



## Meeting of Castle Primary School Local Governing Board (LGB)

**Date: Thursday 09<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at Castle Primary School**

Governors in attendance:	Tom Pear (TP)	Chair of Castle Primary School
	Alex Canning (AC)	Chair of Dove Bank Primary School
	Tom Bourne (TB)	
	Lucy Diggins (LD)	
	Carly Dutton (CD)	
	Jade Mullock (JM)	
	Gemma Plant (GP)	
	Anthony Roche (AR)	
	Jess Trevers (JT)	

Others in attendance:	Sally Dakin (SD)	Headteacher
	Allan Howells (AH)	Clerk

### Part One Minutes – Non-Confidential Business

The meeting commenced at 4:32pm.

ITEM NO.		ACTION
	<b>GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION</b>	
1.	<p><b>Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations</b></p> <p>The meeting was opened by the Chair (TP), who welcomed all attendees including the new governors. Quoracy was confirmed. No additional declarations of interest were made.</p> <p>TP was confirmed as Chair JT was confirmed as Vice Chair</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The minutes from the previous Local Governing Board meeting held on 10th July 2025 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings. Governors approved the minutes.</p> <p>The joint action log from the previous meeting was also reviewed. Progress was noted with no outstanding actions required to be carried forward.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Membership update</b></p> <p>There were no vacancies reported.</p> <p>New appointments confirmed:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Jade Mullock (04.07.25 – 31.08.29) Lucy Diggins (04.07.25 – 31.08.29) Carly Dutton (04.07.25 – 31.08.29)</p> <p>No terms of office due to expire before the next meeting.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Declarations and Confirmations</b></p> <p>All Governors confirmed that their annual declarations and confirmations. The clerk agreed to check update GovernorHub accordingly to ensure that GovernorHub was accurate.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Confirmation of Governor Link Roles</b></p> <p>There was a discussion on strategic verses operational role of link governors. The Committee also noted the value of having a buddying system for new governors. The following link roles were agreed</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">EYFS: GP Safeguarding: JT</p>	



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	<p>School Improvement Priorities:            Leadership &amp; Management- TP and AC            Personal Development – AR            Curriculum: CD and JM            SEND: AC            Sustainability: TB</p> <p>Governors noted that at the July meeting a two-week window for link governor visits would be arranged for the 2025–26 academic year.</p>	
	<p><b>Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities</b></p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>a) <u>Summary of Progress - Castle Primary School:</u>            Significant work was undertaken to redesign the curriculum to suit mixed-age year groups. The previous model of alternating Yr3 and Yr4 content was found to be ineffective for knowledge retention and sequencing.            Staff had collaborated across both schools to resequencing curriculum objectives, ensuring that learning builds logically across subjects, where both Yr3 and Yr4 objectives may be taught together. Science had been completed and PSHE was planned for the next half term. A spotlighting model was introduced, focusing on one subject per half term to deepen teaching quality. This included:            Clear expectations set during staff meetings.            Book scrutiny aligned with the spotlighted subject.            Sharing of best practices across staff.</p> <p>A new writing scheme, <i>Pathways to Write</i>, was adopted. Governors <b>challenged</b> how staff had found the implementation. Initial staff concerns about rigidity were addressed, with emphasis on flexibility and professional judgment.            Behaviour improvements were noted across the school, with children demonstrating increased politeness and positive routines, especially at lunchtime. Governors also <b>reported</b> this was visible during visits to the school.            The Head <b>confirmed</b> that SEND processes were strengthened, with clearer staff responsibilities and improved liaison with professionals.            Governors <b>asked</b> about the progress made against Vision and Values work. The Head confirmed that this was delayed but scheduled to resume at the end of the current half term and during the upcoming INSET day.</p> <p>b) Approval of Priorities for 2025–26-            Governors <b>reviewed</b> and <b>approved</b> the SIP priorities for the current academic year which were included in the HT report and meeting papers. It was noted that these had been modelled against and aligned to the previous Ofsted framework. It was <b>noted</b> that the key priorities would include focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding the redesigned curriculum and spotlight model.</li> <li>• Continuing development of writing, behaviour, and SEND provision.</li> <li>• Enhancing staff collaboration and professional development.</li> <li>• Strengthening community engagement and pupil enrichment.</li> <li>• Improving consistency in attendance procedures and emotional support across both schools.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION</b></p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>KS2 SAT Results</b>            Governors <b>noted</b> that this was discussed in detail at the previous meeting held in July 2025. The current meeting papers included a detailed data analysis of pupil performance and attainment.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Admission and Pupil Numbers</b>            The Headteacher’s report provided a detailed breakdown, by year group, of pupil numbers. Governors <b>noted</b> that the school is experiencing a positive trend in admissions, with several new enquiries received for Year 4.</p>	



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	<p>Projected Movement: Five pupils are expected to leave at the end of the academic year, with a projected intake of 15 new pupils. Governors <b>queried</b> what the medium-term intake target was. The head <b>confirmed</b> that the school aims to maintain a steady intake of 15 pupils per year to ensure consistency and sustainability.</p> <p>Two-Year-Old Provision: The introduction of provision for two-year-olds is expected to support more stable and predictable pupil numbers. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to level out admissions and maintain a consistent cohort size of at least 12 pupils annually.</p>	
9.	<p><b>SEND Report</b></p> <p>Governors noted that the SEND report was being compiled, with further information being included by the SENDCo. The draft report would be circulated for approval through correspondence. <b>Action HT.</b></p>	<p><b>HT / Governor s</b></p>
<b>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE</b>		
10.	<p><b>Attendance</b></p> <p>The Headteacher’s report provided a breakdown of attendance for 24-25. Attendance procedures at Castle have been reviewed and tightened. Historically, the school has not issued fines for term-time holidays, which has contributed to a higher number of absences. Governors <b>supported</b> the introduction of fines for unauthorised holidays to align with statutory guidance and improve attendance rates. Governors <b>endorsed</b> the implementation of clear attendance protocols to ensure consistency in how absences are recorded and followed up. Governors <b>challenged</b> whether the school had appropriate support and resources to make the changes. A member of staff who currently manages attendance at Dove Bank, will be released from some classroom duties to support attendance and emotional literacy across both schools.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Rewards and Behaviour</b></p> <p>The Headteacher report was <b>received</b> which included the latest data on behaviour, including suspensions and exclusions. The Headteacher confirmed that there had been no permanent exclusions this term.</p> <p>There had been no days lost due to fixed-term suspensions.</p> <p>Governors <b>queried</b> the difference between internal inclusion and fixed term suspensions, which was explained by the Headteacher. Governors requested that summary data on internal inclusions be included in report at the next meeting [<b>Action HT</b>].</p>	<p><b>HT</b></p>
12.	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>The Headteacher’s report provided the latest data on the safeguarding caseload. Governors <b>queried</b> whether there were any trends and what was the impact on workload. The Head confirmed that one case had recently transitioned from Child in Need to a different category, reflecting ongoing changes in pupil circumstances.</p> <p>Governors <b>queried</b> whether there was appropriate resources to support safeguarding workloads. Safeguarding is managed solely by the Headteacher due to a smaller caseload.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> what support is provided to those needing early help and informal support. The schools provide a range of informal support services that are not always captured in formal safeguarding data. This support includes Uniform provision, free breakfast and after-school clubs, and emotional support for families facing hardship. The Headteacher noted that these services are offered proactively to prevent escalation and support vulnerable pupils and families.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> what external support is provided. Formal referrals have been made to Gingerbread, Staffordshire’s Early Help team, for pupils requiring structured external support. The safeguarding team continues to monitor and support these cases in collaboration with external agencies.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> whether there were any patterns and trends. The Headteacher noted that while the overall numbers are relatively small, there is a clear correlation between behavioural</p>	



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	<p>challenges and safeguarding needs. Pupils who have experienced internal exclusions or suspensions are often also part of the safeguarding caseload. The safeguarding needs span across all year groups, from nursery to Yr 5, indicating a broad and inclusive approach to pupil welfare. The headteacher <b>confirmed</b> safeguarding workload is currently manageable but complex. The restructuring of roles and the addition of support staff is expected to improve capacity and responsiveness. No additional funding is available specifically for safeguarding-related support such as clubs or uniform provision. Such costs are absorbed by the school, although there is often overlap with Pupil Premium and disadvantaged pupil funding, which can indirectly support some of these initiatives.</p>	
13.	<p><b>Welfare and Wellbeing- Students</b> Governors noted that a pupil survey was planned for later in the term.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Welfare and Wellbeing- Staff</b> The Head reported that staff morale was generally positive, although this had followed a recent dip at the beginning of term. In recent months more support structures were in place and the cross working between the two schools was being received positively.</p>	
<b>LOCAL MATTERS &amp; STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT</b>		
15.	<p><b>Local Policy Approval</b> The following policies were reviewed and approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Behaviour &amp; Exclusions</li> <li>• Relationships &amp; Sex Education &amp; Health Education</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the Behaviour policy and Charging and Remission Policy would be circulated post-meeting and governors approve this via correspondence <b>[Action All]</b>. The RSE policy had received only minor updates as a more substantive update was planned when pending DfE guidance (effective Sept 2026) was published.</p>	
16.	<p><b>Governor Training Update</b> Training session on pupil performance data was planned post-half term. Prevent and safeguarding training needed to be completed every two years. Governors were reminded to log training on GovernorHub.</p>	
17.	<p><b>Governor Biographies</b> Governors were encouraged to submit biography forms for website. The clerk was asked to resend the link to the form. The option to include photographs discussed and agreed and the clerk will advise when this option will be available. <b>[Action Clerk]</b></p>	<b>Action Clerk</b>
18.	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement – Parents / Carers</b> Governors noted that the calendar of activities had been posted on Governorhub in advance of the meeting. The following further points were highlighted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A parent survey was planned.</li> <li>• PTA activities were noted (e.g., pumpkin picking, disco).</li> </ul> <p>A governor (GP) offered to provide financial education sessions to Yr 6 pupils</p> <p><b>Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community</b> Discussion on place-based education and community links. It was noted that this was a topic of the Governance conference. Governors supported the goal of becoming a centre of community achievement. One governor noted the work being done at Congelton High School where its pupils had cultivated and then share plants with its local community.</p>	
19.	<p><b>Communication – to Trust</b> Governors highlighted the following items to be communicated to the Trust:</p>	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KS2 Assessment Administration:</b> The committee confirmed that the administration of Key Stage 2 assessments was in line with guidance. Although there was a dip in results, it was acknowledged as an accurate reflection, and steps have been taken to prevent recurrence. This includes collaboration between Yr6 teachers across both schools.</li> <li>• <b>Curriculum Development and Alignment:</b> The schools are actively working on curriculum sequencing and spotlighting subject areas each half term. This approach is being used to embed teaching practices and improve subject delivery, particularly in science and PSHE.</li> <li>• <b>Writing as a Trust-Wide Priority:</b> Writing has been identified as a key area for improvement across the trust. The committee noted the adoption of the "Pathways to Write" scheme and the trust's use of the DfE writing framework to support this initiative.</li> <li>• <b>Community Engagement and Place-Based Education:</b> The committee discussed efforts to strengthen links with the local community, including joint activities between Castle and Dove Bank, PTA events, and outreach programs. This aligns with the trust's broader goal of developing place-based education.</li> <li>• <b>SEND and Admissions Challenges:</b> Dove Bank is experiencing significant pressure due to increasing numbers of pupils with high SEND needs. The committee raised concerns about the impact on existing pupils and staff capacity, especially in Yr1, and suggested this be flagged to the trust.</li> </ul>	
20.	<p><b>Communication – from Trust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors noted that Headteacher presentation to trustees in July was well received. Trustees may attend future LGB meetings to strengthen connections.</li> <li>• A communication strategy is under development to help strengthen information flow, building on the feedback offered at the summer governance conference .</li> </ul>	
21.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Governors enquired whether they could have an email address with a name extension that reflected both schools. The Head would raise this with the IT team <b>[Action SD]</b></p> <p>It was agreed that to minimise duplication that the Castle Governohub would be used as the main site for governor communications and paperwork, with appropriate weblinks to Dove Bank where appropriate <b>[Action all]</b></p> <p>The Head reported that regular school newsletters would be included on the website .</p>	<p><b>SD</b></p> <p><b>All / clerk</b></p>

The meeting closed at 5:45pm.