



## St John's Church of England VA Primary School

### Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting Held in St John's Primary School

on  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
at  
4:15pm

<b>Present:</b> Jo Leigh – Foundation Governor	<b>Chair</b> Safeguarding, Equality Duty, SDP -Curriculum
Jo Basquill – LA Governor	<b>Vice Chair</b> Finance, SDP – Future Planning
Olly Priestley – Ex Officio	
Sarah Brown – Staff Governor	EYFS, SDP – Curriculum
Luke Merchant – Foundation Governor	Health & Safety, GDPR, Cybersecurity, SDP – SIAMS
Ruth Knowlman – Foundation Governor	Collective Worship, SDP- Writing
Colin Simpson – Ex Officio	RE, SIAMS, Church School Distinctiveness, SDP – SIAMS
Rachael Horan – Parent Governor	SEND, Pupil Premium, Children Looked After
Claire Harding – Parent Governor	SDP - Writing

**Apologies:** None received

**Clerk:** Angela Morley

**In Attendance:** Vicki Mead, School Business Manager

Item	Details
1.	<p><b>WELCOME &amp; OPENING REFLECTION</b> The <b>Chair</b> welcomed everybody and introduced Claire Harding, the new Parent Governor.</p> <p>The <b>Rector</b> shared the prayer of the day celebrating the Feast of the Annunciation (commemoration of the visit of the archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary).</p>
2.	<p><b>APOLOGIES</b> No apologies. All Governors present.</p>
3.	<p><b>DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS</b> There were no matters to declare.</p>
4.	<p><b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025.</b> The minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.</p>
5.	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b> None raised.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Headteacher (<b>HT</b>) reported that after consideration, the information needed regarding assessment was too detailed for the Teaching and Learning Policy and has created an overarching statement for assessment to be referenced in the original policy.</li> <li>• The <b>HT</b> stated that Basic Awareness Training would be delivered after the meeting.</li> <li>• The <b>Clerk</b> reported that information had been circulated by email confirming that the cost of electricity had reduced by £400 per month following the installation of LED lighting throughout the school.</li> <li>• The <b>HT</b> reported that no further progress had been made in respect of updating the Religious Education Curriculum.</li> <li>• The <b>Clerk</b> confirmed that the BECOME information had been circulated to Governors.</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b>FINANCE</b> The following reports had been circulated prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft Budget Plan 2025/26</b></li> <li>• <b>School Financial Value Standard</b></li> </ul> <p>Governors received, noted and thanked the School Business Manager (<b>SBM</b>) for the reports.</p> <p><b><u>DRAFT BUDGET PLAN 2025/26</u></b></p> <p><b>SBM</b> highlighted the following in respect of the Draft Budget Plan 2025/26:</p> <p>Total 25/26 anticipated funding allocation: £1,403,723 Total 25/26 anticipated expenditure: £1,414,229</p>

In year surplus:

**£739**

- Estimates had been calculated based upon the October Census pupil numbers (214).
- The increase in salaries had been budgeted at 3% for Support Staff and 2.8% for Teaching Staff.
- The school contribution to National Insurance had increased by £28,000. The Department for Education (**DfE**) would reimburse approximately 75%.
- Pupil Premium numbers had increased from 64 to 69.
- The Core Offer had increased from £43,959 to £49,507.
- In order to successfully balance the budget, staffing reductions had been necessary. A Learning Support Assistant due to leave at the end of the summer term would not be replaced and 1-1 Learning Support vacancy would be covered internally.

**SBM** invited questions upon the draft budget plan.

**Q: Previously, concern had been expressed regarding the viability of the kitchen. Is this still the case?**

**SBM:** Explained that, as part of the budget planning process, a thorough evaluation of the kitchen finances had been conducted. As a result, the kitchen would be in surplus.

**Q: What would happen if we were to lose the contracts for the two schools?**

**SBM:** The income supplemented the school budget. Without this income, the kitchen would not be viable.

**Q: Could we take on any further schools?**

**SBM:** No, the kitchen did not have capacity for further contracts.

**Q: The 25/26 projected income had reduced from £55,000 to £40,000. Why is this the case?**

**SBM:** In 24/25, the school had run three catering contracts for one term only whilst West Buckland School served its notice period. The difference in income was in respect of this contract.

**Q: Will the predicted DfE grant in respect of the National Insurance contributions be permanent?**

**SBM:** The grant had been guaranteed for one year only.

**Q: Are the cuts to staffing levels manageable in school?**

**HT:** The Special Educational Needs (**SEN**) in the school had become increasingly challenging. Pupil Premium (**PP**) funding had been used to provide additional staffing support. Reducing staffing levels would inevitably impact the quality of education, because there would be less opportunity to provide intervention.

**Q: How will that impact the welfare of staff? How are we fulfilling our Christian values by reducing staffing levels?**

**HT:** The impact upon staff workload was inevitable. Staff wellbeing had been a key consideration in school. The challenge identified was the cascading impact upon

teaching and learning. In keeping with the school values, the staff team had been solid and supportive of one another.

**Q: Would it be possible to advertise for more volunteers?**

**HT:** Indicated that the intention was to undertake a major volunteer recruitment effort during the Summer term. The Rector offered to share the need for volunteers with church members.  
**Action Headteacher**

**Q: PP Funding appears to reduce in subsequent years. Why is this the case?**

**SBM:** Indicated that the lower figure reflects the planned reduction in classes from 8 to 7.

**Q: Do you have to justify the cuts to staff?**

**HT:** Confirmed that staff had been communicated with and decisions regarding the structure had been shared. He added that restructuring would be significant next year when the number of classes reduce. Strategic discussions had begun with County Officers and they had been constructive. Compassion had been central to conversations.

Having sought assurance that the school values had been central to the budget planning process, Governors approved the budget plan as circulated.

**Vicki Mead left the meeting.**

**SCHOOL FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD (SFVS).**

**SBM** explained that the **SFVS** helps to provide Governors with the assurance that they had met the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management. The **SFVS** checklist asked questions of the Governing Board in areas of resource management to seek assurance that the school had managed resources effectively. This document would then be used to identify possible areas for change to ensure resources are used to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for pupils. The SBM stated that this must be a standing item on the agenda.

Governors approved the **SFVS**.

**SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS AND TRADED SERVICES**

Governors noted that the Service Level Agreements and Traded Services had been detailed in the Draft Budget Plan and thanked the **SBM**.

**Q: Had checks been undertaken to establish where savings are possible?**

**HT:** Stated that the **SBM** had carefully examining every area and savings had been made across the board.

7. **HEADTEACHER SPRING (1) SHORT WRITTEN REPORT**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors noted that the report covered the following areas:

- **Attendance (to include month by month and ongoing data)**
- **Census Data**
- **Staff**
- **Admissions**
- **Behaviour**

- CPD
- Curriculum
- Enrichment
- Finance
- GDPR
- Safeguarding
- SEND
- SIAMS
- Premises

Governors thanked the **HT** for the report.

**HT** invited questions upon the report.

**Q: It is striking that almost a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM). What efforts are made to ensure all eligible families had applied?**

**HT:** Explained that the Admin Team had made a considerable effort to encourage parents/carers to apply. Further work was planned for the summer term.

**Q: What are the predicted Reception numbers for September?**

**HT:** Indicated that the forecast for the Reception intake had been positive; 23 first option.

**Q: Is the interest because St John's is a church school?**

**HT:** Responded that, in part, this had been the case. There had also been favourable comments regarding the school values. Additionally, many visitors indicated that they had heard that the school had an exceptionally good reputation and high standards in education.

**Q: Is the Social, Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional training shared with the rest of the school?**

**HT:** Explained that this training had been shared with key Learning Support and Teaching Staff.

**Q: Why have 5 pupils left since January?**

**HT:** Explained that it had not been because of dissatisfaction. Two had been offered a place at a school closer to their home and two further children had moved out of the area.

**Q: A Governor indicated that she had enjoyed coming into school to view the Science Week material. She expressed concern that there had been parents who did not appear to not understand the material. Should the school provide a simplified set of bullet points at events of this nature?**

**HT:** Thanked the Governor for her comments and indicated that this suggestion would be implemented.

**Q: Could there be a noticeboard to remind parents of what is on in school?**

**HT:** Liked the idea of a board to highlight what's on and offered to explore how the school might achieve a wider reach in terms of advertising school events.

**Action Headteacher**

Governors celebrated the range of enrichment opportunities and thanked the staff for their efforts in organising a good programme of imaginative events. **Action Headteacher**

A suggestion was made by a Governor to create an outside rest area for staff wellbeing. The Headteacher agreed to explore this further. **Action Headteacher**

	<p><b>Q: What strategies had been undertaken to improve pupil attendance?</b>  <b>HT:</b> Assured Governors that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken to improve attendance. Both he and the Administrator met weekly to create an action plan. He indicated that improvements had been evidenced in his Headteacher report.</p> <p><b>Q: What is happening in Y5? The evidence suggests an increase in persistent absence during February 2025?</b>  <b>HT:</b> Indicated that there had been significant illness during this period. The overarching attendance figures had not suggested a downward trend emerging in Year 5.</p> <p>The <b>HT</b> referred Governors to the attendance trends and stated that it had been noteworthy that the best attendance had been among the English as An Additional Language (<b>EAL</b>) pupils.</p>
8.	<p><b>SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION</b>  <b>HT:</b> Reported that Designated Safeguarding Lead (<b>DSL</b>) training had been completed by the three <b>DSL</b> leads.</p> <p><b>Pupil Wellbeing Report</b>  A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors thanked the <b>Deputy Headteacher</b> for the report.</p>
9.	<p><b>SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SPRING REPORT</b>  A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors thanked the <b>SENDCo</b> for the report.</p> <p><b>Q: Are there further children being assessed for EHCPs?</b>  The <b>HT</b> indicated that applications had been submitted for assessment.</p> <p><b>Q: What is the lead time on assessments?</b>  <b>HT:</b> Indicated that assessments take several months and had often been delayed.</p>
10.	<p><b>PREMISES</b></p> <p><b>Asset Management Plan</b>  A copy of the Asset Management Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Governors approved the plan.</p> <p><b>Premises Report</b>  A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors noted that the report covered the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Site Maintenance Work Undertaken by Site Manager</b></li> <li>• <b>Work Undertaken by External Contractors</b></li> <li>• <b>Planned Work</b></li> <li>• <b>Health and Safety Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Planned Visits</b></li> </ul> <p>The <b>SBM</b> sought Governor approval for the <b>Y3/Y4 Residential Trips to Barton Hall</b> from 28 – 29 April. Barton Hall was a PGL Residential Activity Centre and nestles in 46 acres of Devonshire countryside. The children take part in a number of outdoor activities. The <b>SBM</b></p>

	<p>explained that learning away from home would help the children flourish, grow in confidence, develop independence and improve their learning across the curriculum.</p> <p>The <b>HT</b> stated that the trip had been approved by Somerset Council.</p> <p>Governors approved the residential visit to Barton Hall.</p> <p><b>Q: Are there any children not attending?</b>  <b>HT:</b> Stated that fifteen children would not attend for a variety of reasons. A range of fun activities had been arranged for them to experience whilst remaining in school.</p> <p><b>Q: What happens if we do not replace the Fire Doors? Are we indemnified?</b>  <b>SBM:</b> The replacement of the Fire Doors had been highlighted in the Fire Risk Assessment action plan to be undertaken within a three-year period. So long as this matter had been addressed, the school would be indemnified.</p>
11.	<p><b>POLICY REVIEWS</b></p> <p>The following policies were reviewed and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy</li> <li>• Attendance Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>18:15 Colin Simpson left the meeting.</b></p>
12.	<p><b>GOVERNOR ITEMS</b></p> <p><b>Governor Vacancies:</b>  <b>HT:</b> reported that he had been in conversation with a potential candidate for the role of Foundation Governor.</p> <p><b>Skills Audit:</b>  A Skills Audit summary had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Q: Why had there been no reference to Christian Distinctiveness included in the list of skills?</b>  <b>Clerk:</b> Stated that the list had been a generic and provided by Governor Services.</p> <p>Governors asked the clerk to source additional questions referencing Christian Distinctiveness and to update and circulate the skills survey accordingly. <b>Action Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Governor Training and Feedback:</b></p> <p>A number of Governors had attended training and shared the following feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collective Worship training.</b> Very informative. Encouraged schools to hold collective worship in differing spaces. The content had been low on content regarding monitoring advice.</li> <li>• <b>New to Governance.</b> Elements of the course had been useful, especially the opportunity to meet Governors from other schools.</li> <li>• <b>Human Resources (HR) Governance.</b> It had been useful to understand the distinction between operational and strategic <b>HR</b> matters and how best to hold the <b>HT</b> to account.</li> </ul>

### **Governor Monitoring and Feedback:**

- **Health and Safety:** A visit had been undertaken in January. This had been the first visit for the Governor concerned and had centred around fact finding. Initial impressions had been that Health and Safety was well managed. The Site Manager was clearly organised and proactive.
- **SDP – Writing:** Examinations of children's books evidenced clear and ongoing improvements. There had been many positive written comments from Teaching Staff. Children had been very confident in communicating their enthusiasm for writing and had clearly enjoyed in their learning.
- **Early Years:** Very positive and encouraging monitoring visit.
- **SEND:** Governor met with Headteacher and SENDCo. Very informative session, the Governor learnt much about the various **SEND** categories and needs. Of particular note had been that Educational Health Care Plans would not automatically update as children moved up through the school. This had highlighted challenges for teaching staff. The **SEND** monitor stated that she had been surprised by the extent of the workload.
- **PP:** Governor met with Headteacher and discovered information in respect of averages and demographics. The Governor had been surprised at the levels of data retained for each child and the thorough recording of needs. Progress had been evidenced very well.

### **Clerks Briefing Update:**

- Recycling Regulations: from the 31 March 2025, schools, along with all workplaces will be required to separate dry recyclable waste such as paper, card, glass, metals and plastic, from food waste and black bin waste. Governors/trustees should receive assurances that their schools had facilities in place to meet these regulation.

The Clerk confirmed that the school separates waste as specified above. The school had pupil recycling monitors to assist.

- The Clerk reported that she had circulated to Governors the new **DfE SEND** guidance for Governing Boards.

### **General Governor Business:**

- A Governor offered to prepare Easter Cards from the Governing Board to staff.

### **Reflections on Meeting**

Governors reflected upon the meeting and concluded:

- Really positive meeting.
- Good ways forward proposed for the school.
- Excellent feedback in terms of monitoring visits.
- Good that Governors had the welfare interests of staff at the heart of discussions.
- Heartening to have all Governors present.
- Great atmosphere – enthusiastic contributions.

	<b>HT</b> commented that he had felt well supported by Governors and thanked Governors for their support to staff.
15.	<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b> The Clerk reported that no correspondence had been received.
16.	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> The next meeting of the Full Governing Board will be held in school on <b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b> in school at <b>4:15pm</b> .

Meeting closed at 18:30

**Action points arising from meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
6.	Advertise for more volunteers.	<b>HT</b>
7.	Staff to create a list of bullet points for parents for Science Week and similar events.	<b>HT</b>
7.	Create noticeboard to advertise school and friends events.	<b>HT</b>
7.	Explore possibility of developing outside seating area for staff.	<b>HT</b>
12.	Update and recirculate Skills Audit.	<b>HT</b>

Signed.....

Chair of Governors

Date.....