



**ST MICHAEL'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**MEETING OF THE CHILDRENS COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2025 AT 5.30PM ONLINE**

**MINUTES**

**Membership:**

| Position                 | Name                    | Initials | Term End Date |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------|---------------|
| Local Authority Governor | Vana Sarimpalidou       | VS       | 22/03/2029    |
| Staff Governor           | Julia Machin            | JM       | 23/02/2026    |
| Parent Governors         | Stephen Bethel – Chair  | SB       | 07/04/2027    |
| Foundation               | *Lisa Maguire           | LM       | 11/04/2027    |
|                          | *Valerie Doulton        | VD       | 02/02/2025    |
|                          | Cordelia Brown          | CB       | 07/06/2027    |
| Foundation               | *Reverend Kunle Ayodeji | KA       | Ex-Officio    |
| Executive Headteacher    | Geraldine Gallagher     | GG       | Ex-Officio    |

\*Denotes Apologies    ^ Denotes absent

**Also in Attendance:**

Sinead O'Brien, Head of School (HoS)

Rebecca Austin, Deputy Head of School (DHoS)

Jasbir Aujla, Clerk to the Governing Body, Haringey Education Partnership

**PART 1 – Public Matters**

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting which was quorate.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from LM, VD and KA.

**2. Declaration by Governors of Interest Pecuniary or Otherwise in Respect of Agenda Items**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest made..

**3. Minutes of the previous Children's Committee**

- 3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 were **agreed** as an accurate record, for the Chair to sign and for the school to retain on file.

**3.2 Matters/Actions Arising**

(5.1) Newsletter article - Sustainability/Site Presentation - Thank children that were Y4 now in Year 5 for their work and ideas for improvement and actions being taken. **Completed.**

**4. Curriculum – SEND review: Andrea Batten (AB), Inclusion Lead (SENCO)**

- 4.1 Andrea Batten (AB), Inclusion Lead took the Children's Committee through the SEND presentation as follows:

The school has 439 children on roll of which 25 receive SEND support. There are two levels of SEND support that the school really focuses on and also has some children that are monitored. The SEND levels are E and K; the school has 5 children on level E they have a whole assessment



to get an EHC plan together and school has a statutory duty to them. There are 20 children on level K, school provides some support and interventions to these children that have diagnosis such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism or just need more support. The number of children on EHC plans at the school is lower compared to the borough and national figures but has increased since last year. At present the biggest area of need at the school is children's wellbeing, emotional, social, and mental health and we look at how we can support to ensure they are in the right frame of mind and engaged.

**Q: Note you say numbers are increasing overall is it around emotional, social, and mental health, is that what driving the numbers up.**

**A:** It is mostly emotional, social, and mental health which could be to do with children's self-esteem or issues with their family circumstances. The EHT said actual diagnosis relates to autism across the borough and nationally. Governor pointed out there is an increase in autism due to raised awareness and also due to lots of children with significant speech and language delay, particularly those born during the lockdowns, which can present as difficulties with social communication and interaction. Girls have been historically under diagnosed and with increased awareness more girls are now being diagnosed with autism.

**Q: Is mental health a Covid issue** **A:** Not solely a Covid issue need to also take into consideration social media which has a massive impact on how children feel about themselves and how they look. A governor mentioned the impact of gaming and children not being aware of what is real or part of the game.

**Q: How long does it take for diagnoses as privately if can take up to 6 months.** **A:** Not aware of how long it takes privately, through the NHS last year it was 2 years and now 3 years to access services from assessment to diagnosis. School has children that have speech and language support but cannot access that support unless the child has an EHC plan and it states they need speech and language support, the goal post keeps changing. In addition, the LA have a new system for children in EYFS prior to having EHC plans. The process involves a lot of paperwork and evidence gathering and may still not get the expected outcome. The EHT said it is also about the awareness that even without diagnosis a child has particular needs. It is also about families being aware of the child's needs and diagnosis and how to support their child. It is such a turmoil for families going through the process and it is about supporting and managing expectations.

AB shared the overall attainment in tests, the children with SEND in autumn were at 38% and have made strong progress throughout the year and in the summer are at 48.6%. Children without SEND are at 85.6%. Highlighted what the school has in place to help children to engage, enjoy and make progress:

- Inclusion room
- Sensory garden
- Lego therapy
- Circle of friends: social skill groups meets twice a week and supports children with social emotional needs and make friends.
- Anchor: hope to start 2025/26. The school does have in place Zones of Regulation as a daily check point, where children use different emotions to check how they are feeling throughout the day, this is working really well and for children that have champions they are able to speak to them for support about how they are feeling and about any concerns they may have.
- Widgets: some children use widgets to engage, to get their ideas down as may not like writing so use them to help them write where their story is going and shared examples of use.
- Word shark – helps children struggling with reading, is fun and engaging and helps develop their reading.



- Doodle maths: Just recently got this to support children with gaps in maths.
- Trailblazers: is through Whittington hospital and have trainees that are assisted by their clinical psychologist who work alongside and supports them. The trainee takes the lead and talks to families around issues to do with anxiety or sleep and about lots of activities and techniques some which parent can take home and work with the children and this works well. Trailblazers is working with one family at the school.
- TRUGs: Teach reading using games is for children that are reluctant readers, has lots of games which the children enjoy playing and helps them to read.

Wellbeing space: following a successful application for funds the space has been transformed, is amazing and is being used to focus on children wellbeing and is also used for interventions.

**Q: Is Trailblazers only for SEND children.** A: No, it is for all children and families.

**Q: Why only mention only one family joined as Trailblazers is excellent have strategies and tools for all to use.** A: Not sure why some families do not join, school does provide some strategies to families to put in place and maybe they feel they do not need to access them as the issue they had has been resolved. The criteria was this is specially for children that have anxiety or had issues around sleeping so is specific.

**Q: Is there anything in place for all the children.** A: Trailblazers worked with whole class, and this is an individual offer around on anxiety and sleep. For whole school we have Zones of Regulation, which is evidence based, is rolled out across the school starting from nursery and we are starting to see the positive impact as children have a greater understanding about how they feel. When speaking to Trailblazers they too use zones of regulation. The HoS said school also has Wellbeing week and do PSHE throughout the year. The EHT pointed out it is for everybody and is about day-to-day practice to help regulate children and if a child is feeling anxious it will come out in their behaviour and staff are very skilled to deal with this. For some children they have more things going on outside of school that is causing anxiety and school has a skilled ARK therapist in school as another route for children to have therapy in confidence. The EHT updated on a number of initiatives school has in place even lining up and quietly coming into assembly helps regulate the children.

**Q: Are the techniques and programmes you presented helping children with attainment** A: Yes there is a correlation and cannot underestimate how much focussing on children wellbeing helps them.

**Q: Are children using the chrome books for talk to type.** A: Yes they do use and is really good, have some headphones which the children enjoy using.

The Chair thanked AB for her comprehensive presentation.

## 5. Staff Code of Conduct

- 5.1 The Committee received the Staff Code of Conduct Handbook. The EHT updated the Code of Conduct is a useful document for new and existing staff to refer to as sets out the expectations and the procedures if not followed and that the HoS asked DHoS as new member of staff to look through it. The DHoS said the school is constantly evolving so it was good to look through, ask questions to ensure it is accurate as can be, reflects expectations and it is useful to have information in one place. The HoS it was a healthy exercise, addressed questions asked and updated accordingly.



It was suggested to include in the Code of Conduct that wearing smart trainers is permitted as many staff do this and they are now widely considered acceptable work attire. Discussion took place about allergies and staff being mindful of wearing strong scents.

## 6. Learning Improvement Plan (LIP) 2024-25

6.1 The Committee received the school's Learning Improvement Plan 2024-25 shared in advance of the meeting. The HoS reported on the RAG rating

6.2 **Q: What was the impact of this.** A: The impact is the discussion around what high quality teaching is, what it looks like at the school and having a shared understanding of it. At staff meeting DHoS spoke about consistency of approach whatever we talk about we need to be consistent, so everybody knows what we are talking about at St Michael's. Still need to do work on inclusion, adaptation and SEN. DHoS has done an interesting piece of work with Adrian around maths on how children are progressing and how to embed maths.

6.3 The Chair commented the amber rag rating of partially met seems unfair as majority of the things listed are ongoing and asked if there are any areas of concern or not met. The HoS said there are no areas of concern or not met, she will look at changing the rating key, and items currently ongoing will be carried forward to the next academic year.

6.4 The EHT updated on a potential measure for improved staff well being. A number of schools have been providing their written reports mid-year. St Michael's currently provides written report at the end of the academic year which is an extremely busy time of the year, and it may be worthwhile considering a mid year model. This would mean having parents meeting Oct/Nov, provide written report in March/April followed by a parents meeting and an end of year parents meeting in July. A number of schools use this approach and the committee agreed to explore the advantages and disadvantages especially if this could enable better management of staff workload and wellbeing. In addition, relook at starting the parents' meetings early afternoon so they do not go on too late into the evening.

6.5 The HoS went through the **LIP 2025 26** priority areas of focus.

**Q: What you are sharing.** A: HoS works with the HoS at St James C of E and share expertise together with staff across both schools. The EHT gave examples of resource use and how she looks at what the priorities are across the two schools and who is best placed to lead on something at staffing level on things that maybe similar such as sustainability, gender gaps. planning a joint residential trip so children get to know each other.

Works on Arts Mark has started, Sophie met with an artist and will have a legacy piece of Arts Mark and school is going for accreditation next year.

**Q: Thinking of workloads, all the things ongoing, SIAMS and accreditation what are the things you and staff think are established and embedded?**

A: High quality teaching, a conversation constantly evolving, walkthroughs really well embedded staff have a good understanding of how to use them and how to support children with it and is a case of keeping on top of it and upskilling staff more and will not be bringing in anything new.

**Q: What about the accreditations.** A: A lot of this work is in place, is about pulling all the evidence together and some of the work crosses over.



Governor suggested with regards to sustainability about holding a plastic free eco-fair and maybe children doing an activity around electricity usage, by taking smart meter reading. The HoS said this can be looked at in the future and updated on the initiatives in place as part of the school's travel plan, what the SMSA does with regards to sustainability and recycling and the role of the role of the sustainability champions.

EHT updated in Early Years are planning to have a cycle track and she has said she wants the children to be able to ride a bike by the time they leave Early Years.

The school has a bid in to have an electric car charger installed.

## 6.6 LIP Priorities for 2025/26

The Committee received the school's Learning Improvement Plan priorities for 2025-26 shared in advance of the meeting. The HoS went through and updated on each of key priority areas of focus for 2025/26 relating to:

High quality teaching: Power Up your Pedagogy book she is reading, which is broken into 12 parts, is about really good teaching, supporting teaching, what makes a good teacher, a good lesson and is looking at tying in walkthroughs and consider how we monitor and maintain.

SEND: a new target partially borne out of SEN which is massively on the radar, a lot of need is coming through. The school needs to set expectations for parents as to what we can or cannot do and are considering doing SEND Road Show for parents. Also provide high quality training for staff including all support staff half-termly focussing on need at our school and look at what can be done to make our classrooms more inclusive. Look at the SEN code of practice and tightening up processes and build supportive relationships with parents

**Q: Is there a mismatch in parents' expectations and what the school can deliver.** A: There is more of a discrepancy in terms of expectations particularly where parents who are having private diagnosis. The private diagnosis could be recommending what the school could put in place, they are recommendations not a legal document like the EHCP. The expectation is we will do it, and we have the person trained to deliver but that often is not the case. A lot of parent advocacy groups are stating go back to the school. We need to ensure parents are able to come talk to us and we are supportive and listening, but we are not promising things we cannot deliver.

**Q: Does that increase pressure on staff.** A: Yes, is very time consuming but staff do feel supported. The committee discussed the need for a written "Can do" list that can be included in the school SEND offer and say private diagnosis are recommendations which we can consider but may not be able to offer.

**Q: Does school recognise private diagnosis or do they need to be NHS.** A: No, to get some diagnosis for instance for dyslexia through the NHS could take ages and explained the process.

**Q: What is new for next year.** A: In EYFS the next stage is there will be increased capacity, new staffing, new phase leader, continue to extend offer and some structural changes which will impact.

SEN and EYFS are the two big areas for next year followed by other in the LIP. SIAMs is big area requiring a lot of work too.



The need for governors to attend collective worship was highlighted which are held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays at 9am and the school has 4 different clergy, with differing approaches attending on different days with 2 attending on Thursdays.

## 7. **Conscious Inclusion action plan 2025/26**

- 7.1 The Committee received the Conscious Inclusion action plan 2025/26. The HoS updated minor changes have been made which have been highlighted in the document relating to:
- CPD looking at way of supporting teachers particularly around race and racism in terms of language, provision and how we teach this.
  - Global Majority Lead is undertaking much more of an active role, ran World Heritage Day which was great and done really well is engaging with hard-to-reach parents .

Governor suggested tying in the schools aims in with the vision, mission, and values as links to SIAMS.

The HoS said she has added respectful behaviour amongst pupils, this is a big piece of work we need to do on how children behave, treat, and speak to each other and ties in well with the Behaviour policy.

Thinking of what a child's spiritual, pastoral, academic journey at St Michaels.

The remaining items are similar to the previous year.

The Chair and Committee thanks the HoS for her updates and noting involves a lot work.

## 9. **Governor Visits**

9.1 Update on visits was received as follows.

- SB updated he went to see football and netball, saw boys and girls playing football or netball and way more inclusive than a few years ago. The governors were pleased to note this. The HOS said the girls football coaching has assisted in enthusing girls into playing football.
- VS updated she visited SATs; the children were calm and focussed and staff were supportive. She will write up a short report on her visit. VS will arrange to a science visit.

The EHT said at Strategy Day on 1<sup>st</sup> October, teachers and governors will the get an opportunity to meet with their link teachers.

## 8. **Policies**

8.1 The Committee received and considered the policies circulated in advance of the meeting as listed below.

8.1.1 **EYFS Policy - Agreed.**

8.1.2 **Pupils' Personal Electronic Devices Policy - Agreed**

Discussion took place about the Pupils' Personal Electronic Devices policy and proposal to follow the borough-wide initiative to become smartphone free in school. The EHT updated all schools in the NLC are on the same path but at different stages. The school now needs to consider how this is implemented in a positive and supportive way to bring parents on board on this journey, educate on the impact on wellbeing and risk of smartphones and social media on children, citing



some examples of phone-related incidents that are increasing. The HoS updated Years 5 and 6 pupils can bring in a brick phone if they are independent travellers, but to hand them in the morning as we move to a smartphone free school. Following discussion, the Committee supported the operation of the policy and agreed from a safeguarding perspective for the school to start sharing information about the school going smartphone-free. There was discussion around implementing the new policy in September or January. The Chair of Governors concluded that the board would support the school's decision on when best to implement the smartphone-free policy.

**9. Any Other Business**

9.1 VS said she is unable to attend the next FGB and gave her apologies.

**10. Chair's Items**

None

**11. Dates and Times of next meeting**

11.1 It was noted the next meeting of the Children's Committee will take place on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 5.30pm at the school.

There being no further Part 1 business this part of the meeting closed.

..... *S Bethel*.....25/11/25  
**Signed** **Date**  
**Chair of Committee**  
**Stephen Bethel**