed that this would normally happen in the summer term.

It was felt that the presentations should cover the focus areas within the SDP: EYFS, Science, Music, DT and Writing. It was also agreed that Mathematics should be included, as it had been a focus area the previous year and lots of progress had been made. It was agreed that summary reports should be uploaded to GovernorHub in advance of the meeting.

ACTION 3: Add SL curriculum updates to Agenda for next meeting.

A discussion took place on the information received by governors in order to discharge their duties. It was confirmed that the Head of School's report would normally contain relevant information on staff appraisal (in line with protecting staff identity) and staff CPD activities. It was further confirmed that benchmarking data would normally appear in the Finance report.

Governors were advised that committees were disbanded upon joining the Trust.

ACTION 4: Committees to be removed from GovernorHub.

The Chair queried whether staff received Prevent training. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that this was always updated during annual safeguarding training.

Q: Do Governors need to complete Prevent training? Governors were advised that there were online courses available if they were interested.

S: The GSO advised that the DfE run webinars on the topic and undertook to send a link to the relevant page.

The Chair advised that the recent skills audit had highlighted where gaps were, with a background in finance being most needed and expertise in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Governors were advised that it was not an imminent problem as there were currently no vacancies on the Board. Governors were reminded that they could find the relevant documents on GovernorHub.

Governors were reminded about the importance of keeping their own training up to date. The Chair advised that the National Governance Association (NGA) recommend a specific training focus every term and recommended that governors look to update themselves on Safeguarding, the Ofsted inspection framework and EDI based on the results of the skills audit. Governors were further reminded to add records to their profile on GovernorHub of any training completed externally. The proposed governor training plan was **AGREED**.

S: The GSO advised that Governors may also want to look for training on Attendance, given the focus on this in the Ofsted inspection framework.

The Chair advised governors that she had uploaded a draft induction plan for new governors, based on NGA guidance. Governors agreed this was a useful thing to have and commended the Chair for her work on the issue. Implementation of the induction plan was **AGREED** by governors.

S: The GSO advised that Governors also had access to training through SLA Online and the terms of their SLA with Stockport Council.

The Chair highlighted Diocese training on finance to governors and advised that she would add future dates to GovernorHub. Mr Good advised governors that this may be more relevant to Community schools than those within a Trust.

The Chair confirmed that she and Dr T Dieck had attended a Trust meeting with the CEO about the changes to the Ofsted inspection framework. The Chair advised that the meeting materials had been uploaded to GovernorHub for other governors to read through.

15. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE UPDATE SPRING 2026 – MANCHESTER & STOCKPORT

No updates were provided.

16. SCHOOL NEWSLETTER SPRING 2026 – MANCHESTER DIOCESE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Head of School and Executive Headteacher confirmed that they had seen the newsletter and informed Governors that DCE were listed as one of the top performing schools.

17. DATES

It was **CONFIRMED** that the next meeting would be held in school on Tuesday 23rd June 2026, at 6pm.

18. A.O.B.

Dr t Dieck requested that the record of attendance for the October LGB meeting be amended to reflect his attendance at the meeting.

With no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 20:26 with a prayer for the school, staff and wider community

Signed..... Date.....

Ms C Christopholus (Vice Chair)

DIDSBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
SPRING TERM 2026 LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING ACTION POINTS

ACTION POINT	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION FOR	DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
1	Include approval of EVC Policy on Agenda for next meeting	GSO	June 2026
2	Upload H&S Audit Report to GovernorHub when received	Executive Headteacher/Head of School	Post-meeting
3	Include SL curriculum updates on Agenda for next meeting	GSO	Post-meeting
4	Remove Committee visibility on GovernorHub	GSO	Post-meeting