

‘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 11 July 2022 at 7.00pm held at the school
MINUTES

Present: *Parent Governors:* Hannah Draeger, Natalie Pepper
Co-opted governor: Hilary Doherty, Catherine Harvey
Foundation Governors: Delia Bonner, Stuart Burnett
Jane Croot, Caroline Fleming (Chair), Henry Loweth (joined via Google Meets)
Local authority governor: Lucy Parr
Ex-officio: Dennis Stamps
Headteacher: Rizelle Crouch
Staff Governor: Kate Birss

Apologies: Simon Caunce

In attendance: Tracey Norris, HfL Clerk

1.	Presentation from School Council Christopher (Y6) and Isla (Y5) joined the meeting and described the school council’s engagement with the local food bank which had arising following the cancellation of their sustainability project: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Volunteers from the foodbank came to the school and delivered an assembly.▪ The pupils had learned lots of interesting facts about the foodbank; it delivered/handed out over 2 million parcels a year.▪ There were 120 volunteers working in the St Albans District and they were busier than ever because of the cost-of-living crisis.▪ There were 6/7 centres within the district.▪ The school council had plans for how the school could help with more donations and regular collections.▪ Governors thanked the school council members for their presentation and asked why the sustainability project had been cancelled? This was due to transport issues.▪ Governors offered their services to the school council should the need for volunteers (for transport) arise again.	
2.	Prayer and Chair’s Welcome Dennis Stamps led the meeting in prayer. Caroline Fleming welcomed everyone to the FGB meeting and noted that today’s meeting would be Jane Croot’s last FGB as she was standing down as a governor.	
3.	Procedural items a. Apologies received in advance: Simon Caunce (absence approved). The meeting was quorate.	

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	<p>b. To declare any conflict of interests: none relevant for this meeting. DS’s ongoing conflict (church hall letting) was noted.</p> <p>c. Any other business: one items raised – see agenda item 9.</p> <p>d. To approve the minutes of the previous meetings: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings.</p> <p>e. To consider matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CF to arrange a working party re contingency planning for pupil numbers in the autumn term: carry forward to autumn term. ▪ CF to email families who had decided not to take up a place following a school visit: Upon further reflection and discussion at the comms working party, it had been agreed that this would not be productive. Contact details of families were not available from HCC and there was no way of knowing how many of the families who had attended the open days were really seriously considering the school as an option. Feedback from the previous year was about the lack of wrap around care for pupils which working parents needed. ▪ RC to check that breakfast club was advertised prominently on the school website: completed – this information was under the parent tab. ▪ Governors to read SIAMs framework: ongoing. ▪ CF to arrange wellbeing visit in the summer term: Completed w/c 27 June. ▪ CF to update briefing paper on Governor hub: completed. ▪ CF to follow up expression of interest from parishioners re governor vacancies: A meeting had been arranged between DS/CF to discuss potential candidates. ▪ CF to prepare governance structure proposals for consideration at next FGB: completed, see agenda item 7. ▪ CF to update policy schedule: completed in May. ▪ DB to organise governor book prize: completed. 	CF
4.	<p>Headteacher’s verbal update</p> <p>The following documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head teacher’s report ▪ Staffing structure September 2022 ▪ SDP updated summer 2022 ▪ Whole school data report (including Y6) ▪ KS2 results <p>Questions and comments were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q What was Easy Tracker? This was the new HfL assessment system (two years old) which the school now uses. This was the second iteration of an assessment model created by HfL following the abolition of national “levels” a number of years ago. Easy Tracker reported attainment in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working towards the expected level ○ Working at the expected level ○ Working beyond the expected level ▪ ARBOR was the new school information management system which had replaced SIMs earlier this year and presented the data in a slightly different format. ▪ Q Pupil numbers for Reception intake 2022? Currently there were 12 accepted spaces for September (post meeting note: there have been 2 more acceptances since the meeting). RC had spent a lot of time modelling out different class 	

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	<p>configurations and looking at current waiting lists to try and maximise pupil numbers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two pupils have recently joined the school and another family would be touring later this week. Emerald would be a Y3 class only. Garnet would be split 50:50 between reception and Y1 pupils. Q The school was top heavy in KS2 – was this sustainable from the teacher’s perspective? The biggest positive impact for teachers in KS2 would be for their TA to be with them for all lessons. At the moment, TAs were also performing lunch duties so had a break at the start of afternoon lessons. The recruitment of midday supervisors would support teachers in KS2, releasing TAs from this commitment. Unfortunately, recruitment for midday supervisors was proving challenging. RC reported that other measures had been taken to reduce staff workload, eg some staff meetings were allocated to long term planning. <p><u>Staffing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A member of staff on long term sick had returned to school in May and had settled back into school routines well. Another member of staff had been hospitalised and would be off until September. Action: CF to send a card from the governors. Q Were the teacher absence numbers correct? RC would double check these numbers; there had been some teething problems with ARBOR vis report generation (it seemed to be counting training days as absences). Action: RC to double check the staff absence/attendance report and change the terminology to staff attendance. Pupil attendance was accurate and this was good at 96.2% for the year. <p><u>Attainment Data</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KS1 data had been reviewed at the recent SIC meeting – see SIC minutes. Writing had been moderated which provided additional assurance that teacher assessment was accurate. Q Were there any surprises in the data? The number of children who had achieved greater depth was unexpected. KS2 data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading: 95% EXS (68% GD) Writing: 74% EXS (16% GD) Grammar, punctuation and spelling: 89% (74% GD) Maths: 95% EXS (58% GD) Q Would the school celebrate these results, they were amazing and significantly higher than national and compared strongly to other local schools? The outcomes would be shared on the website and in the newsletter. Governors congratulated the Y5/6 teaching team for their dedication and support of pupils, enabling them to reach their full potential. <p><u>SDP priorities 2022/23</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC would arrange a staff meeting at the beginning of the autumn term to which governors would be invited to review the SDP priorities which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonics scheme to be embedded; 	<p>CF</p> <p>RC</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of the early reading scheme/reading for pleasure/key skills for the teaching of reading – training from TLA had been received, this now needs to be disseminated to all staff and embedded; and ○ Learning for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q Was the planned focus on reading enough to also address writing levels? Yes, and this was essential. In KS2, pupils had to write in the style of an author, exposure to good quality literature was key. ▪ Q Would the class reading books be out on display during the open classroom event? This might help with parental engagement. ▪ The reading challenge at the library would be promoted again to help support reading for pleasure. ▪ “Learning for all” had been recommended by the school’s HIP in response to the changes in emphasis in the OFSTED framework. ▪ The HIP had urged the streamlining of the SDP to a more manageable level and had identified the need to better manage subject leader workloads to ensure what they did was effective. ▪ The final iteration of the SDP would be shared and approved at the next FGB meeting. Governor visits would be mapped out to coincide with scheduled subject leader monitoring, visits should be “regular and often” and could also take the form of Google Meets for any governor finding it more difficult to do visits during the school day. 	
5.	<p>Safeguarding update</p> <p>The following documents had been shared in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Termly safeguarding report to governors ▪ CLA annual report to the Virtual School ▪ Pupil premium progress report to the Virtual School ▪ Annual H&S report <p>All items were noted, and the following comments/questions raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The safeguarding governor (Catherine Harvey) had reviewed the report in detail with Kate Birss. There were no significant safeguarding incidents to report. ▪ One member of staff had felt unsupported while waiting to give evidence at a family court hearing but they had not raised their anxiety with SLT and instead approached a governor directly. SLT had immediately signposted resources and support for this member of staff and would clarify the role of the governor with all staff. ▪ SLT had reiterated to all staff that they should speak up as soon as possible if they had any anxieties (about safeguarding or other matters). It was often stressful being involved in a serious safeguarding issue, particularly ones that continue over a longer period of time. It is not the expected role of governors to support staff in this regard and SLT had secured resources from Paula Hayden (HCC safeguarding team) which would be shared with staff at the next INSET training. ▪ The H&S report had been discussed in detail at the F&P meeting, RC noted that the school’s measures in response to the coming heat wave would be announced on Tuesday 12 July following guidance from HCC. 	
6.	<p>Committee updates</p> <p>The committee chairs summarised the main points of discussion at the recent committee meetings (the minutes of which were available on Governor Hub):</p>	

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	<p>a. <u>Finance and Premises Committee 21 June 2022</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health and safety report ▪ Premises plans for summer ▪ Additional income streams ▪ Q Period 2 monitor? This was not yet available. Due to capacity issues, the school was behind with posting invoices but would be shared with the F&P committee as soon as available. <p>b. <u>School Effectiveness Committee 4 July 2022</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupil progress ▪ SDP review ▪ Safeguarding ▪ Policies ▪ Composition changes: Hannah Draeger to take on role of chair from Catherine Harvey, Jane Croot would be retiring. ▪ Q What has driven the decision to move away from teaching maths in year groups rather back into class group? ▪ RC had reviewed the provision of maths with the maths subject leader; there were pros and cons to teaching in year groups vs whole class teaching. The class teacher was not able to maintain as much oversight of progress/provision when year groups went out for teaching with another adult for example. ▪ Q Maths progress and attainment is outstanding at the end of KS2 – is this because maths is taught in year groups? Small group teaching had impact on progress and attainment and this could be maintained within a class setting with two adults (teacher and TA). ▪ Action: SEC committee to carefully track the impact of this change in the teaching of maths in KS2. ▪ Parent governors reported that the teaching of year groups in maths in the Y5/6 class had always provided them with the assurance that their child was receiving age-appropriate learning. The communications to parents needed to be very clear that pupils would still be taught in small groups within the class setting. ▪ Emerald would be a single year group in 2022/23 (made up of Y3 pupils) and progress and attainment in this class would be similarly tracked. ▪ Parent governors highlighted the commonly held conception that Sapphire had a Y4 focus and Diamond had a Y6 focus and the Y5 cohort was inevitably the squeezed middle. This needed to be addressed as the year 5s are well led in their learning. ▪ RC explained that the White Rose maths scheme allowed teachers to tailor their lesson for different abilities (and therefore age groups). It has been specifically designed for mixed aged classes. ▪ RC felt the staffing teams in place in Sapphire and Diamond were strong and experienced practitioners. <p>c. <u>Personnel, Pay and Performance Committee 28 June 2022</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staffing structure ▪ Wellbeing ▪ Safeguarding ▪ Policies 	<p>SEC comm</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q Was the school fully staffed for September? Yes, with the exception of midday supervisors and a cleaner. ▪ CF had conducted exit interviews with those staff who were leaving at the end of term. Comments raised included how the garden space could be developed, the need for continued support for SEN pupils within class with higher SEN pupil numbers than in more recent times, teacher workload, the heavy burden of subject leadership, but all stated what a great staff team was in place with strong leadership. ▪ Q Was SEN really an issue or was it that more conditions were now being labelled as SEN? KB explained that in recent years the school’s SEN numbers had dropped significantly below expected levels which had freed her up to take on other responsibilities. It was exceptional for a school to have such low numbers of SEN, vulnerable groups (travellers, EAL), pupil with EHCPs. This was now returning to more normal levels. KB would remain assistant headteacher and a new SENCo had been appointed, Julie Broekhuis (0.2). <p>d. <u>Admissions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See HT’s update. <p>e. <u>Communications Working Party</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NP had joined the group and was working on the website and choreographing links between this and school social media platforms. ▪ Representatives from the PTA had joined the meeting and agreed to work on joint communications/messages. ▪ The PTA will launch its own website in the autumn. ▪ Open day dates had been agreed. Action: RC to share on Governor Hub. 	RC
7.	<p>Governing Body Matters</p> <p>a. <u>Complaint panel recommendations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HL reported on the recommendations from the formal complaint hearing held on 22 June. See PART II minutes. ▪ CF thanked the governors involved in this panel for their time and conscientious deliberations. <p>b. <u>Committee structure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CF had met with the committee chairs to review the existing committee structure with a view to reducing the number of meetings to avoid duplication and reduce SLT workload. A paper outlining the proposed changes had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Questions and comments were invited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The enablers (listed on page two of the report) were critical. ○ The difference between a committee and a working party were explained by the clerk who noted this was a common practice for other governing bodies; to give attention/consideration to a discrete piece of work outside of a committee. ○ Policies would continue to be reviewed off line by the link governor (as was the case now). ○ Concern was raised that a combined F&P and Personnel meeting would increase the length of the meeting. ○ Agenda planning was key and governors could take this opportunity to review the committee termly workplans, focusing on what governors must do, should do, could do. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Q Did RC think this new structure would reduce her workload? Yes, she commented on the duplication and time spent reporting on information already presented to governors at committee level. There was overlap between all the committees. ○ Governors were mindful of recent training re governing body effectiveness: what are we doing, what difference does it make, what is the impact and how does the school become outstanding. ▪ The proposed merging of the F&P and Personnel & Pay committees into a new Resources Committee was approved. ▪ Committee chairs were agreed as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality of education (formally SEC): Hannah Draeger ○ Resources: Stuart Burnett (chair) and Lucy Parr (personnel lead) ○ Communications: Natalie Pepper ○ Admissions: Henry Loweth <p>c. <u>Succession planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caroline Fleming restated her intention to stand down as a governor in November 2023 at the end of her second full term as a foundation governor. She is willing to continue as Chair through 2022/23 if needed although would be delighted if someone could step into this role sooner. A new Vice Chair of Governors / CoG will be agreed at the next FGB. <p>d. <u>Governor visit report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of visit reports had been uploaded to Governor Hub shortly before the meeting. These would be reviewed at the next meeting. ▪ CF noted that the governor visit form would be updated to include a section on the school’s vision and values. ▪ Action: HDr to update the visit template and policy. ▪ There had been 18 visits to the school in the summer term. This demonstrated excellent engagement by governors and CF took this opportunity to thank all governors for their continued support. ▪ It was agreed that governor visit reports should be shared with all staff. <p>e. <u>Governor training:</u> Report noted. The in-house training session would be organised in September.</p> <p>f. <u>Governor newsletter:</u> This was in the process of being finalised; CF would add in a section on SATs results, premises works, donations from the PTA and the school’s Twitter link.</p> <p>g. <u>Governor document retention:</u> Specific queries relating to document retention should be addressed to HL.</p>	<p>Agenda</p> <p>HDr</p> <p>FGB agenda</p>
8.	<p>Policies for approval</p> <p>The following policies had been reviewed in committee and were recommended for ratification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ECT induction policy (HCC model policy): approved. b. H&S policy: approved. SB asked that all governors read this policy, all links and contacts details in the policy had been tested. c. Leave of absence policy (HCC model): approved. d. Data security: approved. e. RE: approved. f. Early years: approved. g. Health and attendance for staff: approved. 	<p>Com chairs</p>

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	Action: Committee Chairs to update the policy tracker.	
9.	Any other business <u>Jane Croot</u> : CF thanked Jane for her contribution to the FGB over the previous ten years. She had been a tremendous asset to the FGB having served on all committees, external visits and panels and her experience and insights would be much missed.	
10.	Closing prayer	
11.	Date of next meeting: Tuesday 4 October 2022 at 7pm Friday 9 December 2022 – hold for governors' day in school. Monday 6 February 2023 at 6.45pm - school council to join meeting Thursday 18 May 2023 at 7pm Monday 10 July 2023 at 6.45pm - school council to join meeting	

Summary of actions arising from the meeting			
No	Item	Who	Status
1	Arrange working party in autumn term re contingency planning for low pupil numbers	Caroline Fleming	
2	Sent best wishes card to member of staff on sick leave	Caroline Fleming	
3	RC to double check the staff absence/attendance report and change the terminology to staff attendance.	Headteacher	
4	SEC committee to carefully track the impact of the change in the teaching of maths in KS2.	SEC committee	
5	Share dates of school events NB open days	Headteacher	
6	Appointment of Chair, vice-chair at next meeting	Clerk	
7	Update the visit template and policy to include section on school vision/values	Hannah Draeger	
8	Book in-house governor session in autumn term	FGB	To note at next FGB
9	Committee Chairs to update the policy tracker.	Committee chairs	By September 2022