

Simon Marks Jewish Primary School

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held at the school and via Teams on 17 March 2026 at 6:00pm

Members		
	Category	Attendance
Howard Pallis (HP)	Local Authority Governor	Present
Gulcan Asdoyuran (GA)	Headteacher	Present
Jonathan Freedland (JF)	Foundation Governor	Present
Austen Garth (AG)	Foundation Governor	Present on line
Lauren Buck (LB)	Foundation Governor	Present on line
Eve Pearl (EP)	Foundation Governor	Present on line
Rael Gamsu (RG)	Foundation Governor	Apologies for absence accepted
Zachary Jacobs (ZJ)	Staff Governor	Present
Eddie Marshbaum (EM)	Parent Governor	Apologies for absence accepted
Duval Middleton (DM)	Parent Governor	Apologies for absence accepted
Rachel Burns (RB)	Associate Governor	Apologies for absence accepted
Robin DasGupta (RDG)	Associate Governor	Present
Syed Gilani (SG)	Associate Governor	Present
Michael Clayden (MC)	Acting Clerk to the governors	Present

1 Election of Vice Chair

- 1.1 Lauren Buck was proposed and seconded and as the only candidate approved. HP said he would discuss the role with LB.

2 Governor appointments

- 2.1 HP said he was continuing to discuss appointments to the Trust vacancies and hoped to have a resolution before the end of the academic year..

3 Apologies for absence

- 3.1 Apologies for absence were received and approved from EM, DM and RB.

4 Declarations of interest

- 4.1 Governor declarations of interest were as approved at the autumn term meeting

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2025

The non-confidential and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2025 were **agreed** and signed.

6 Matters Arising

Issue		Action by
From minutes of 8 December 2025		
4.3	The governors discussed training possibilities. GA said, until the new OFSTED framework was clearer in practice, training on OFSTED should be postponed. As discussion agreed that a refresher on safeguarding could be a possibility.	GA
AG joined the meeting		
12	EP's report was on the agenda	

LB joined the meeting.

7 Headteacher's Report

- 7.1 A report had been circulated together with the term dates for 2026-27.
- 7.2 Governors noted that most Jewish holidays coincided with weekend which was easier for working parents, however Pesach was more difficult in 2026-27 as it was separated from Easter.
- 7.3 **Resolved** to approve the term dates 2026-27
- 7.4 LB joined the meeting.
- 7.5 GA went through the report briefly. She said 2-3 new early years starters expected shortly would increase the roll to 123-24. The ARP was full. There were 14 first choice applications for reception in September which was higher than by the same time in the previous year.
- 7.6 There was an increase in community languages by the addition of a Yiddish speaker. There were now 25 education health care plans, one being recently approved, with two in the pipeline, one of which was likely to go to tribunal with the school's support. SEN children represent 40% of the roll, autism was the highest category, but diagnosis of ADHD was also increasing. One ARP child was moving to Haringey, but another Haredi child was replacing them.
- 7.7 There were currently no children on the child protection register but, in a few cases, where the school has concerns that do not meet social services thresholds for action they have been ported to the police using the non-urgent line. There was only one homeless family who had been evicted yesterday, and it was hoped charitable organisations would help. There were no children in care although one has a special guardianship.
- 7.8 The school had tested its lockdown arrangements twice, one under the classroom desks and the other evacuating to the back to the hall which took 7 minutes; it was hoped in future to improve on this. Some parents on site took part in the latter. Parents had had a copy of the school Marten's Law policy. The ARP had evacuated to a toilet. Jubilee and Stoke Newington Common had been identified as possible off site evacuation points.
- 7.9 Overall attendance was good but persistent absence from a small number of families was too high
- 7.10 The CCTV system had been upgraded. GA EP and LB had discussed the quality of security guarding, but the problem was that for the pay rate limited the personnel attracted.
- 7.11 The new year 6 teacher had settled in well and the children were doing well. The support staff in early years had been increased by one because of the number of education health care plans. Another support staff member would retire in the summer and may not be replaced for the time being.
- 7.12 Preparations were in hand for the mock seder although it was close to Purim which made planning difficult.
- 7.13 There were currently 7 trainee teachers at the school on training but they also provided welcome additional support. They were at the school for a

term of training. GA said trainees at the school always offered a possible source for potential recruitment but, at present, there were no needs.

- 7.14 The programmed staff performance went well – despite awful acting, singing and jokes! – but it evinced plenty of laughter from the audience. It was followed by a children’s “catwalk” in which all children, including the ARP participated. She hoped more governors might be able to attend future events.
- 7.15 A summary, from the Key, of the government White Paper, Every Child Achieving and Thriving, and a link to the full document had been circulated. The head had considered the paper, and the school was working on a main idea, Individual Support Plans (ISPs). Some years ago, Individual Education Plans had been replaced, under the subsequent, at that time, new code, by Personal Learning Goals which the school was now realigning to the proposed ISPs. Whilst there appeared to be money attached to new ideas this could be recycled money and the danger was ending up with more children defined as SEN without more resources, but a promise of better training. The underlying aspiration was that schools should be more inclusive and the fact of the school’s higher proportion of defined SEN children might put it ahead of others in achieving the new goals that when determined as a result of the white paper.
- 7.16 A parents’ coffee morning had been held and many parental surveys returned on computing. There had been general support for the school’s planned computing curriculum including AI. The head had had a number of parents subsequently contacting her about online games at home which she hoped had raised awareness of the risks games such as Roadblock and Fortnite could lead young children into. More work was needed on raising parental awareness on this and strategies for effective supervision where allowed.
- 7.17 Teaching remained good with much outstanding. It was concurrently assessment week, so updated assessment figures would be available later.
- 7.18 30 new laptops had been purchased with funding support from the school Trust and were being put into use once the appropriate access controls had been defined and tested. The machine would stay in the school although children could use their own computers to access such things as homework to finish. Parents could apply to the school for use of old school laptops if they had a need case.
- 7.19 RDG was making a bid for MUGA replacement funding and getting some quotations to base the bid on.
- 7.20 The head’s report was **received**

8 Finance Staffing and Premises Committee

- 8.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2026 and the School Financial Value Standard statement 2025-26 had been circulated.
- 8.2 MC reported that the committee had monitored the projected outturn which projected a small positive balance, but it depended on the Council providing a balance of over £100K of ARP funding, which was overdue. It had now been chased three times. The head reported she had escalated the matter

to the director of education. HP Proposed and it was **agreed**, unless a positive answer was urgently forthcoming, the matter should be referred without delay to the Mayor.

- 8.3 The Financial Value Standard statement 2025-26 had been sent to the Committee members and no comments had been received. It closely followed previous years' statements.
- 8.4 The Financial Value Standard statement 2025-26 was **approved** and the minutes were **received**.

9 Reports of visits from link governors (10 minutes)

- 9.1 Notes of visits to the ARP and to the SENCO by EP which had been reported at last meeting had been circulated. EP the ARP visit was one of her termly ARP visits. She understood that the language therapist who had conducted twice weekly visits and who had been excellent had resigned. ZJ said the replacement had just been appointed but had not yet visited the school. EP said it was a crucial area of support and needed to be monitored after the change of staff. Governors noted that, except for a couple who had very complex needs, all ARP children appeared to be making excellent progress. The head said the school SIP during a recent visit had said that several of the children should not normally be allocated to an ARP because of their extreme needs and congratulated the school on the strategies it had in place to contain their needs.
- 9.2 EP said that the teacher who had moved into the ARP to cover the maternity leave appeared to have settled in very well.
- 9.3 She echoed the head's comments about the white paper and resourcing and that the experience of Simon Marks would stand it in good stead.
- 9.4 EP reported on the development of the curriculum and the second classroom area which enabled differentiation between verbal and non-verbal needs. She said there was also one child who spent a lot of time in mainstream classes with ARP staff support.
- 9.5 EP and other governors congratulated ZJ and the unit on their work.
- 9.6 EP said she had done a learning walk with RDG, as SENCO, with a focus on literacy following the focus on maths in the summer term. She said in general walking through the school she was very impressed that one would have no indication that 40% of children had SEN. The learning atmosphere was very positive, and it was not possible to identify those with complex needs, unless pointed out, because of the way their needs were seamlessly met. It was obvious during the learning however that in early years/reception there was a need for additional learning support, that had now been recruited, because of supervisory needs of some of the EHCP children. She also referred to the pressure for 6 extra places attached to the ARP which she understood GA was discussing with the local authority.
- 9.7 Governors thanked EP for her informative reports.

10 Chair of Governors’ verbal report

- 10.1 HP reported that the computer meeting for parents already reported had been useful well attended by 24 people. He also reported the Trusts £10K contribution to the computer purchase previously discussed
- 10.2 He had examined the MUGA area which was uneven and in need of treatment. The bid if successful would be useful and the Trust would have to examine the possibilities for funding too. In answer to questions RDG said quotes for the current application was being prepared by Creative Play and possibly by another organisation. The school had a guidebook on possible sources for funding including Sport England and would choose one or more depending on the funding required. The head also reported a bid for a sensory garden was also at an early stage of consideration. She had also obtained a small grant for some playground painting and artwork
- 10.3 The report was **received**

11 Governor training

- 11.1 AG reported on two sessions attended of Hackney finance training. The first had been useful and he would recommend it. The second was less so. He felt the schools’ systems were robust and secure but there were some additional processes suggested that added little and would be a poor use of resources.

12 Dates of future meetings

- 12.1 Summer term -9 June 2026 (subsequently postponed to 8 July 2026)
- 12.2 Received

ACTION

	Issue	Action by
5	School to file signed minutes	GA
6	Consider arrangements for governor training on Safeguarding	GA
7.17	Report on updated assessment data when available	GA
8	Seek an immediate governors’ meeting with the Mayor unless the remaining ARP funding were urgently forthcoming	GA/MC

The meeting ended at 7:15pm



Signed (Chair):

Date: 8/7/26