MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD OF WESTMINSTER NURSERY SCHOOL (WNS), CREWE ON WEDNESDAY 4TH MARCH 2026

Governors Present:

Emma Connor	(EC)	Headteacher
Donna Reed	(DR)	Chair
Neil Smith	(NS)	
Leanne Jennings	(LJ)	
Steve Hogben	(SH)	
Jill Chadwick	(JC)	
Graham Chadwick	(GC)	
Liz Austin	(LA)	
Dewi Agostini	(DA)	

Others in attendance:

Maria Wilson — Clerk to the Governors

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting commenced at 4pm with a presentation entitled: Assessing (and supporting) pupil progress for children with complex SEND needs.

ITEM	
	Dewi Agostini was welcomed to the meeting. Introductions were made.
	PRESENTATION: ASSESSING (AND SUPPORTING) PUPIL PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX SEND NEEDS A colour coded tracking sheet from Development Matters for children from birth to 4 years showing PRIME areas only was shared with Governors. This shows members of staff which children are on track, and which are not. This exercise is completed termly. EC explained that in the first three weeks of the school year all children are baseline assessed by Key Workers to identify who might need support. Key Workers find out the children's likes and dislikes during this time. They watch their interactions- whether they can share or if they snatch. Key Workers listen to find out if the child can communicate verbally or is non-verbal. These indicators can identify children with complex needs. On arrival all children are assessed using the Wellcomm programme. EC guided Governors through a presentation [uploaded to Governor Hub after the meeting] which informed Governors of: • What does assessment look like for all children? Recap.

	On this slide EC clarified that WNS uses the Wellcomm programme for the whole age-range. • Early identification of needs – first half term in Nursery Step 1: supported by WNS's experienced members of staff. Step 2: for some children it is their first time away from home. They do not know what to expect from school. Step 3: looking for wider information is informal. Class observations take place. Health Visitors can be involved. Step 4: parental permission is required before discussion with the Cheshire East Inclusion Team. This step is taken very seriously by school and parents. ***Governor question: Is the same process used if a child joins Butterflies?*** *Response: The same process is used for Butterflies and for all in-year arrivals.* • Strategies which support children with complex needs in the classroom WNS has 6 children on roll with complex needs. Pre-verbal children are encouraged to vocalise in any way. Each child has their sensory profile completing. Examples of children with particular characteristics were shared. Use of people games enables children to be seen, to be valued and to feel safe. ***Governor question: Does this include making eye contact?*** *Response: Not always. Some children feel uncomfortable with eye contact*. Ruby Smith-Maddock completed Bucket training at Springfield Special School. The practice is having a positive impact. ***Governor question: Why is it called Bucket time?*** *Response: Whatever is in the bucket is hidden. The lid is taken off and there is an element of surprise which captures the children's attention. At the end of the time the lid is put back on the bucket to end the activity.* • Assessment tools for tiny steps WNS continues to use Development Matters to track the children. An overview of children with complex needs using Stoke Speaks Out was shared with Governors. The overview focused on what the child is consistently able to achieve. Progress was shown when a selection of workbooks was shared with Governors. Governors **applauded** the standard of work in the workbooks. The wellbeing of children is an additional measure to show progress. Some children start Nursery distressed but become happier. An example of an anonymised sensory portrait was shared with Governors. DR explained that the objective of this term's learning walk is to observe a specific child and to look at their learning journey. It puts the challenges faced by the school into perspective. EC was **thanked** for her comprehensive and informative presentation.

1	**APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) ITEMS** Apologies were received and **accepted** from SG and LB. No additional business was raised for discussion under agenda item 14.
2	**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** No pecuniary interests were declared. There were no conflicts of interest with the business of the meeting.
3	**MEMBERSHIP** Dewi Agostini has been appointed as Parent Governor for a four-year term of office from 21.11.25. DR and DA have met for an induction meeting. DA's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is in progress. **Action: GC to liaise with Dewi Agostini regarding units to undertake for induction training** There are no vacant posts on the Governing Board. There are no terms of office due to expire before the next FGB meeting. NS has updated Getting Information About Schools (GIAS). This is completed every 60 days.
4	**PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING** A copy of the 24th November 2025 FGB minutes and their attendant action log had been shared with Governors in advance. Governors **approved** the minutes, pending one amendment to page 10. **Action: Clerk to amend the electronic minutes on Governor Hub on page 10** There was only one matter arising – to clarify when Governors need to mark minutes as signed on Governor Hub. This only needs to be done when an amendment has been made to the minutes after a meeting. **Action: Governors to only mark as signed minutes if they have been amended as an action following a meeting** The action log was all completed or items in progress. **Action: Clerk to check that all Governors have signed the start of year documents on Governor Hub** **Action: GC to review the suitability of the NGA Cyber Security training module**

5	**CHAIR'S ACTION** DR made one decision as Chair of Governors this term – to sanction school closure for snow for one day.
6	**PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIILITIES** <u>Premises and Engagement</u> The minutes for this Committee meeting (05.02.26) were shared with Governors in advance. Governors were informed that: After the EFGB meeting of the 21.02.26, the bathroom specification has been chosen. A photograph was shown to Governors. Governors approved of the colours. ***Governor question: Are we having thermal blinds to be compliant?*** *Response: No. There is no heat left on in school overnight. There would be no visibility.* ***Governor question: What project is the Committee addressing next?*** *Response: We have one or two projects to revisit, then we will move on to something new.* <u>Sustainability update</u> GC explained that he had delivered INSET training to staff on 'Building a Sustainable Nursery Together'. One action cascaded out of the session was an agreed temperature range within the school. GC added that the school is already working sustainably. It just needs to formalise and improve what it is doing. GC explained that he has not met the school's Sustainability Lead, Lousie Barlow, yet formally but they have talked informally about how to measure and record sustainability. They are looking at a Growing with School project. They have a scheduled date for a further visit. They have some low-cost projects planned for this year: • Increasing local biodiversity through the Sunflower Project. Children, members of staff and Governors will be able to take a sunflower home. • Rainwater harvesting • A school composter • Already in action – purchase of green energy; waste recycling and reduction of single use plastic. ***Governor question: Should sustainability be an element of the School Development Plan?*** *Response: Yes, it should be.* There was discussion of a sit-in sandpit and of canopies.

Remedial work is needed to the outdoor playground.

Curriculum Meeting

The Curriculum Meeting (13.01.26) minutes were shared with Governors in advance.

Governors were advised that:

- The data received is from the end of the Autumn 2025 term. The Spring Term 2026 data will be available for discussion in the Summer Term 2026 when targets will also be set.
- There were 34 children in Butterflies in December 2025. Two pupils joined in the second half term following baselines.
- 3 children receive EYPP = 8%, 23 pupils are EAL = 68%, 6 pupils attend for 30 hours (18%).
- 9 children have SEN needs (22%); 4 complex needs, 4 speech needs, 1 other medical need.
- The 2025 baseline tests show low percentages across the PRIME target areas due to the cohort being larger than usual.
- In January 2026 10 Caterpillars transitioned to Butterflies. The PRIME overview of these pupils shows them to have achieved 60%+ in all target areas.

Chairs' Meeting

The following areas of discussion were held:

- Staffing- to be relayed in Part 2.
- Receipt of a safeguarding update
- A staffing update relating to the national restraint guidance.
  This will be the subject of an INSET day.

  Governor question: Is there a central system for recording restraint?
  Response: It is recorded on CPOMS.
- An appraisal and staff target update.
- Leadership and management elements of the School Development Plan.
- Pupil numbers.
- The subject of today's Governor training.
- Policies.

Action: DR to share the audit and staff questionnaire with Governors at the Summer FGB

SEND Update

The following information was shared with Governors:

- There are 17 SEND children on the school's register.
- 6 children have complex needs who access wider professional support. There have been some delays accessing Educational Psychologists (EPs) which has meant that some of these children are awaiting EHCP (education health care plan) referrals.

  4 of the 6 children will transition to primary school at the end of this year. Their allotted school will not be known until 16th April 2026. There is discussion already of their transition arrangement and support available for both the child

	and their parents to manage their anxieties. Two of the wider professionals have already offered their support with the transition process and the child's integration into primary education. ***Governor question: Do members of staff go on the primary school visits with the child?*** *Response: No, they do not. We do not have enough members of staff.* It was noted that some primary schools put on extra sessions for SEND pupils. EC has requested photographs and pictures to share with the children to support their transition. • One child on SEN Support is making good progress. • 10 children are displaying speech and language delay. They receive speech therapy with Chatty Learning twice per half-term. Chatty Learning also meet with parents to model strategies. **Action: Clerk to add an item to the Summer Finance Committee meeting agenda: To discuss retention of the external speech therapy provision** • The Government White Paper has been published. The document emphasises the importance of early intervention. However, it talks very little about nurseries and maintained schools. Beatrice Merrick (Chief Executive of Early Education) has responded to the DfE regarding the White Paper. One Governor raised the issue of the DfE wanting all schools to join a Trust. EC responded stating that maintained nurseries are not allowed to join a Trust. ***Governor question: Is it worth us lobbying our MP about the White Paper?*** *Response: Realistically, no.* <u>Safeguarding update</u> DR apologised that the Report had only been uploaded to Governor Hub this morning. This element of the discussion was referred to the Part Two minutes for the purpose of confidentiality.
7	**FINANCIAL MATTERS** The following document was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting: • Finance Budget Papers Summary – FGB - 04.03.26 <u>Finance Committee Minutes, including a review of budget v actuals for 2025-2026 and progress against the current 3-Year Plan</u> • The minutes had been shared with Governors in advance. • The budget v actuals expenditure shows £478k spent, by year end that will be £525k. This takes into account the backpay error, payment of statutory sick pay, and teaching staff overtime. • In the 3-Year Plan there is a projected positive carry-forward from Y1 to Y2 of £214, 539

	• WNS will earmark reserve £180k to ensure that it does not carry forward more than the 8% permitted by Cheshire East before money is clawed back. Governors commented that WNS has done a fantastic job working within its budget whilst improving the premises, future proofing the school and maintaining staffing. <u>To consider and approve the draft annual budget for 2026-2027</u> Governors **approved** the draft annual budget for 2026-2027. <u>To approve the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures (MIFP)</u> Governors **approved** the MIFP. It was acknowledged that the Governor section will need to be updated to include DA. <u>To review and approve the SFVS (School Financial Value Standard)</u> The SFVS is completed annually. It is a governor assurance, across 30 questions, that financial safeguarding is in place and rigorous policy and procedure are followed. The document is submitted to the Local Authority. NS completes the document. JC checks the documents. Governors review and approve the document. The document will not be complete until Monday 9th March. It will be uploaded to Governor Hub by 13th March. **Action: DR to schedule an EFGB meeting with a one-item agenda: To approve the SFVS, clerked internally** <u>To monitor the spending and impact of the Pupil Premium funding</u> WNS has 3 PP children Each child realises £1 per hour in funding. This will increase from April 2026 to £1.15. WNS looks at the children's individual needs to see how the school can support them. One child needs speech and language support, and one needs support with their fine motor skills. **Action: JC to add as agenda item to finance meetings: Pupil Premium funding** A termly statement regarding use and impact of PP funding is lodged on the school website. <u>To receive a copy of the annual accounts of the Unofficial School Fund and the audit certificate 2024/2025</u> NS showed Governors the audit certificate. Currently the Unofficial School Fund account contains £19k. This money helps to pay for various activities such as the trip to Blue Planet, the football coach and Zoo to You, booked for Summer 2026. These activities help to enhance the children's learning. The account is added to from the sale of snacks and book replacements. The account is audited annually. There are monthly bank reconciliations and weekly transaction checks. JC also completes ad hoc checks.

8	**PART ONE HEADTEACHER'S REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING** A copy of the Headteacher's Report had been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. Also shared was a copy of the WNS SDP 25 26 Final Update. EC explained the following: • Staffing remains the same. • WNS has completed a lot of training and staff development. • Wellbeing is a priority for members of staff and pupils. January was a challenging month due to staff absence and other members of staff covering their work. The team pulled together well. • The school has 72 children on roll. • More children had attended Friday morning Toddler Time than expected. • The school has 17 children on its SEND register. • EC is on the Cheshire East Education Safeguarding Board. From her attendance, she brought to Governors' attention that there has been a case of female genital mutilation amongst the East Timor population in Cheshire West. Members of staff received an update on FGM at their February 2026 INSET day. • Attendance has been reduced by illness. Children have struggled to recover from these illnesses. • Parental engagement remains unchanged. The school has retained its Friendly Face at the Gate presence. Key Workers meet with parents at the end of term. The school has shared online safety training and potty training with parents. • The school has some fully bilingual children on roll. • All key priority areas in the SDP, with one exception, are rag-rated amber. These all signify work in progress. The one exception is rag-rated green and will continue to be actioned. • WNS is involved in wider engagement. Whilst EC's offer to provide training for Cheshire East was declined, she has been the guest speaker at a North-West Stronger Practice event. WNS has applied to be a Partner Setting for a DfE Hub for Cheshire, Warrington and Halton. A response is awaited. ***Governor question: Would this be just for Nursery provision?*** *Response: It is for Nursery and Reception provision.* ***Governor question: Would participation be lucrative?*** *Response: Yes, it would.* • EC is a Safeguarding and E-Safety Link Governor for a Stockport maintained school. This is enabling her to glean examples of good practice to share with WNS. The Report contained premises updates and information regarding fire drills. EC advised Governors that: • There are no pupil accidents to report.

	• Two members of staff needed first aid treatment following bites from distressed pupils with complex needs. • It is anticipated that the hourly rate for 2- and 3-year-olds will increase. • The school continues to welcome visitors including health visitors. • The school has welcomed Manchester Metropolitan University students and has become a place for trainee teachers to visit.
9	**STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE – ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND CLERKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2026-2027** Governors **agreed** that they would like to continue to use Cheshire East clerking for their FGB meetings only. The Clerk thanked them for their continued support for the service. **Action: Clerk to notify CE of the school's decision to retain FGB-only clerking for 2026-2027**
10	**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** A copy of the Spring 2026 Director's Report had been shared with Governors before the meeting. Also shared was the DfE Changes to Restrictive Interventions, including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools document The Clerk advised Governors to look at the following items: • Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force changes • The SEND White Paper • The Equality Act • Employment Rights for Support Staff • The monitoring of staff wellbeing • The focus on inclusive education • The importance of Governor training to develop their effectiveness. • The publication of DfE Complaints Guides • Various HR publications and • The DfE consultation regarding social media It was noted that social media does refer to Governors as well as members of staff and parents. It links in with the Governor Code of Conduct and the pursuit of the Nolan Principles for all those involved in public office. It was discussed that whilst Part Two conversations are noted as confidential, all discussion within Governing Board meetings is confidential.
11	**GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** <u>Training Link Governor Report</u> GC read a prepared report which is paraphrased here: • All Governors completed the Autumn 2025 training via the NGA.

- Two previously planned units for the Spring Term 2026, to address the Governor Skills Audit development areas – I know what the school's strategic priorities are and I understand how my governing board engages with stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff and the wider community) and how this informs decisions – had been withdrawn by the NGA.
  GC identified two alternative courses for completion – Introduction to the Strategic Role of Governance (Spring Term) and Understanding the Role of Governors in Your Setting (Summer Term).

  As of midday today 7 Governors had completed the Spring Term unit and a further three Governors had also completed the Summer Term unit.

  It was noted that the Spring Term unit was a good match and the Summer Term unit an 80%-85% match.
- GC and JC attended the January Governors' Forum which included a Gary Aubin presentation on SEND Provision in Cheshire East entitled 'Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice'. Gary Aubin was enthusiastic and went to great pains to use non-technical language as he adjusted his vocabulary to his audience, most of whom were Governors not teaching professionals.
  GC has uploaded Gary Aubin's slides to Governor Hub and highly recommended Governors to read them.

Action: Clerk to send a compliance document to GC

<u>To review the status of Government PREVENT training</u>
A document the Clerk will share with GC states that PREVENT training needs to be done on appointment to the Governing Board and then every two years.

Action: Governors to complete the PREVENT Awareness module training in Autumn 2026

<u>Feedback from Governor training</u>
Governors discussed the Spring Term training module.
DR learned two things from the course:

- There should only be urgent AOB items raised on the day of the meeting, otherwise items should be recorded in advance. This is to prevent Governors from hijacking a meeting.
- All questions should be sent through to the HT/CoG in advance of the meeting. Under the new Framework, Ofsted will look for challenging questions.

<u>To review progress of the Governor Development Plan</u>
DR guided Governors through this item and the following points were discussed:

- Several items have been rag-rated green which is pleasing.
- Items rag-rated amber are ongoing items.
- The Learning Walk item is still amber as some Governors have visited WNS and some are booked in to visit.
- Pitching the WNS Training Package to Cheshire East was rejected, so the item is closed.

Action: DR to send a copy of the updated Governor Development Plan to the Clerk

DR continued:

- Governor photo displays are not complete, so rag-rated red.

Action: DR to remind EC to put items re Governor activity in the newsletter

<u>To receive feedback from Governors regarding the school website</u>
GC has liaised with NS regarding the website.

<u>To receive feedback from Governors on their Learning Walks</u>
Three Learning Walks have been completed, looking at SEND in action.
Each visit follows one child.

The following feedback was relayed by Governors:

- The visit was amazing and shocking.
- The visit took place on the Friday afternoon before February half-term and members of staff were exhausted.
- There are 10 children in Caterpillars with one teacher and two support staff. Only 6 children were in school on the day of the visit, 2 of whom have very complex needs.
  One child is operating at 9-12months. The child is non-verbal. The child loves to eat sand. Members of staff were great with this child. The child is included in everything the group do. A visitor would not know that the child was non-verbal. The child needed a bottle and lots of cuddles. This took one member of staff away from the group. Members of staff need to have ears and eyes everywhere.

  Governor question: What is the ratio?
  Response: Legally it is 1 to 5. At WNS class ratios are generous.

  The group was calmly spoken to. Visual and verbal encouragement was given. Instructions were sung leading to children focusing on the member of staff.
  Members of staff were very observant.
  It was a tough session to watch.
  Children were able to draw lines and were starting to make words.
- Looking at Caterpillars moving into Butterflies, one Governor saw incredible initiative in play and use of a fidget toy. Members of staff were conscientious and worked to engage and bring the children together in an effortless way. There was excitement when accessing the song book. The group was inclusive. Nurture and comfort were seen. Children all worked at their own rate but were all learning.
  The apprentice in Butterflies encouraged all children to engage.
  The visit showed that the whole child was embraced.

It was noted that the purpose of the meeting was to open Governors' eyes – which has happened. Governors saw a love of learning and that the children wanted to be at WNS.

Self-supported play was seen.

	The pupils are proud of their role in school. The same can be seen both inside and outside the classroom. Governors **thanked** members of staff for their diligence and enthusiasm.
12	**SCHOOL POLICIES** Governors **ratified** the following policies which had been approved in committee: • Teacher's Pay Policy • Whistleblowing Policy • Data Protection Policy • Critical Incident Policy and Procedures • Induction Policy • Leave and Time-Off Policy • Administering Medicines Policy and Procedures • Play Policy • Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy • Anti-Bullying Policy • Inclusion Policy
13	**MEETINGS** Governors **agreed** the date of the Summer Term 2026 FGB meeting: **Monday 13th July 2026 at 4pm in school.**
14	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** No further business was raised for discussion.

The meeting moved to the Part Two agenda.

The meeting ended at 6.15pm.

…… Chair

…….. Date