

‘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

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ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Thursday 7 February 2024 at 7pm held at the school

MINUTES

FGB ATTENDANCE TRACKER

Name	Governor Type	5 Oct	7 Feb	14 May	20 Jun
Delia Boner	Associate Member	A	A		
Stuart Burnett	Foundation Governor	P	Retired 31 December 2023		
Simon Counce	Foundation Governor	P	P		
Anna Cherniaeva	Staff governor	P	A		
Rizelle Crouch	Headteacher	P	P		
Hilary Doherty	Foundation Governor	P	P	Retired 7/2/24	
Dr Hannah Draeger	Parent Governor (moved to LA slot on 18/10/23)	P	P		
Caroline Fleming	Foundation Governor	P	Retired 31 December 2023		
Austin Finnegan	Parent Governor		P		
Dr Catherine Harvey	Co-opted Governor	P	A		
Henry Loweth	Foundation Governor	P	P		
Lucy Parr	Foundation Governor	P	P		
Natalie Pepper	Parent Governor	P	P		
Marie Price	Foundation Governor	P	P		
Mary Jean Pritchard	LA governor (moved to Foundation slot on 18/10/23)	P	P		
Charlotte McCrossin	Foundation Governor	P	P		
Rev’d Dennis Stamps	Foundation Ex-Officio	P	P		
In attendance					
Tracey Norris	HFL Education Clerk	P	P		

P	Present
A	Apologies provided

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N	Not present
O	Observer

1.	Welcome and Prayer The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Austin Finnegan to his first meeting as a parent governor. LP also noted that today was Hilary Doherty’s last meeting as a governor as her term of office had come to an end and after over eight years as a governor, Hilary had decided to retire. Rev’d Stamp would also be leaving at some point in the summer term as he moved to a new position in Oxfordshire. Rev’d Stamp led the meeting in prayer.	
2.	Procedural matters a. <u>Apologies</u> : Apologies for absence had been received and were approved for Catherine Harvey and Anna Cherniaeva. The meeting was quorate. b. <u>Declaration of any conflict of interest</u> : None relevant for this meeting. DS’s ongoing conflict (church hall letting) was noted. c. <u>Notification of other business</u> : None raised. d. <u>Minutes</u> : The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 October 2023 were approved as an accurate record. e. <u>Matters arising</u> : All actions from the previous meeting had been completed or were in progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ School to highlight term dates as clearly as possible and remind parents not to take term time holidays: completed, see articles in E-bulletin.▪ School to include photos from the after-school club in open day slide show: completed.▪ CH to assist RC select a risk register template: completed, see discussion at governor day and agenda item 5.c.▪ CF to update governor roles document: Now allocated to LP, completed - see agenda item 7.▪ Clerk to arrange in-house training session on effective governance: completed and held on 18 January.▪ HL to seek clarity from the Diocese re impact of proposed changes to the definition of home address in the admissions policy: completed.▪ RC to make changes to the safeguarding policy: completed and uploaded to Governor Hub and the school website.▪ Pay recommendations to be approved at the governor day in school meeting: completed.▪ Agenda item for May FGB meeting: Review the implementation of the behaviour Policy c/f to May.	

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3. **Headteacher’s Written Report**

The following documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

- HT’s report
- SEA (school effectiveness adviser – formerly the HIP) visit report – November 2023
- CSV (commission school visit) report on eliminating economic exclusion December 2023
- Autumn term progress and assessment data
- PP strategy statement
- SDP 2023/24 (updated as of January 2024)
- SEND information report

Questions and comments were invited:

- Three in-year admissions had been approved and these pupils had joined the school earlier in the spring term.
- Four pupils had left the school (two from Y2 and two from Y4).
- Staffing was stable and well settled. There had been a lot of training in the autumn and early spring and where appropriate staff who had attended external training were given time in staff meetings to disseminate learning/strategies to their colleagues.
- SEND audit (by HCC) would take place on Monday 12 February: RC noted how the school’s SEND provision had progressed over the year. A one-page profile was created on each SEND pupil detailing the in-class adaptations to provision that were required.
- **Q The CSV highlighted that due to higher numbers of PP students the school now needed to use the DfE PP report template – had this been done?** Ans: Yes, RC had worked on this at the end of term and the report had been uploaded to the website and was included in the meeting papers. The follow up CSV meeting was scheduled for later in February and RC hoped that most of the recommended actions would have been completed by then. HDr noted that in her role as PP link governor, she had met with the SEA on 6 February.
- It was noted that the PP report and strategy related to the academic year (September to July) but PP funding was received for the financial year (April to March).
- There had been two reported incidents of bullying, one had been received this week and was being investigated. One had been received in the autumn term and family had decided to remove their child.
- **Q Did the school communicate clearly enough with parents about the work that was done by staff with pupils about bullying/feeling safe?** Ans: RC had planned to include a summary of this work in the coming week’s bulletin to parents, this would be linked to mental health week and the “my voice counts” initiative.
- Staff were well trained in supporting pupils at an age-appropriate level.
- **Q What steps were taken if a parent reported a case of bullying?** Ans: The school followed the processes and procedures as set out in its behaviour policy. These included:
 - Investigate an allegation, ascertain if there was intent to cause harm, identify the frequency of incidents, speak to pupils and parents of all parties involved.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Much of this would remain confidential to the families involved and would not be shared with the wider school community. ▪ Q Was the level of pupil mobility a cause for concern? Ans: Some mobility was inevitable as families moved in and out of the area. It was less common for a pupil to move to another local school. Sometimes, despite the team’s best efforts, the small size of the school meant that relationship issues were not resolvable to the parents' satisfaction. ▪ Q What support was there for teachers dealing with pupil relationship issues – did this impact their wellbeing? Ans: The staff team were experienced but also have regular training and CPD. During the January INSET day, training had been delivered on anxiety mapping for pupils and adults. A staff wellbeing workshop had been attended by some members of the team who had shared their learning with colleagues. ▪ Teacher workload had been discussed at a recent history cluster meeting and the member of staff noted how having a bought-in scheme of learning reduced their workload compared to peers at other schools who had to devise their own scheme of learning. ▪ A staff wellbeing survey would be issued after half term. ▪ Action: Staff wellbeing survey and results to be reviewed at the next meeting. ▪ Parental engagement: feedback from the recent reading workshop for parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Good information shared on Phonics and preparation for SATS. ○ Parents with children in the middle years felt there had not been enough information for them in terms of what they needed to do at home to support their child. ▪ This feedback would be shared with the literacy subject leader. ▪ Q What plans were in place for the 13 pupils who were not at EXS in maths in Y6? Ans: RC noted that the at the point of the assessment data collection in the autumn term, not all topics had been covered. There was a high proportion of SEN in this cohort and targeted groups had been identified for extra support in reading, writing and maths. ▪ Q There was a similar picture to this last year, at this time this had been attributable to covid legacy, was this still the case or was it due to the change in the teaching of maths in Y5? Ans: This would be analysed at the end of the year; it was difficult to comment on mid-year assessment. ▪ Action: Review of maths progress/attainment in Y5 and Y6 – impact from change to teaching of maths – agenda item for FGB in summer term. ▪ Q Was the decision to move to a three-day residential trip from a five-day trip for Y5/6 a permanent change? Q What was the rational for this? Ans: This decision had been made for financial reasons, the price of transport and PGL had risen significantly. ▪ Q What feedback had the school received from parents about this change? Ans: The letter to parents had set out the price differential between a three day and a five-day trip. Two pupils would not be attending due to SEND needs. ▪ Q Had alternatives to PGL been explored? Ans: Yes, this was always on SLT radar. ▪ RC noted the county-wide increase in behaviour incidents/reporting as discussed at the Heads’ Briefing held on 7 February. This impacted number of teachers signed off work with stress and staff retention. ▪ Q Why was behaviour so challenging – was it appropriate to still be citing covid as the reason? Ans: The impact of lockdown and enforced isolation was still very real; it was affecting relationships and communication skills and levels of emotional support needed. In response, the school was spending a lot of time promoting how to be a good friend, friendship posters 	RC
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	<p>etc to complement the PSHE curriculum. All of this would be signposted to parents via the website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Action: RC to find out if HFL could offer a workshop for parents on covid/impact on children and how to build resilience.▪ Terms dates: noted.▪ The Quinquennial survey had been undertaken and the report would be shared when received. The two areas highlighted as needing attention were the boiler and the kitchen.	Agenda
		RC
4.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>The termly safeguarding report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Staff had received training on the Brooks traffic light; this was a nationally recognised standard to identify sexualised behaviour.▪ One family was being supported by the FSW.▪ No children were on CIN or CP plans.	
5.	<p>Strategic Matters</p> <p>a. <u>Feedback from governor day in school:</u> LP thanked everyone who had been able to attend the governor day in school event. Notes had been made of the main session and these would be uploaded to governor hub. Class visits had been undertaken by all governors who noted the enthusiasm of staff and the positive behaviour of pupils, particularly in assembly (this had been very calm).</p> <p>b. <u>SIAMs readiness:</u> The school was due for inspection in the 2024/25 academic year. A working party would meet to review the SIAMs criteria later in the spring term.</p> <p>Action: LP to arrange SIAMs working party.</p>	

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	<p>LP had booked to attend a SIAM Readiness training on 5 March – this was being delivered by the Diocese.</p> <p>An OFSTED and SIAMs ready folder had been created on Governor Hub.</p> <p>c. <u>Risk register</u>: This document had been created at the governor day in December and would be a standing agenda item. The following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Q Were ten risks too many to monitor and manage – should they be reduced in number? Ans: It was agreed that no risks should be removed from the register in the first year. <p>d. <u>SFVS</u>: The resources committee had begun work on this document, and governors had been sent skills audits to complete. A copy of the current draft had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>e. <u>Sustainability</u>: LP and NP had attended a HFL sustainability seminar and reported that all schools would need to have a climate action plan in place by 2025 with a staff lead and a governor lead.</p> <p>Austin Finnigan offered to take on the sustainability link governor role. This was gratefully accepted.</p> <p>DS noted that the diocese were keen to develop net-carbon strategies for all its estates and might have some useful input; they were hosting a carbon cutting webinar on 28 February, all governors were welcome to attend. The net-zero officer might be able to offer the school some practical advice.</p> <p>Action: LP to share details of Diocese Carbon Cutting Webinar.</p>	LP
		LP
6.	<p>Committee Q&A</p> <p>Committee minutes had been circulated in advance of the meeting and matters to escalate were noted:</p> <p>a. <u>Resources Committee held on 23 January 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It had been agreed to add 5p to the cost of school meal. A discussion followed on whether or not this was enough, given the deficit position for school meals (the school had to pay a hire charge to the church for using the kitchen/dining hall).	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school always kept the school meal provision under review – options included buying in meals from another school kitchen, moving to packed lunches only, what impact the rising price of a school lunch might have on take up etc. ▪ The school’s ambition was to always offer a hot meal at lunch time, but this could not be done at any cost and it was noted that the school’s financial position was getting more and more constrained. ▪ It was agreed that a 5p increase should be made in April with a potential further increase in September. Action: Benchmark other local schools meal charges. ▪ HDr reported that during her PP meeting with the SEA this had been discussed. The school were advised to be seen to be constantly promoting the PP eligibility criteria and other sources of support (food banks, charities, school uniform etc). ▪ The school knew its parents well and would sensitively raise the issue of financial hardship with any families with whom the office had to chase for trip money for example. ▪ Action: Include PP eligibility reminder in every school newsletter. ▪ Q Did the school charge enough for lettings? Was this a source of additional income which could be increased. ▪ The EY playground redevelopment had almost been completed bar some finishing items and snagging items. ▪ Q Was the finished project as expected? Ans: Yes. A lot of effort had been put into selecting items that were suitable for EY pupils. ▪ Feedback from parents: parents of older pupils had not seen any benefit from their fundraising efforts. Q When would the main playground be overhauled? ▪ RC confirmed that this was the next priority and would take place in the summer term (quotes were being requested). This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removal of trees ○ Creation of a sensory area ○ Changes to some equipment ○ Upgrade the artificial grass ▪ Governors suggested that comms to parents needed to be clear on these plans and as soon as the design was agreed, visuals and a commentary should be shared in the school newsletter, this would support fundraising efforts at the summer ball. ▪ Q Was an “opening ceremony” planned for the EY playground? Ans: Yes, RC would invite the mayor. ▪ Budget benchmarking had been reviewed. The staffing structure had been reduced as much as practicable, there were no further cuts possible to support staff. 	<p>Res Comm</p> <p>RC</p>
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	<p>b. <u>School Effectiveness committee held on 13 November 2023</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Safeguarding responsibilities needed to be included in all committee terms of reference.▪ The link PP governor had met with the SEA as part of the commissioned school visit, a follow up report would be circulated shortly.▪ There was one CLA on roll, HRr was the CLA link governor and Mrs Kennet was the member of staff responsible for CLA and communications with the Virtual School.▪ SEND was now a standing agenda item in recognition of the rising level of need at the school. <p>c. <u>Admissions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ See update on pupil numbers in HT’s report.▪ An in-year application for a pupil in Reception had been received. This was approved.▪ September reception places: update to follow. <p>d. <u>Communications working group meeting held on 13 November 2023</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Open days; now completed.▪ Parent consultation meetings planned for w/c 12 February would be online.▪ Governors had suggested that staff needed training to conduct the meeting within the allotted timeframe and give parents enough time to ask questions.▪ RC had checked how many parent consultations had not been completed in the time frame – 3 follow up meetings had been held in Emerald Class and 1 in Garnet. RC suggested that the online system was working well.▪ Open classrooms would be held so that parents had an opportunity to see their child’s books.▪ Q Would the school return to face-to-face meetings – it was not always convenient for parents to be online at home? This would be reviewed at the next Communications meeting. It could be a question for the next parents survey.▪ Governors noted that St Georges School had re-introduced face to face parent consultation meetings in Y7 in an effort to promote parental engagement with the school.▪ If parents' evenings were held in-person, it was suggested that governors could attend and raise their profile with parents.	
7.	<p>Governor Business</p> <p>a. <u>Committee composition and governor roles:</u> the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hilary Doherty: term of office ended on 6 February.▪ There was one foundation governor vacancy: this would be advertised in the normal way, governors to share any potential new governor details with LP. It was suggested that an	

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	<p>approach to the St Albans High School for a newly retired teacher might be an avenue worth exploring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simon Counce had extended his term of office to January 2025. ▪ Complaint panels: Henry Loweth, Charlotte McCrossin, Lucy Parr, Mary Jane Pritchard. ▪ Grants/PTA liaison: Charlotte McCrossin ▪ SEND/Inclusion: Marie Price ▪ Music: Marie Price ▪ Sustainability and premises: Austin Finnigan. ▪ MP and MJP would join the SEC committee, AF would join the Resources committee. <p>b. <u>Governor Visits</u>: The governor day in school had been well attended. Action: Governors to write up any link visits.</p> <p>c. <u>Training</u>: The following training had been undertaken since the last FGB meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anna Cherniaeva – Pupil premium – 17 October 2023 ▪ Henry Loweth – safeguarding and governance – 6 December 2023 ▪ Charlotte McCrossin – safeguarding children – 28 November 2023 ▪ Lucy Parr – An introduction to sustainability – 13 November 2023 ▪ Natalie Pepper – An introduction to sustainability – 13 November 2023 ▪ Natalie Pepper – Being an effective chair – 13 December 2023 ▪ Mary Jean Pritchard – Head teacher’s performance management – 12 October 2023 ▪ All governors (except CMC) – effective governance – 18 January 2024 ▪ Henry Loweth - Data protection ▪ Marie Price – Induction training – 3 February 2024 <p>d. <u>Stakeholder engagement/governor visibility</u>: The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photo board at school entrance to be reinstated. Governors to send headshot photos to RC. ▪ Governors to attend assemblies/church services when parents were also invited and be acknowledged by member of staff leading the assembly/service. 	<p>All</p> <p>Office</p> <p>All</p>
8.	Policy Review	

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	<p>The following policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were approved (having previously been reviewed at committee level):</p> <p>a. <u>Admissions</u>: reviewed by HL, no changes to criteria, minor changes to footnotes. APPROVED</p> <p>b. <u>Agreement between school and home</u>: some changes made to reinforce the expectations on parents. Reviewed by HDo. It was agreed that a sentence would be added in about financial hardship and what to do. Q Did the agreement link to the school rules? Ans: Yes. Q Were parents required to sign and return to the agreement? Ans: It would be sent out each September, but staff would not chase for agreements which had not been returned. Compliance by parents was implicit. APPROVED. Action: Update agreement with reference to financial hardship and support available.</p> <p>c. <u>Staff appraisal policy</u>: APPROVED.</p> <p>d. <u>SEND policy</u>: Comments from HDo had been incorporated. APPROVED.</p> <p>e. <u>Equality action plan</u>: this was due for review and would be circulated to governors via Governor Hub.</p>	RC
		RC
9.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The chair thanked Hilary Doherty for her services as a governor, she would be much missed.</p>	
10.	Closing prayer	
11.	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 14 May 2024: budget approval meeting (resources committee to meet at 6pm) Thursday 20 June 2024 	

Meeting closed at 9.05pm

Summary of actions arising from the meeting			
No	Item	Who	Status
1	Review the implementation of the behaviour policy in the Spring term	Agenda item	
2	Staff wellbeing survey and results to be reviewed at the next meeting.	RC	

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3	RC to find out if HFL could offer a workshop for parents on covid/impact on children and how to build resilience.	RC	
4	LP to arrange SIAMs working party prior in Spring 2	LP	
5	LP to share details of Diocese Carbon Cutting Webinar.	LP	
6	Benchmark other local school meal charges/mark up	Resources committee	
7	Include reference to PP eligibility in weekly newsletter.	RC	
8	Governors to write up visit reports from governor day in school	All	
9	Governor photo board at school entrance to be reinstated. Governors to send headshot photos to RC.	RC All	
10	Update home school agreement with reference to financial hardship and support available.	RC	
11	Circulate equality action plan on Governor Hub	RC	
For summer term			
12	Review of maths progress/attainment in Y5 and Y6 – impact from change to teaching of maths – agenda item for FGB in summer term.	RC/Maths subject leader	