



DRAFT

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 11th February 2025
at
4:15pm

Present: Jo Leigh – Foundation Governor

Olly Priestley – Ex Officio

Sarah Brown – Staff Governor

Luke Merchant – Foundation Governor

Ruth Knowlman – Foundation Governor

Colin Simpson – Ex Officio

Rachael Horan – Parent Governor

Chair Safeguarding, SEND, PP and
CLA, Equality Duty, SDP -Curriculum

EYFS, SDP – Curriculum

Health & Safety, GDPR,

Cybersecurity, SDP – SIAMS

Collective Worship, SDP- Writing

SIAMS, Church School

Distinctiveness, SDP – SIAMS

Apologies: Joe Basquill - LA Governor

Claire Harding – Parent Governor

Vice Chair Finance, SDP – Future
Planning

Clerk: Angela Morley

In Attendance: Vicki Mead, School Business Manager

Item	Details
1.	WELCOME & OPENING REFLECTION The Chair welcomed everybody and introduced the new Parent Governor, Rachael Horan. The Rector led Governors in prayer.

2.	<p>APOLOGIES Apologies had been received from Joe Basquill and Claire Harding who were unable to attend due to the change of date. Governors accepted the apologies.</p>
3.	<p>DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS There were no matters to declare.</p>
4.	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26th November 2024. The minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.</p>
5.	<p>MATTERS ARISING None raised.</p> <p>Outstanding Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher (HT) reported that he had not yet updated the Teaching and Learning Policy. He stated that work upon the assessment criteria had almost been completed and the outcomes would be presented at the next Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting. Action HT • The School Business Manager (SBM) reported that a cost/benefit analysis of staff absence insurance had been undertaken. It was concluded that the current arrangements (insuring teachers from day one of absence) continued to be best value. Insuring Support Staff whilst absent would not be cost effective. • The Clerk had contacted Churches Together regarding the Foundation Governor vacancies but no candidates had come forward. • The Clerk reported that all Governors had been made aware of their responsibility to undertake Safeguarding training. The majority of Governors had completed this training. The Clerk had received assurances from Governors that all outstanding training would be completed by the next FGB meeting. • Due to unforeseen circumstances, Basis Awareness training will not be delivered until the next FGB meeting. Action Clerk/Headteacher
6.	<p>MONTH 9 FINANCE REPORT The Month 9 report and accompanying notes had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Headteacher and School Business Manager explained that this had been an extraordinarily challenging year, resulting in a range overspends in several Cost Centres and provided the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIMS – an additional £4,000 had been charged to transfer this service from Praestantia to ESS. • A child unable to attend school and still on roll had been receiving Forest School Support. This had not been fully reimbursed by Virtual Schools. • Two children required One-to-One support. The funding provided had not meet actual staff costs.

- There had been multiple support staff absences in the following teams: Kitchen, Teaching Assistants, After School and Breakfast Clubs (**ASC and BC**). Cover arrangements had incurred additional costs. These costs had particularly impacted fee paying services i.e. school meals, **ASC** and **BC**. The impact of which had been a deficit balance in all three areas.

HT informed Governors that new regulations will be introduced in 2026 stating that **ASC** must remain open until 6pm each day.

SBM reported that **ASC** had been losing approximately £100. A slight improvement had been discerned since the fee increase but this action had not made up the shortfall. Governors confirmed that the **ASC** is a vital service for parents/carers and agreed to subsidise the provision from the school budget.

Q: How has the introduction of last-minute booking availability impacted the way in which people book?

SBM: The school encourages families to order meals and book clubs in advance. There had always been some flexibility afforded to those families whose children may go hungry if the booking rules were to be rigorously applied. Late booking of **ASC** had been trailed to provide families an opportunity to book last minute. This had resulted in a modest difference to income but not significant.

- A burst pipe in the staff room had cost a significant sum to correct.
- The curriculum subscription Cost Centre had been overspent. A full analysis had been undertaken and changes proposed for the 2025/26 budget. The Staff Governor commented that many subscriptions had been disproportionately inflated due to the additional class in one year group. The fees would reduce when the school resumes single form entry.
- The Gold Library Service had previously been offered free to VA schools as part of the Core Offer. The School had not been made aware that this was for one year only. The subscription will be amended to Silver in the 25/26 academic year.

Governors noted the comments and thanked the **SBM** and **HT** for the detailed notes accompanying the **Month 9 Report**.

BENCHMARKING REPORT

The **Benchmarking** report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors received and noted the contents of the report.

RENEWAL OF CATERING CONTRACT AND CHARGES

The **SBM** reported that the prices charged for school meals will increase with effect from 1st September 2025 from £2.80 to £2.90.

The **SBM** informed Governors that the contract for meals provided to Stawley and Sampford Arundel schools had been updated and renewed for one year only with effect from the beginning of the Summer term.

The **SBM** informed Governors that a recent national survey had highlighted a funding gap of at least 38p per subsidised meal. She stated that In previous years the kitchen had generated a surplus but this was no longer the case due to reductions in subsidies and increases in staff, energy and food costs.

Q: How many meals are provided free and how many are paid?

HT: responded by stating that 78 Key Stage 1 (**KS1**) children had entitlement to universal free school meals and 53 **KS2** children had entitlement to free school meals. An average of 20 pupils per day paid for lunches.

Q: How much do the meals cost?

SBM: responded by stating that the cost of meals was £2.80. Therefore, £56.00 per day had been the average income. The kitchen had been entirely dependent upon subsidies for the remainder of its income.

Q: What would the benefit be of putting the catering provision out to contract instead of the current Self-Managed arrangement?

HT: Stated that the outsourcing option had advantages and disadvantages. The self-managed option better enables the school to align the catering service to the school's vision and values. Quality, safety and compliance was more readily assured but this generated significant line management and administrative investment from a range of staff members (not least the **HT** and **SBM**). Outsourcing would release staff from this high intensity responsibility but there would be a loss of control over the level and quality of service.

The **HT** stated that it would not be a straightforward process to outsource as careful consideration would be necessary in order to assess who best to appoint. It would be crucial to select a contractor able to deliver a cost effective, efficient and quality service.

Q: What would happen to staff if the catering were to be outsourced?

HT explained that it would depend upon whether the meals would be cooked in house or delivered to the school. The options would be TUPE or redundancy.

Governors expressed compassion for the staff concerned and emphasised that they would be seeking assurances that staff would be treated fairly and with dignity.

After a wide-ranging discussion regarding the financial losses sustained by the kitchen Governors resolved that consideration should be given to outsourcing the catering provision.

The **HT/SBM** agreed to explore the various options and present the outcomes to a future FGB meeting. **Action HT/SBM**

PAY AWARD

Consideration was given to the 25/26 staff pay awards. Governors agreed to budget in accordance with the Local Authority recommendations:

- 2.8% Teaching Staff with effect from 01/09/2025
- 3% Support Staff with effect from 01/04/2025

Q: Staff wellbeing: What does the school offer in terms of refreshments to staff?

HT: Tea, coffee and milk are provided free of charge in the staff room.

Governors expressed a wish that this practice continues in order to demonstrate support to staff. Governors recommended that biscuits be purchased from time to time.

7. **HEADTEACHER AUTUMN TERM WRITTEN REPORT**

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Characteristics • Attendance • Attainment and Achievement • Teaching • Staff CPD • Pupil Premium • Sports Premium • Education Enrichment • Exclusions During Autumn Term <p>Governors thanks the Headteacher for the report.</p> <p>HT highlighted details in the report and commented that the new School Business Manager had done really well. He also thanked the previous Business Manager for her support during the transition.</p> <p>HT invited questions upon the report.</p> <p>Q: Do parents of high tariff children receive support at home? HT: The Pastoral Support Deputy Head had communicated with other agencies and sought to harness support.</p> <p>Q: Attendance: Does the fine go to County or school? HT: All fines were collected by the Department for Education.</p>
8.	<p>SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p>HT: Reported that around 20 children had been subject to child protection.</p> <p>HT: Reported that the Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Audit had been completed and the school had been fully compliant. The Chair had supported the HT and confirmed that all had been in order. She commented that the work the school had undertaken to support families had been of particular note.</p>
9.	<p>PREMISES</p> <p>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"> • Site maintenance undertaken by Site Manager • Work undertaken by external contractors • Planned capital work to roof and wet areas. 10% liability to be paid over a three-year period. Governors agreed to pay over three years. • Health and Safety update and analysis. <p>Asbestos training</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that she had undertaken asbestos training. The HT stated that he and the SBM had been booked to attend training. The Site Manager had undertaken training during the Summer term.</p> <p>Q: Has the electricity consumption reduced since the installation of LED lighting? SBM stated that it had been too early to analyse.</p> <p>Governors asked for a report to be submitted to the autumn meeting due to be held in Oct 25.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action HT</p>

10.	<p>SIAMS HT: Informed Governors that spirituality training had been the main focus during the academic year 24/25. The 'In, Out and Up' method had been chosen as the preferred teaching option.</p> <p>The Ethos Committee had discussed the options in respect of updating the Religious Education (RE) curriculum. The HT explained that no one scheme appears to suit the school context. Ongoing research had been necessary. HT to further report upon progress. Action HT</p>
11.	<p>COMPLAINTS HT reported that there had been one formal complaint submitted to the school during the previous twelve-month period. The complaint had been appropriately actioned.</p>
12.	<p>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN HT: reported that RE had been reviewed by the Rector. It had been noted that significant work had been undertaken in respect of the delivery of RE and reported that the Rector had commented positively.</p> <p>He further reported that a number of excellent enrichment activities had been offered and enjoyed by the children.</p> <p>The HT stated that there would shortly be a change in English Lead. He congratulated staff upon the excellent work undertaken in writing. He shared that there had been extensive pupil enthusiasm for writing across the school.</p> <p>The HT asserted that good progress had been made to train staff to successfully deliver the curriculum and record progress consistently.</p> <p>The HT stated that more work was necessary in respect of the marketing proposals.</p>
13.	<p>POLICY REVIEWS The following policies were reviewed and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charging and Remissions • Biometric Data • Statement on Single Public Sector Equality Duty • Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns at Work
14.	<p>GOVERNOR ITEMS Governor Vacancies: The Clerk confirmed that both Parent Governors vacancies had been filled. Governors welcomed the new postholders.</p> <p>Governor Responsibilities: The Clerk reported that a number of Governor responsibility roles had become vacant. Governors agreed to allocate the vacant responsibilities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions Committee third member – Sarah Brown • Asset Management Group – Jo Leigh

- Pay Committee third member – Joe Basquill
- SDP Writing – Claire Harding
- SEND, PP and CLA – Rachael Horan

Governor Training and Feedback:

The **Chair** reported that she had undertaken School Financial Management training. She stated that the course had been informative and helpful.

Governor Monitoring and Feedback:

The **Chair** explained that all governors are required to provide monitoring feedback to **FGB** meetings. The **Clerk** reminded Governors to provide her with copies of monitoring forms.

Clerks Briefing Update:

- **Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

The Clerk reported that there had been an amendment to the Equality Act in October 2024. The amendment required employers to take reasonable steps to prevent employee sexual harassment. It would be important for Governors to ensure a culture exists that does not tolerate harassment. All **LA** Human Resources model policies ensure compliance with the Act. Governors sought assurances that the school culture upholds the conditions of the Act. The **HT** confirmed that the school had a good strategy and staff had been provided with good support that would be harnessed in the event of an incident i.e; outside support/Care First/Pastoral lead in the school. Governors thanked the **HT** for his assurances and recommended this matter be reviewed in one year. **Action Clerk**

- **Children in Care: Guide for School Governors**

Become, the charity for children in care and young carers, has produced a guide for governing board. This guide provides questions that board members may wish to ask. Governors asked the Clerk to circulate the details. **Action Clerk**

REFLECTION UPON MEETING

Governors reflected upon the meeting and concluded:

- There had been compassion expressed during discussions surrounding the impact of possible redundancy upon the kitchen staff.
- Considerable care for children had run as a thread throughout the meeting.
- Governors had been kind and compassionate towards each other during the meeting.
- Significant celebration and joy had been expressed concerning achievement and enrichment.
- Conversations had taken place regarding reaching out to the wider community.
- The vision and values of the school had been central to discussion.

World Book Day

The Staff Governor asked if Governors would like to take part in World Book Day on Thursday 6th March. Governors were invited to share with small groups of children a favourite story or section of a book.

15.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that no correspondence had been received.

16.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Full Governing Board will be held in school on **Tuesday 25th March 2025** in school at **4:15pm**.

Meeting closed at 18:30pm

Action points arising from meeting held 11th February 2025

Minute Ref	Action Point	Responsibility
5	Update Teaching and Learning Policy	HT
5	Deliver Basic Awareness training	HT
6	Check if reduction in electricity charges (re: LED lighting)	SBM
10.	Source new RE curriculum material	HT
14.	Review sexual harassment prevention procedures (Feb 26)	Clerk
14.	Circulate BECOME information	Clerk

Signed.....

Chair of Governors

Date.....