

**DEANSBROOK INFANT SCHOOL**

**COMMITTEE: Finance and Premises Committee Meeting plus Full Governing Body**

**Date: Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Committee members:** Carole Catley (CC), Nikki Simon (NS), Julia Hutton-Squire (JH-S), Nick Mailer (NM) CHAIR, Ryan Hannan (RH), Jade Cheung (JC), Lisa McCann (LM)

**Governing Body members:** Judith Suissa (JS), Ben Amoah (BA), Penka Georgiva Mihov (PG), Amun Chadha (AC).  
Invited to attend as observers due to the Finance and Premises Committee meeting not being quorate. and to ratify the 2026/27 budget.

**Present:** CC **Absent:**

Agenda Item	Discussion/Action	By	Deadline
<p><b>*Full GB Meeting prior to, during as observers &amp; after the Finance and Premises Committee Meeting for budget approval.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Academy Consultation Timeline (Full GB Meeting)</u></b></p> <p>Governors noted the proposed academy conversion consultation timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation period: 3 June to 26 June 2026.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: CC &amp; Rachel Kershaw to finalise documents by 3<sup>rd</sup> June.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation meetings scheduled for 10 June 2026 for staff at 3.45pm – then for Parents at 5.30pm with a governor representative – <b>Action: BA to attend.</b></li> <li>• Following the close of consultation on 26<sup>th</sup> June, a report will be compiled by Rachel Kershaw – (<i>appointed as liaison to support preparation of the consultation documentation</i>) and presented to an Extraordinary Governing Body meeting on 2 July 2026</li> <li>• At this meeting, governors will determine whether to proceed with the academy conversion proposal</li> <li>• If approved, an application will be submitted to the Department for Education and the assessment process will commence –( no reversal possible after submission)</li> <li>• Target conversion date: 1 January 2027</li> </ul>		

**Action: CC send consultation to trade unions and LA before half term.**

**Action: CC to schedule extraordinary GB meeting for 2<sup>nd</sup> July to review consultation outcomes.**

Governors were also informed that:

- The school would join AIM as a standalone infant school, rather than as part of a federated or amalgamated primary structure
- This approach is intended to maximise funding opportunities
- Parents will continue to apply separately for Year 3 places
- Each school will remain subject to separate Ofsted inspections
- A uniform proposal was presented, including blazers and ties for junior pupils, with no changes proposed to infant uniform
- Curriculum discussions are ongoing; it was noted that AIM employs a more structured approach to assessment and schemes of work, however schools may retain existing approaches where outcomes are strong
- Governors reflected positively on the previous meeting with the AIM Board, noting a shared ethos and child-centred approach

Governors noted the proposed governance arrangements under academy conversion:

- Governing bodies would retain responsibility for curriculum and safeguarding
- Financial management would transfer to the academy trust
- Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher costs would be split 50:50 between infant and junior school budgets
- Separate budgets would continue to be maintained for each school

#### Critical Financial Context

Governors received an update from a briefing issued by Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning. Key points noted:

	<p>Declining birth rates are resulting in a sustained reduction in pupil numbers nationally and locally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnet has experienced an approximate 10% fall in school rolls</li> <li>• The local authority is forecasting a growing surplus of school places over the coming years</li> <li>• Further reductions in pupil numbers are expected, particularly within Reception cohorts</li> <li>• The briefing indicated that, as a consequence of these trends, some school closures may be required from September 2028 onwards</li> <li>• The implications for the school's long-term financial sustainability were noted</li> </ul>		
1. Apologies for absence:	<p><b>Finance and Premises Committee (Additional GB members observing only)</b>  Jade Cheung from Finance and Premises Committee Meeting  Ania Bharadia from Full GB</p> <p><b>JH-S joined the meeting</b></p>		
2. Minutes of last meeting	Minutes from the previous meeting on 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026 were agreed and approved as a true record of the meeting.	ALL	
3. Matters Arising	None		
4. Budget 2026.2027	<p><b><u>DIS Outturn 2025.2026 &amp; CFR Report 3 years</u></b></p> <p>CC &amp; LM explained the following with members:</p> <p><i>Key Income Changes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional SEND funding: £26,000 increase due to EHCP numbers rising from 8 to 13 pupils</li> <li>• Rainbow Club: now operating profitably for the first time; ad-hoc rate increased to £15 (from £12 for advance bookings)</li> <li>• Junior school electricity reimbursement: £10,000 recovered; ongoing cost split revised</li> </ul>		

to 45:55 (previously 50:50)

- Additional SEND funding allocation: £11,300 received following budget submission

#### Major Expenditure Pressures

- E27 Teaching Assistant costs: £51,000 overspend due to agency staffing required for SEND pupils
- EHCP funding gap: average funding of ~£10,000 per pupil compared with ~£25,000 cost for 1:1 support, resulting in an approximate £15,000 shortfall per pupil
- NEST provision: four pupils requiring full-time dedicated support at approximately £25,000 per pupil (staffing costs only)
- Pay inflation: 3% cost-of-living increase budgeted for 2026–27 (previous year budgeted at 4%, actual increase 2.7%)

#### Cash Flow Position

- The school received a £72,000 cash advance from Barnet in April to avoid overdraft
- Approximately £20,000 remained after less than two months
- Agency TA invoices (E27) are paid weekly, creating ongoing immediate cash pressure
- The SBM (LM) confirmed that agency staffing payments are prioritised to avoid SEND pupils being sent home
- Further cash advances must be requested as required, with evidence of repayment capacity required

#### Cost Saving Measures Implemented (2025–26)

- Estimated total savings of approximately £25,000 achieved
- Staff secondment arrangement (Nikki to Fairway, two days per week)
- Consumables audit and tighter resource controls (estimated £6,000+ savings in E19)
- Voluntary parental contributions introduced in nursery and reception (£3 per term for consumables such as cooking ingredients and Play-Doh)
- Rainbow Club income improved through pricing adjustments and demand management
- Utility cost recovery from junior school

It was noted that these savings have been offset by unplanned SEND admissions, resulting in a net financial pressure of approximately £51,000.

CFR report 26.27 recovery plan & Detailed information -staffing 3 years

The committee approved a recovery plan projecting approximately £58,000 in additional savings, reducing the in-year deficit to £68,904 (for one year only). The proposed savings include:

- Covering Mrs Bharadia's class internally (CC & NS teaching)
- Continuing the agency TA model to maintain SEND flexibility
- Use of HLTAs for PPA cover
- Further reductions in curriculum resources
- Potential TLR restructuring (deferred pending academy decision)

It was noted that these savings are non-recurring and are dependent on variable factors, including staffing turnover, SEND admissions, and potential school reorganisation.

SEND provision

Governors noted the current SEND caseload:

- 13 EHCPs (increased from 8 at the start of the year)
- 4 NEST pupils requiring dedicated 1:1 support
- 3 Year 1 NEST pupils continuing into the next academic year (with 1 Year 2 pupil leaving/relocating)
- 5–6 additional consultations declined due to capacity constraints

It was further noted that NEST provision costs are not fully captured within standard SEND budgets, including:

- Dedicated specialist provision space (e.g., sensory equipment such as a swing)
- Full-day 1:1 support, including lunch and break times
- Specialist resources and materials required for individual needs

	<p>The finance committee agreed to submit the 26.27 budget to the GB for ratification.</p> <p><b>Action for CC/LM to separate NEST-related costs from general SEND expenditure in future financial reporting to enable clearer tracking and analysis.</b></p> <p><b>Action for CC/LM to include a breakdown of E07 (Other Staff Costs) and E19 (Learning Resources) in future reports.</b></p> <p><b>Action for LM: Submit deficit budget and recovery plan to the LA</b></p>		
5. Lettings Policy	Governors approved the revised policy, including the introduction of a £50 refundable deposit to cover potential cleaning and/or damage costs.		
6. Premises	<p>Capital budget allocation: £6,000 available; replacement of the electronic gate is required, with an estimated cost of £15,000–£20,000 (shared with the junior school)</p> <p>NS secondment: continuation is pending a decision for the next half term.</p>		
Licensed Deficit Application & Agreement Form 2026	<p><b>Full GB meeting for ratification of budget</b></p> <p>The following resolutions were formally agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body unanimously approved the 2026–27 deficit budget for ratification.</li> <li>• The recovery plan was endorsed for submission to Barnet, with academy conversion identified as the primary mechanism for financial recovery</li> <li>• Governors formally recorded their assurance that school leadership is acting with full professional integrity, and that the deficit position arises from unfunded statutory obligations rather than operational mismanagement</li> </ul>		
Date of next meeting	TBA		

