

Minutes of the Full Governing Board meeting
Monday 16 March 2026 at 6.00 pm

Membership

Name	Initials	Term Expiry Date	Governor Category
Leon Choueke	LC	N/A	Head Teacher, Ex-officio(1)
Debby Kuypers (Chair)	DK	09-11-2029	Co-opted Governors (7)
Richard Holmes (Vice Chair)	RH	01-02-2030	
*Nomi Tysman	NT	01-12-2028	
*Jean-Michel Garcia-Alvarez	JGA	10-02-2029	
*Becca Monahan	BM	17-11-2027	
Michael Wang	CW	01-07-2028	
Andrena Emin	AE	04-02-2028	
*Melian Mansfield	MM	26-11-2029	LA Governor
Kirsten Schmidt	KS	04-02-2028	Staff (1)
*Sarah Boffey	SB	05-01-2029	Parent Governors (2)
Ian Chapman	IC	05-01-2029	
Also in attendance:			
*Tim Ibbotson	TI	N/A	Asst HT
*Ben Strange	BS	N/A	Deputy HT
*Ben Miller	BMi	01-07-2028	Associate Governor
Eddie Webb	EW	01-12-2028	Associate Governor
Morinade Akinbobola	MA	01-12-2028	Associate Governor
*Sarah Ward	SW		Associate Governor
Louise Foulkes	LF	N/A	Deputy HT
Adam Crosier			Clerk

* Denotes absence

PART 1

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

DK opened the meeting at 6.05 pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from NT, MM, BM and SB for reasons of prior commitments. These were accepted.

The meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise in respect of items on the agenda

None.

3. Governing board business

Membership

DK reported that MM's role as LA governor had been agreed by LB Haringey and governors APPROVED this appointment. There were no other updates.

Reports of training

Safeguarding training/KCSIE25: DK asked all governors to complete safeguarding training and to send the school the relevant certification before the following week.

She reminded governors of the commitment to undertake regular training throughout the year.

Reports of visits

DK reported that she and LC had agreed that governor visits should be arranged for a week in advance of the next FGB, to avoid disruption of staff. She asked that governors file their written reports of visits to Gov Hub.

4. Minutes of the meeting: 2 February 2026

- **Accuracy**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

- **Actions**

ACTION: SB to share with LC research guidelines for the conduct of focus groups with children.

STATUS: ONGOING

ACTION: NT to post her report on Gov Hub.

STATUS: ONGOING

- **Matters arising**

None.

5. Finance report

LC reported that the school was preparing its financial year-end report to LB Haringey. The school had begun the 2025/26 financial year with a deficit of £307,000. It was now expected that by the 31 March 2026, the total deficit would rise to around £500,000, representing an in-year deficit of around £193,000.

Various reasons for the increase in the debt were identified. These included:

- Set up costs of the Wrap Around Care (WAC) programme, including the payment of salaries before the school had received any income.
- Misunderstanding about the amount of money the school received via the Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG). The school had anticipated that it would receive £111,000 income under the SBSG. However, most of this money had been included in the main grant. The actual additional figure under the SBSG was just £39,000.
- A shortfall of £12,000 in SEND income. LC said that school was chasing this money with LB Haringey as it was unclear why these monies had not been paid.
- Cost of 2 x members of staff on long term sick leave (2 and 6 months respectively) and the cost of their replacements.
- An unforeseen utility bill of £21,000 due to the utility company having provided incorrect estimates over a period.
- Breakdown of the cleaning contract, discussed at previous FGB meetings.
- An increase in the number of children with high levels of need, necessitating one to one support. He reminded governors that the school received much less funding than it spent to support these children. He cited the case of a child for whom the school received £9,000, while the cost of a TA was around £30,000.

Overall, the school was in a position where the growth of the deficit could be stemmed, thanks to the increased income from WAC and holiday care. Once this was in place, the next consideration would be to reduce the accumulated debt.

On the positive side, the school's budgeted income for 2026/27 would be £177,000 higher than 2025/26. However, once National Insurance and SBSG costs were taken account of, the true additional income was around £57,000 compared with 2025/26. The main reason for the increase in income was due to an increase in pupil numbers.

LC said that the main pressures on schools' budgets in general were SEND, staffing and the decrease in birth rate affecting pupil numbers. It was pleasing that at a time when many local primary schools were reporting falling pupil numbers, Coleridge was seeing an increase both in the number of children entering in Reception year, and in its ability to fill spaces across the year groups. However, LC said that many of those children who arrived in year, were children with more complex and costly needs.

Other financial pressures included unfunded pay awards. It was expected that over the next 3 years there would be a 6.5% pay increase for teachers. Also, as teachers progressed in their careers, their salaries increased annually. There would also be unfunded increases for support staff.

Q. DK asked whether the income from WAC would prevent an increase in the school's overall debt burden and what level of deficit was predicted for the end 2026/27.

A. LC said that he expected there to be no growth in the overall deficit of the school but no reduction either because of the WAC income.

However, he said that the income from WAC alone was not sufficient, and that actions would be needed to monitor and address other costs, especially in relation to TAs. He said that the school could no longer afford to employ class TAs and that every TA on the payroll would need to be working with children who had a need for one-to-one support. There would also be a need to monitor more closely expenditure on such matters as sports tournaments that the school participated in. These were funded by the Sports Premium grant, but the costs were currently exceeding the funding provided.

He reported that savings would also be needed in relation to SEND. He said that the Rainbow class would be reviewed and made as an intervention rather than a full-time class, with a focus on English and Maths only. Additionally, Rainbow class would become a resource primarily for children in Early Years and Y1 and Y2. He said that it was important that teachers across the school recognised Rainbow class children as their responsibility, in terms of planning and delivering teaching and learning. This was something that had been highlighted in the recent White Paper.

He said that the teaching arrangements in Rainbow class had proven not to be sustainable, and he was now looking to recruit 2 High Level TAs to help the SENCO and teacher of the Rainbow class, to take over the teaching of this group, which would enable the SENCO to focus on ensuring that adaptive teaching was taking place elsewhere across the school.

Q. MW said that he was surprised by the report that the WAC would serve only to cover the operational costs of the school. He said that governors had previously been informed that this income would be sufficient to reduce the overall deficit within a matter of a few years. He asked if this was a correct interpretation of what LC had presented.

A. LC confirmed that it was. The income from WAC would not be sufficient to address the accumulated debt. He said that the school had undertaken various activities to identify where it could further reduce its expenditure and increase income. These had included meetings with the local authority's finance team and benchmarking of Coleridge against other similar schools. He pointed out that Coleridge faced unique challenges, including having to operate on two sites and the mix of pupils. He said that the size of the senior leadership team was a challenge financially.

He said that the most realistic way of increasing income in the coming period was to improve the school's Nursery offer. There were currently just 40 spaces, but the school received around 150 applications. And while the school offered term time only provision between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm, other nurseries offered all year provision from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm.

Another potential income stream was the Boffey House and LC reported that he was developing plans for its use.

LC said that an important development from the White Paper was the expectation that schools should collaborate more to share and reduce costs. This was also an area that he was looking to pursue.

Q. MW asked whether LC had confidence in the financial support he received from the School Business Manager and team, particularly their ability to foresee difficulties ahead.

A. LC confirmed that he did and that the finance team was very strong. He pointed out that school finances were exceptionally difficult to plan because there were many unknowns that only appeared from the horizon, once the financial year was well underway. This included information related to admissions and pupil numbers, the number and complexity of needs of children with SEND, unfunded pay increases and pupil movement in year.

He reported that at Stroud Green school the governors were sent information on the income and expenditure on SEND, which was a significant element of the overall budget.

Stroud Green govs – SEND spend has to be reported on. Income and expenditure. This is a massive chunk of the budget and enabled governors to properly challenge the school. He proposed providing this level of financial reporting to governors.

He reminded governors that the cost of providing SEND support was much greater than the income the school received for this area of activity.

ACTION 1: LC to include SEND income and expenditure at FGB meetings.

IC said that in his opinion it was not good use of resources to focus on chasing savings at all costs. He said that he worked at another school that had done this and achieved savings in the order of £50,000 but that the cost on staff morale had been huge. He was not convinced that savings of that order on a deficit of the size of Coleridge's would make a significant difference and urged LC to focus instead on increasing income with the Nursery.

LC reported that while the deficit at Coleridge was of concern, it was not out of line with that of many other local primary schools, and that with the increase in pupil numbers, the increase in income from WAC and plans to develop the Nursery provision, there were many reasons to be optimistic about the school's finances. He said that across the borough, primary schools were carrying debts of around £6 million

SFVS

LC reported that the SFVS was complete and had been circulated to governors. The SFVS was APPROVED.

Financial audit

LC reported that an audit was due. He reported that the SBM was confident about the school's financial systems.

6. Headteacher's report

LC had circulated a written report in advance of the meeting. He invited comments and questions.

He reported that at the last FGB there had been a request for anonymised case studies. He asked if governors had any feedback on this.

DK thanked LC for this report and said that it provided insight to the needs and context of the children at the school and the support provided by the school.

DK asked about the White Paper and its implications for Coleridge. She said that there should be a strategic meeting of the board after Easter.

LC reported that attendance remained good and was above national average.

7. Safeguarding

An audit on safeguarding was due in the coming week.

8. Premises

Roof: LC reported that work had been scheduled to start in July 2026. However, it had been found that the hall structure would not support a new roof. More structural engineers had been to visit to determine how the hall structure could be improved. The upshot was that the works now required more funding than envisaged and the matter was in the hands of the local authority. Meanwhile, more leaks had been found in the roof.

Caretaker's house: this remained empty. LC reported that he was keen to work with LB Haringey to make the property viable and to use it to generate income. A stumbling block was the ownership of the property, which did not stand on school grounds. He said that he had submitted a proposal to the local authority but had not received a response. He proposed to follow up on this.

ACTION 2: LC to pursue proposal to LB Haringey over the use of the caretaker's house.

9. Health and Safety

Audit had been undertaken. This had identified the need for H+S training for staff involved with WAC and for risk assessments for WAC. Separately, kitchen inspectors had given the school a 5 star rating.

10. Policies

LC said that BS was due to send policies to governors for approval at the next FGB. These would include a revised anti bullying policy and a revised online safety policy.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Date of next meeting

TBA.

13. Confidential items

LC reported that there had been a complaint from a parent that he was dealing with. There had been 2 exclusions involving the same child. The school was working with parent.

Separately, he reported that he was expecting one of the teachers on long term sick to return, and that this person would cover a maternity leave. He was delighted to have the teacher back at work.

Signed.....Debby Kuypers
Date.....11.5.26.....
Chair of Governors