

*'With God there is no limit to what you can do. There is no obstacle you can't overcome.
Through Him, all things are possible.' Matthew 19.26*

ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Monday 13 July 2020 at 6.45pm held via Google Meets
MINUTES

Present: *Parent Governors:* Catherine Harvey, Hannah Dreager
Foundation Governors: Caroline Fleming (chair), Simon Counce, Henry Loweth, Delia Bonner, Dennis Stamps (ex-officio). Hilary Doherty, Janet Croot, Stuart Burnett
Local Authority Governor: Lucy Parr
Headteacher: Rizelle Crouch
Staff Governor: Caroline Addis

Apologies: None

In attendance: Tracey Norris, Herts for Learning (HfL), Kate Birss (AHT)

This meeting was held via Google Meets

		Action
1.	<p>Prayer, Welcome and introductions absences</p> <p>Caroline Fleming welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for joining the meeting remotely. There were no apologies for absence. The focus of meeting would be to reflect on the summer term and the lessons learnt during this unprecedented time of school closure/home learning. Governors acknowledged the huge achievement of the school to achieve a full cohort for its Reception class in September 2020 against the background of the school's new admissions policy and potential competition from the Harpenden Academy's feeder status to SJL.</p> <p>Dennis Stamps led the meeting in prayer, based on the new school prayer.</p>	
2.	<p>Procedural items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Apologies: There were no apologies for absence.b. To declare any conflict of interests: none relevant for this meeting. Long standing conflict: Dennis Stamps – school hall.c. Any other business: three items were raised, see agenda item 11.d. To approve the minutes of the previous meetings: the minutes of 19 May were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. These would be signed and filed in the school office at the earliest opportunity.e. To consider matters arising from the previous meeting:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sign and file the minutes of the last meeting (February 2020): completed.▪ Circulate letter to parents re school opening plans to governors: completed.▪ Sign and submit budget to HCC: completed.▪ All governors to complete one evidence form to support Mental Health award application: completed see agenda item 8.▪ Head to share photos of the computer suite with governors: completed.▪ Teachers to compile a list of issues raised by parents through email communications or in response to school reports being sent home:	Chair

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	completed.	
3.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>The Safeguarding report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The document had been prepared on 24 June and shared with the safeguarding governor. ▪ Prevent training has been completed by staff. ▪ Governor training was up to date and RC thanked governors for their co-operation in this regard. ▪ Online safety policy: this document was in draft format. ▪ ESafety units: lots of guidance was being shared with parents during lock down, as well as signposting of relevant online safety resources. ▪ Y6 parents had received a class-specific email alerting parents to apps that their children should not be using. ▪ Safer recruitment training: CF had undertaken this. ▪ SCR has been checked. ▪ CP caseload: this was lower than normal, a result of less pupils in school. A number of issues had been followed up but no referrals had been made. ▪ Q were all vulnerable pupils now in school? Yes and all had attended for transition days, one family had been reluctant but had been persuaded. ▪ HB had tried to book safer recruitment training, but it was full. The next available session was 25 September. ▪ SCR training is offered by HfL and can be accessed by governors. 	
4.	<p>Headteacher’s Written Update</p> <p>The HT’s report had been circulated in advance of the meeting, the following was discussed in more detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update since the report had been written: pupil numbers in Reception had fallen from 22 to 21 due to one pupil accepting a place at a closer school. ▪ Y6: one leaver just before lock down whose family moved away from the area (the revised total for Diamond class was confirmed as 33). ▪ Sapphire: 30 pupils. One pupil had left just before lockdown and moved to Crabtree Juniors. ▪ Emerald: one pupil had left (sibling of Y6), relocation to Tring. 29 pupils. ▪ The responses from the Y6 leavers questionnaire had been circulated and governors considered how much the Covid-19 disruption might have coloured the responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Links to church was ranked towards the lower end. Staff would consider how this could be addressed, values reinforced and links with church re-established post-Covid. ○ There were no apparent themes emerging from the responses to indicate why this had been ranked so low. ○ Impact of mindfulness lessons was also ranked low. ▪ KB confirmed that questions 1-8 were new and had been added as part of the well-being award, Q9 onwards were the same as previous years which would give the school comparative data. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A general wellbeing questionnaire for pupils would be issued at the beginning of the year, it would be interested to compare other year group responses in the autumn term. ▪ Q should we ask the parents the same question in next parents survey? This would be considered, KB was mindful that some of the questions needed to remain the same (to allow for meaningful comparative data) but there was flexibility to change some of the questions. ▪ Mindfulness needed embedding in all year groups, this had worked particularly well in Y6 in previous years when the class would work with a different teacher on mindfulness sessions in the build up to SATs (this had not happened this year). ▪ Governors were pleased to have had this opportunity to get insights from Y6, ordinarily, representatives from Y6 would have presented to the FGB at this meeting. ▪ SDP priority 2 was linked to the school’s mental health award. This had been a huge piece of work, preparing the submission and collating 170+ pieces of evidence. <p>Action: HT to share workbook with governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The impact of the application process and the creation of the staff wellbeing committee was well timed in terms of the team’s ability to cope during the Covid-19 period. Staff have supported each other really well. ▪ Governors were pleased that RC had been able to finalise the staff structure for September with a full time teacher in reception class. ▪ Q Did RC have capacity to teach in Sapphire class each Wednesday? This decision had been taken because of staff allocations across the classes and budget considerations. Additional admin time has been incorporated into the budget in order to relieve RC of some of her other responsibilities. ▪ HLTA had been appointed, this would help T&L outcomes and provide flexibility within the staffing structure (previously RC had been covering some PPA time). ▪ Maternity cover in Emerald Class continues to be provided with increased hours from other staff. Mrs Weldon (four days) and KB (one day). ▪ In accordance with employment law, RC is waiting for Mrs Jayes to contact school to discuss her return to work. 	RC
5.	<p>Lock Down Learnings</p> <p>A parent survey had been collecting feedback on the provision during the summer term. The closing date was today and RC had already shared some emerging themes (see powerpoint report uploaded to Covid-19 folder in Governor Hub). CF and RC summarised the school’s response to the pandemic and the feedback received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School closed on 20 March. ▪ Remained open for key worker children. ▪ Expanded to R/Y1 and Y6 from 1 June. ▪ Transition session for other year groups. ▪ Weekly calls between SLT and Chair/vice-chair. ▪ The school had responded quickly to rapidly changing guidance. ▪ During this time, emails from parents have been mostly positive, when issues have been raised, these have been responded to quickly. Naturally parents were 	

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	<p>becoming increasingly concerned about the amount of schooling their child/children were missing, this was a national issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff support for each other via WhatsApp group has been powerful. ▪ Staff responded well to the changing demands placed on them, they have been setting home learning tasks, upskilling their IT skills, participating in online training etc. ▪ Parent queries (via class emails) have been immediately addressed. ▪ R&M improvements have been made to the school during this period. ▪ Subject leader action plans have been updated. ▪ Teacher practice has developed and improved in response to having multiply age groups in each bubble. Additionally, pupil confidence has grown as older children have been able to support younger pupils (within bubbles). ▪ RC asked staff to keep a log of hours, some members of staff have been working too much. ▪ Access to staff server had been problematic. ▪ Case studies have been written up and training completed for the mental health award. ▪ There have been lots of positive aspects to be drawn from the Covid experience as well as some difficulties which would need to be addressed/overcome so that the school was better placed to face another lockdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anxiety of staff, personal health. ○ Risk to pupils and wider family members. ○ Difficulties teaching multiply age groups. ○ High demand for technology, inadequate IT resources/access to the server. ▪ Q: A new server had been purchased, what other IT issue needed to be addressed? Surface Pros were being used in the key worker bubble, it was difficult to access Oaks Academy from these devices. The Finance Committee were aware of this issue and were putting a plan in place. ▪ KB was pleased that the school had already begun work on supporting staff wellbeing. High expectations were placed on staff and the school’s efforts to support this meant that staff have coped well during this period. ▪ RC noted that despite this, all staff have faced challenging/low periods at some point during the period. ▪ The Chair and Vice-Chair were mindful of this and earlier in the day had delivered a bottle of wine / box of chocolates to each staff member as a gesture of thanks to all staff. ▪ Home learning has been set every week. In response to parent requests, teachers had started up-loading this on preceding Friday to give parents time to get resources ready for Monday. ▪ In addition to English/maths and curriculum topics set by teachers, there were links on the website to other online resources, eg Oaks Academy/BBC bitesize. ▪ In response to parental requests, CPG books had been given to Y4-6 and the school had printed out paper resources for collection. ▪ Parent feedback: positive about Oak Academy maths but found the English repetitive. ▪ Several parents had wanted extra challenge for their children. ▪ Parents had asked for feedback to be more frequent. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q What was the school’s contingency plan if another lockdown/local spike occurred? RC confirmed that this had been considered, and it may adopt the Google Classroom platform if needed in the future. ▪ HfL would be running training on Google Classrooms in September. ▪ Q RE curriculum, what were the resources like? The Diocese has provided signposting for the Oak Academy. The RE subject leader has been setting RE for home learning. ▪ Q Would SLT respond to parents with an update of key themes on their feedback? Yes RC was in the process of drafting a letter to parents. ▪ Q When would the school share its plans for September/contingency plan with parents? This information will be in the letter to parents which would be sent out before the end of term. This would include information on what to do in response to a potential Covid diagnosis. (Public Health England guidance will be followed at all times). ▪ From September, pupil will be in year group bubbles, there will no longer be key worker bubbles. ▪ Pupil resilience was high. Only four children (from different year groups) had been anxious about coming onto the school premises. Support was given by adults on site. ▪ The majority of pupils have settled into new routines well. Staff have worked hard to reinforce the key messages eg washing hands. ▪ Contingency planning (if home learning was needed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide increased contact with teacher via different platforms, video messages, phone calls etc. ○ Increase feedback to pupils. ○ Develop Google Classrooms. ▪ The ebuletin would remain post-Covid and replace the old style newsletter. ▪ It had been impossible to have more children back in school due to small staff numbers and restricted school size whilst still remaining compliant with the guidance on bubble sizes. ▪ JC had attended a Diocese session recently and it was clear that other schools had chosen to interpret the guidance slightly differently, depending on their own unique circumstances. ▪ There had been extensive communication to parents. ▪ 60% of parents felt that home learning had been set at the right amount. ▪ 17% felt that too much had been set. ▪ Q had SLT looked at parent survey in terms of year groups responses? The automated report did not break down the responses in this way. ▪ Q future technology needs for pupils/access to IT at home? RC had made parents aware several times of the James Marshall Foundation (which had offered to provide laptops to families who needed IT equipment). No families had applied. ▪ Q Y5 and Sapphire had the highest response rate, what had caused this? SLT would look into this. The individual responses could be printed off to see if there were any particular issues. ▪ Parent governors suggested that the Y5 parent cohort would perhaps be the most anxious/eager to raise issues with school as this year group had not been 	
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	<p>back in school at all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other local schools have done different things, eg some were able to bring back Y2-5 for 2+ days because they had the space/capacity or because Y6 pupils broke up earlier. <p>Plans for September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All pupils would be expected back, staggered times for drop off/pick up. Provision would be made for clubs. Additional cleaning would be needed. Risk management would need to be updated, currently this was in place for 15 pupils in each bubble not a whole class. Automated hand sanitisers had been purchased. Two members of staff were classified as at risk, they would need personalised risk assessments in place. A grouping of diamond and sapphire classes would be a bubble to allow teachers to move between bubbles and provide other T&L opportunities. Q How would school support anxious parents who might not want to send children back to school? RC was aware of one very vulnerable family who would need an individual approach/support. This would be the same approach as in June. <p>Action: CF may convene an FGB meeting in late August to discuss any changes which might be required in the event that government guidance was updated.</p>	Chair
6.	<p>School Development Plan</p> <p>The SDP had been reviewed by the SEC and an updated version was available on governor hub. Work was now underway on the SDP for 2020/21. The following was shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HfL has produced some comprehensive curriculum resources for maths, English and assessment. Subject leaders would remain unchanged. Staff have been using google docs to share and annotate the SDP and RC suggested that governors could use this too. She would send governors a link to the document and asked that they rank priorities in order of importance. RC would use this feedback to finalise the SDP. Assessment for learning would be a focus in the autumn term. <p>Action: Governors to complete and return comments by end of July. This was a good opportunity for governors to provide feedback and demonstrate impact.</p>	All
7.	<p>Annual Reports</p> <p>a. H&S report: SB referred the meeting to the H&S Annual Report (uploaded in advance of the meeting) and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two recorded accidents had taken place at school. Accidents were recorded in a formal accident book. No reportable injuries to any members of staff during the year. Quinquennial premises survey had been undertaken by Nick Martin (this was completed every five years) which raised a few minor issues which had been or were in the process of being addressed. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Termly fire drills had taken place. ▪ Asbestos survey: slight disturbance in boiler room but the area was rarely accessed so risk was low/acceptable. 	
8.	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>Minutes of all committee meeting were available on Governor Hub, questions were invited:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions: no questions raised. Governors were pleased that in-year admissions have been processed promptly. Finance & Premises: no questions raised. School Effectiveness: Q was the committee happy with response of school to concerns of parents during remote learning? Most concerns have been about feedback and marking and the committee would be mindful of this if the school had to return to some form of home learning. The potential future use of Google Classroom would hopefully address this. Baseline assessment would be made at the beginning of September to make sure those that have fallen below were identified and interventions put in place. Personnel: Work has continued for this committee although there has not been a meeting this term; online interviews have been held and the HT PM review would take place this week. 	
9.	<p>Governor Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Governor Wellbeing: The chair reminded all present that governors had a duty of care to support each other. It was great to reflect on how well governors have maintained communications through this time. She encouraged governors to try not to send too many late night/weekend emails to avoid overloading each other and staff. Governor newsletter: this was almost complete and the chair thanked governors for comments received. The newsletter did not refer much to the proposed arrangements for September as this was being covered by RC in her communication to parents. Governor visits: governors reflected on their effectiveness and how Covid-19 had impacted their visits during the summer term. Q When would be a safe and appropriate time to return to governor visits? It was agreed that governors should arrange subject leader meetings via Google Meets in the autumn term. In addition, staff conversations re class links/PP/SEND etc could also take place via google meets. Governor training: The in-house training session would be agreed at the next FGB meeting. Governors should think strategically about what training they should book. <p>Action: Chairs of committees to look at training opportunities and discuss with committee members.</p> <p>Action: HL would contact Diocese for list of training (there was no need to use HfL exclusively).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Governor succession planning: Stuart Burnett’s term of office (foundation governor) would expire on 31 July and he had agreed to continue for another term. SB would complete the appropriate paperwork to be approved by the St 	<p>Comm Chairs HL</p>

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	<p>John’s PCC and then submit to the Diocese. The chair recorded a vote of thanks for Caroline Addis, staff governor, who would be stepping down at the end of term. She had done an excellent job liaising between governors and staff.</p> <p>f. Review effectiveness of governing body: the Chair invited feedback from governors separate to this meeting. Some governors had found it hard to feel connected to the FGB/school during lock down. On behalf of the governors, CH thanked the chair and vice-chair for their hard work during this period.</p>	
10.	<p>Policy Review</p> <p>The following policies had been reviewed by committees and were recommended for ratification:</p> <p>a. Collective Worship: approved.</p> <p>b. H&S Policy: approved.</p> <p>c. Home school agreement: approved by SEC, noted. This would be shared with all parents at the beginning of the year.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would not be necessary to review every policy in light of Covid-19 implications.</p>	
11.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>a. PTA AGM: two new co-chairs had been elected who were full of energy and ideas and had already launched a fund raising appeal to raise £10,000 (the amount the summer ball usually raised). £1000 had already been donated. The PTA had set up a Facebook group to improve communications with parents and create community spirit.</p> <p>Action: LP would join the group as a former parent.</p> <p>b. Communications working party: LP/JC/CF had met recently to discuss communications and an update would be presented to the FGB in the autumn term. It was agreed that there should be regular discussion on the school’s communication strategy going forward.</p> <p>HD and HDo volunteered to join the working party.</p> <p>Action: Set up a meeting in September.</p> <p>Action: LP to look at what communication platforms other school use.</p> <p>c. Summer club: governors were pleased that a summer club was being offered and noted that it had already sold out. The school would continue to arrange Easter and half term clubs but were happy for an external provider to run the summer club.</p>	<p>LP</p> <p>Comms W/P</p>
12.	<p>Date of next meetings</p> <p>Monday 24 August: back up meeting.</p> <p>Monday 12 October at 7pm</p> <p>Tuesday 17 November – standalone topic.</p> <p>Friday 4 December: annual governors day</p> <p>Tuesday 2 February 2021</p> <p>Wednesday 19 May 2021</p> <p>Monday 12 July 2021</p>	

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Summary of Actions Agreed			
Agenda item	Action	Responsibility	Deadline
2	Sign minutes and file in school office	Chair	
4	Upload copy of Mental Health/Wellbeing submission workbook to governor hub	RC	
6	Governors to complete Google Doc re SDP and return comments by end of July	All governors	31 July
12	Training: Agree in-house training session at next FGB Meeting Committee chairs to review training needs of committee members HL to get up to date list of training available from Diocese	CF Comm Chairs HL	Oct
11	Communications working party: Arrange a meeting and agree next steps, report to Autumn FGB Lucy Parr to review other school’s communication platforms Lucy Parr to join PTA Facebook Group	CF LP	