

*'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

Wednesday 19 May 2021 at 7.00pm held via Google Meets

### MINUTES

**Present:** *Parent Governors:* Catherine Harvey, Hannah Draeger  
*Foundation Governors:* Delia Bonner, Stuart Burnett, Simon Caunce,  
 Jane Croot, Dennis Stamps (ex-officio), Hilary Doherty, Caroline Fleming (chair),  
 Henry Loweth  
*Local authority governor:* Lucy Parr  
*Staff Governor:* Kate Birss

**Apologies:** Rizelle Crouch (Headteacher)

**In attendance:** Tracey Norris, HfL Clerk

1.	<b>Prayer and Chair's Welcome</b> Rev'd Stamps led the meeting in prayer. Caroline Fleming welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for joining the meeting remotely.	
2.	<b>Procedural items</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Apologies:</b> Apologies had been received from Rizelle Crouch who was unwell.</li> <li><b>To declare any conflict of interests:</b> none relevant for this meeting. Longstanding potential conflict: Dennis Stamps - hire of church hall to the school.</li> <li><b>Any other business:</b> there were five items of other business, see agenda item 9</li> <li><b>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting:</b> the minutes of 2 February 2021 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings.</li> <li><b>To consider matters arising from the previous meeting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was agreed that the remote learning parent survey would be re-issued if lockdown went beyond 8 March: <b>not required.</b></li> <li>The positive parent feedback included at the end of the HT's report should be added to the next e-bulletin: <b>completed.</b></li> <li>Communications working party to arrange meeting to consider response to low pupil admission applications: ongoing, see agenda item 6e</li> <li>RC to send email link for collective worship sessions: <b>completed.</b></li> <li>Update attendance policy (chairs name): <b>completed.</b></li> <li>Update policy tracker: <b>completed.</b></li> <li>Governors to complete mini questionnaire re HT communication and return to CF/JC: <b>some received.</b></li> <li>Send letter of thanks to PTA: <b>completed.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
3.	<b>Finance Matters</b> Stuart Burnett (Chair of F&P) presented the committee's recommendations in respect of the year end position 2020/21 and the proposed budget 2021/22. The following papers had been circulated in advance of the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget report pack HCC</li> <li>2020/21 Out-turn</li> <li>Proposed budget 2021/22</li> <li>Budget commentary</li> <li>SFVS return</li> </ul>	

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	<p><b>a. 2020/21 Outturn and Proposed Budget 2021/22:</b> Stuart Burnett summarised the committee’s discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Various conversations and meetings had been held between committee members and school staff in the run up to budget setting.</li> <li>▪ Pupil numbers were predicted to be lower in September than the PAN of 22 and this would impact the financial position of the school. This is thought to be due to there continuing to be a lower number of children in Harpenden than the primary school reception provision.</li> <li>▪ KB was able to report that 18 pupils were now confirmed in Reception class.</li> <li>▪ The budget had been set with a more cautious 15 pupils (the figure known at the time) so already this was an improvement on the projected budget position.</li> <li>▪ Pupil numbers directly impact the school’s income as the school receives a certain amount for each child.</li> <li>▪ Historically the school’s final year end position was always better than that predicted at the start of the year; income was predicted on conservative estimates and often the school received additional unbudgeted income (eg HCC grant for teachers’ pay and pension increases and covid catch up funding) and expenditure was projected on a worst-case scenario basis.</li> <li>▪ Staffing costs was the biggest expenditure line and had increased this year as two members of staff were eligible to progress to UPS (upper pay scale). This benefited the school in terms of impact on teaching and learning from experienced teachers but meant the salary budget was higher.</li> <li>▪ All non-teaching staff would receive a 2% pay rise in the coming year (agreed by unions and DfE).</li> <li>▪ A new induction policy for ECT (early career teacher, formally NQT) would result in additional training and mentoring costs in the first two years of employment – an extra cost to the school.</li> <li>▪ The carry forward from the end of 2020/21 was £140,000. This was higher than had been anticipated and a result of the school operating with a budget surplus during 2020/21. This was caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School closure resulted in less expenditure (supply budget, curriculum resources, training etc).</li> <li>○ Additional unbudgeted income had been received from sports premium, covid catch up funding, pay and pensions grant, some of which was unable to be spent during the period of school closure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The projected budget anticipated an in-year deficit of £60,565 which would be funded by the carry forward.</li> <li>▪ The school was not projected to be in a deficit budget position until Y3 with opportunities to manage the budget before then.</li> <li>▪ Plans to upgrade the school’s computing resources (iPads and IT equipment) had been removed from the budget. Other fundraising opportunities will be sought.</li> <li>▪ The F&amp;P committee have reviewed every line of the budget and scrutinised the school's spending plans in detail.</li> <li>▪ A restructuring of support staff had taken place 3 or 4 years ago and it was possible that this might need to be considered at some point in the future if the school’s projected deficit in Year 3 materialised. It is hoped this won’t be required.</li> <li>▪ Maximising pupil capacity was essential to achieving a balanced budget.</li> <li>▪ KB reported that a funding application for financial support of an extra TA in one of the classes (to support pupil with additional needs) had been approved and the school would receive c£6,000.</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Q What other grants/bursaries could the school apply for?</b> As a VA funded school, the governors received a grant from the Diocese to support R&amp;M and premises matters. The PTA had an active grants team who regularly applied to local charities/Trusts/companies for support.</li> <li>▪ Currently income from lettings was particular low (because of covid). THE PTA had similarly lost income from cancellation of events.</li> <li>▪ Now that covid-safety restrictions were beginning to lift, the school would seek to maximise letting opportunities.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Should Governors consider asking parents for monthly voluntary financial contribution?</b> Governors were aware that other schools expected this but hoped that this request could be parked for a while as they were not comfortable suggesting it at present, especially given likely financial upheavals caused to families through covid.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Were there any major R&amp;M/premises matters coming up?</b> Building maintenance was an inevitable consequence of the school’s aged buildings. Regular condition surveys were undertaken to create the school’s programme of R&amp;M and where possible grants were applied for.</li> <li>▪ SB was pleased to confirm that an application to the Diocese for financial support for flat roof repairs and fire safety work had been approved: £25,000.</li> <li>▪ Herts Catering had conducted an inspection of the kitchen which had raised fears of costly R&amp;M work. However, this matter had been resolved with the installation of ventilation grills. In the coming 2/3 years further investment in the kitchen would be required.</li> <li>▪ The on-going conversation regarding the maximum number of people that could be accommodated in the school hall continued. Options had been explored (eg widen access doors) but the agreed way forward was to hold a trial evacuation from the hall to see if this could be completed in an acceptable amount of time. This has already been successfully completed but fresh evacuation time evidence will be obtained once the bubbles have gone and all pupils are able to meet together.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What SEND funding did the school receive?</b> SEND funding had been re-structured last year and ENF applications were no longer made. Instead, SEND funding would be allocated to a pupil on the basis of need identified on his/her EHCP. Pupil premium funding remained in place for those pupils eligible for free school meals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governors unanimously voted to approved the proposed budget</b> and thanked SB and the F&amp;P committee for their diligent scrutiny of the budget and the useful commentary supporting the financial decision making.</p> <p><b>a. SFVS Submission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SB referred to the SFVS submission which included a dashboard of KPIs which were noted.</li> </ul> <p>SB commended Rizelle Crouch for her hard work and ownership of the school budget which meant that the school’s financial sustainability was always at the forefront of school decisions.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Headteacher’s Report</b></p> <p>The following documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Headteacher’s report</li> <li>▪ HIP report 20 April 2021</li> <li>▪ Science Subject leader report</li> </ul> <p>In the absence of RC, Kate Briss would attempt to answer any governor questions. KB was able to provide the following updates to the HT’s report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SEND numbers: 12 pupils.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing for September: Mrs Hammerson would be working in a job share with Mrs Mortimer in Garnet class.</li> </ul> <p>Questions were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Q When might collective worship resume for pupils?</b> Rev’d Stamps confirmed that the Church was open to agreeing a way forward for this.</li> <li><b>Action: RC/DS to discuss appropriate protocols for collective worship.</b></li> <li>School leaders were keen to relax covid-safety measures as soon as possible. The lack of interaction between staff, socially and professionally was beginning to impact staff wellbeing.</li> <li>SIAMs had published a new report on collective worship and this was noted.</li> <li><b>Action: Send SIAMS guidance to Lucy Mortimer (RE subject leader).</b></li> <li>The logistics for the end of term leavers service were being planned by SLT.</li> <li><b>Q The school’s teaching and learning (T&amp;L) focus had been on Maths and English, what wider learning opportunities were now being considered?</b> SLT were considering what trips could be arranged for Y6 to replace the cancelled PGL trip.</li> <li>The full curriculum (core and foundation subjects) was being delivered. Coverage was back to pre-covid recovery times.</li> <li>Enrichment opportunities were being taken up in many subjects including D&amp;T, science and art.</li> <li><b>Q What could be done to support Y6 pupils who have missed out on so many school milestones?</b> Governors noted the school’s attempts to recreate as many traditional end of year activities for Y6, this was much appreciated by parents who felt that this year group had been particularly adversely affected by covid.</li> <li><b>Q The science subject leader report mentioned the lesser importance parents placed on science – was this accurate and did governors/SLT need to address it?</b> This matter was discussed and governors felt that these comments related to when remote learning was taking place and parents had been advised that if they were struggling with remote learning then they should focus on maths and English (if they could).</li> <li>LP had arranged to have a governor experience visit of a science lesson on 20 May.</li> <li><b>Action: KB would follow up with science subject leader and other subject leaders to gauge parental support for learning.</b></li> <li>Parent governors noted the many creative adaptations made to the science curriculum for home learning.</li> <li>Staff were keen to promote science in school and make it exciting.</li> <li>Governors thanked staff for the consistent format of subject leader reports.</li> </ul>	<p><b>RC/DS</b></p> <p><b>CF</b></p> <p><b>KB</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Safeguarding &amp; Inclusion</b></p> <p>The full safeguarding report would be shared at the July FGB meeting. Catherine Harvey, the safeguarding governor, reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She had held a meeting last week with the headteacher to review progress against the safeguarding audit.</li> <li>An action from this was the Single Central Record (SCR) review which would be actioned by the personnel committee.</li> <li>A recent online safety event had been well attended by parents and governors.</li> <li>CH urged all governors to table a safeguarding question at any governor visit.</li> <li>The inclusion link governor, Hannah Draeger, noted that an in-year admission was classified as EAL and this was being managed by the class teacher.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Committee Reports</b></p> <p>The minutes of the committee meetings (listed below) had been uploaded to Governor Hub. Questions/comments were invited:</p> <p><b>a. Finance and Premises: 15 March, 4 May, 12 May 2021</b></p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ See discussion at agenda item 3 above.</li> <li><b>b. School Effectiveness: 1 March, 26 April 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remote parent consultations events had been successfully held.</li> <li>▪ Parent survey would be conducted this term, after half-term.</li> <li>▪ PP update would be shared at next FGB meeting.</li> <li>▪ Assessment/progress: main area of concern was in Y3 and Y4. The new tracking system had been reviewed and reports were clearer. There would be two data points each year.</li> <li>▪ KS2 pupils had settled back in to good behaviour for learning without difficult.</li> <li>▪ KS1 had found this slightly harder.</li> <li>▪ House captains would be replaced with School Ambassadors with specific roles around the school (eg showing visitors round, public speaking etc). This promoted greater opportunities for leadership responsibilities for Y6 pupils.</li> <li>▪ Houses would remain as they were a useful way of dividing the school into groups – for sports days, house points etc.</li> <li>▪ School Council would continue in the same format and was an excellent example of British Values: democratically elected school councillors who represented their class.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Would this change be communicated to parents?</b> Yes, in a forthcoming newsletter.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>c. Personnel, pay and performance management: 2 March 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mid-year performance appraisals had taken place at the end of March.</li> <li>▪ KB was completing TA appraisals.</li> <li>▪ Some HR policies had been reviewed.</li> <li>▪ Teacher interviews had been conducted and ECT appointed.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q When would the new appointment be announced?</b> This would be announced in a newsletter shortly. Confirmation of year group and TA allocations for September 2021 would take place later in the term.</li> <li>▪ <b>Action: CF would conduct an exit interview before the end of the summer term with Mr Joel Carr, leaving from Sapphire class.</b></li> <li>▪ Head teacher's PM: targets would be reviewed before the end of term.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>d. Admissions: 11, 16, 26 March and 30 April 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Various in-year admissions had been fast tracked (as agreed via email) and all had progressed.</li> <li>▪ Consideration was given to how reception places could be better promoted.</li> <li>▪ Governors had previously met the St Georges School Chair of Governors to discuss opportunities for informal or formal connections between the schools. An arrangement for a feeder school, similar to that between SJL and the Harpenden Academy, had been dismissed at the time.</li> <li>▪ Competition for secondary school places had reduced now that KWS was open.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to create more informal links with secondary schools was considered (eg GCSE PE Students supporting sports day, MFL students running French lessons etc).</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>e. Communication working party: 23 March 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school's Twitter account would go live shortly (June).</li> <li>▪ RC/SLT would “own” the account but teaching staff would be able to easily upload photos from dedicated school iPad and post messages.</li> <li>▪ Open days were being planned in July as well as the autumn term to be able to showcase the school in the summer term.</li> <li>▪ New banner and bunting had been purchased to more clearly locate the school within the local community and raise its profile.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">CF</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The website was being updated and would be completed by the end of June.</li> <li>▪ Promotion of autumn open days would be via nurseries and pre-schools (posters and/or leaflets). Where possible the school’s existing network of parents would be used.</li> <li>▪ Events were being planned to provide opportunity for new parents to get to know each other. The exact size of this event needed to be confirmed (all reception, Y1 and Y2 pupils or a smaller sub-set?).</li> <li>▪ The small size of the current Y2 cohort was noted.</li> <li>▪ Governors and members of the PTA would be invited to attend this event.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Governor Business</b></p> <p><b>a. Governor visits:</b> CF urged governors to resume their monitoring activities as much as possible. A list of opportunities to meet teachers had been circulated to all governors on governor hub. Governors were invited to sign up for any available slot.</p> <p><b>Action: CF to write a short summary to staff explaining the purpose of a governor visit.</b></p> <p><b>b. Governor training:</b> OFSTED training for governors had been booked for 8 June at 7pm.</p> <p><b>c. Governor Book Prize:</b> This activity had not taken place last year due to covid but would be resumed this year. Delia Bonner explained how the event was organised; staff in each class nominate a pupil and reason for selection and informs Chair/DB, DB would write to parents and ask for book recommendation for the pupil, the books would be ordered and a handwritten commendation added to first page. Books would be awarded in an assembly at the end of the year.</p> <p><b>Action: SLT to request staff to submit nominations asap.</b></p> <p><b>d. E-Bulletin:</b> CF encouraged all governors to make a submission to the bulletin at any time. CF would begin working on the end of year governor newsletter shortly and would be approaching committee chairs for input.</p>	<p><b>CF</b></p> <p><b>SLT</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Policy Update</b></p> <p>The following policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting having been reviewed by committee and were ratified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Admissions: HCC had advised all schools to include some standard text re in-year admissions.</li> <li>b. Twitter policy: this was a new appendix to the Online Safety policy.</li> <li>c. H&amp;S policy: reviewed but unchanged.</li> <li>d. Capability policy: It was agreed that the chair of governors and/or the chair of the Personnel and Pay committee would be informed of any member of staff being placed on an informal action plan.</li> <li>e. Disciplinary policy</li> <li>f. Governor visit policy</li> <li>g. Privacy notice for staff, governors, parents and pupils: part of the GDPR suite of policies. All governors would re-sign their privacy notice each September.</li> <li>h. Anti-bribery policy. Reviewed and unchanged. It was noted that this policy was no longer statutory and would be reviewed again in three years' time.</li> </ul> <p>Other policies which had been approved by committee were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Home school agreement</li> <li>b. Music policy</li> <li>c. Uniform list</li> <li>d. Bullying and harassment procedures.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that committee chairs were responsible for ensuring the correct policy version was uploaded to the appropriate folder in Governor Hub.</p>	



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	KB reported that a draft feedback and marking policy was currently being reviewed. It was agreed that guidance for parents working in school would be similar to that issued to parents volunteers.	
9.	<b>Any Other Business</b> <b>a. Governor Succession planning:</b> CF noted that Janet Croot had agreed to continue as foundation governor for another term of office. This had been approved by the Diocese. CF asked all governors to give as much notice as possible of future end dates so that succession planning could be arranged in good time. <b>b. Covid “stories”:</b> CF suggested that a meaningful project for the school council might be to capture “stories” from covid and create a scrapbook of experiences, paying particular attention to vulnerable pupils. This had been recommended on recent safeguarding training. <b>Action: SLT would discuss.</b> <b>c. PTA:</b> CF and KB had attended a recent PTA meeting who had continued to approach fundraising and organising community events with innovation and enthusiasm. They had agreed to fund 15 new iPads for the school and provide a “welcome pack” for new parents. A plant sale was being held on 22 May to which governors were welcome to attend or donate plants to sell. <b>d. Governor communication survey:</b> Most governors had completed this survey and CF/LP would resent the link to achieve a full set of responses if possible. Most comments were positive but the team were aware that improvements could always be made. A summary of responses would be shared at the next FGB meeting. <b>e. School Closure:</b> The school activated its emergency closure protocols last week as a burst water main affected the school’s water supply. The information was communicated to parents via email. <b>Feedback to SLT:</b> this information should be sent via text message as well to ensure all parents received the message in a timely fashion.	SLT
10.	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b> Monday 12 July at 7pm	
11.	<b>Closing Prayer</b> Rev’d Stamps led the closing prayer.	

Item	Action	By Whom
4	SLT/DS to discuss protocols for returning to collective worship	RC/DS
4	Send SIAMS guidance to Lucy Mortimer (RE subject leader).	CF
5	KB would follow up with science subject leader and other subject leaders to gauge parental support for learning.	KB
6	CF would conduct an exit interview with Mr Joel Carr.	CF
7	CF to write a short summary to staff explaining the purpose of a governor visit.	CF
7	SLT to request staff to submit nominations asap for the governor book prize	SLT
9	SLT would discuss creating a covid stories scrapbook	SLT