

‘With God there is no limit to what you can do. There is no obstacle you can’t overcome.

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ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL
FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
Thursday 19 May 2022 at 7.00pm held at the school
MINUTES

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

Apologies: Hilary Doherty, Catherine Harvey

In attendance: Tracey Norris, HfL Clerk

1.	Prayer and Chair’s Welcome Dennis Stamps led the meeting in prayer. Caroline Fleming welcomed everyone to the FGB meeting	
2.	Procedural items a. Apologies received in advance: Catherine Harvey (unwell) and Hilary Doherty (on holiday). Absences were approved. b. To declare any conflict of interests: none relevant for this meeting. DS’s ongoing conflict (church hall letting) was noted. c. Any other business: three items raised – see agenda item 9. d. To approve the minutes of the previous meetings: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings. e. To consider matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arrange an Admissions Committee meeting on 22 February: held.▪ Arrange a communication working party on 28 February: held.▪ Chair to record all visits with the HT as a governor visit: completed after each visit.▪ Book exclusions training: held on 21 March.	
3.	Finance Matters The following documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Proposed budget 2022/23▪ Budget commentary▪ SVFS submission (to note)	

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	<p>The chair of the F&P committee, Stuart Burnett referred to the minutes of the F&P meeting at which the budget was reviewed in detail and presented a summary of the school’s financial position covering:</p> <p>a. <u>Year end outturn:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school’s carry forward at the beginning of the 2021 financial year was £141,728 (aided by significantly lower expenditure during the pandemic/remote learning). ▪ In year deficit 2021/22: £50,106 (£10,000 less than originally projected, impacted by higher supply teacher cover due to covid). ▪ Carry forward at end of March 2022: £91,622 <p>b. <u>Proposed budget 2022/23</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Income was based on pupil numbers (calculated from census data collected each January) plus other income from PP/SEN and sports premium grants, in total: £757,051 ▪ Expenditure: the biggest expenditure line was E01: staff costs are 86.2% of income. ▪ The proposed budget for 2022/23 projects total expenditure to be £797,996. ▪ Projected in year deficit: £40,945 ▪ Projected year end carry-forward: £50,678. ▪ Everyone was aware of the financial pressures on the school, if expenditure remained the same then by 2024/25 the school would have an in-year deficit. ▪ It was noted the year three position has historically often forecast a deficit which hasn’t arisen through prudent financial management but year two was looking less positive than normal and lower reception places will impact income. ▪ A support staff restructuring exercise was conducted 4 years ago. ▪ It was possible to reduce staffing costs going forward by replacing experience staff who might move on with less experienced staff, ECT (early career teachers who would be less expensive). The balance was always between financial prudence and school improvement needs. ▪ Budget assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 15 pupils in Reception: lower estimate than PAN included in budget due to known fall in children across Harpenden, although we continue to strive to reach full PAN intake. ➤ Falling pupil numbers presents a real risk to the school’s financial sustainability, a situation also faced by other schools in the town. ➤ Q How had rising energy costs been accounted for? The FSS adviser had budgeted for an increase in energy costs of 135% for gas and 60% for electricity (this was directive from HCC who managed the contract). ▪ Q What further restructuring could be achieved, if every class needs a teacher? It was agreed that a working party should be set up in the autumn term to start working on a contingency plan (if pupil numbers continued to decline). ▪ Action: CF to arrange a working party (contingency planning) in the autumn term. ▪ KB described how there was little slack in the current staffing structure and suggested the focus should be on maximising income through pupil numbers rather than trying to reduce staffing costs. 	<p>CF</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent governors were able to report that there appeared to be a common misconception that St Nicholas was full. This is not the case for Reception 2022 class although some of the other year groups were at capacity. Action: CF to email families who had decided not to take a place in Reception 2022 to understand their rationale. In response to parent feedback, the school was establishing a breakfast and afterschool club. It was hoped that this additional staffing cost would eventually cover its costs and increase the attractiveness of the school to working parents. Action: RC to check the breakfast club was advertised prominently on the school website. <p>The governors voted unanimously to approve the proposed budget and thanked SB for his presentation and work on the budget setting process and financial monitoring throughout the year.</p> <p>c. <u>Medium term financial sustainability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will be in deficit by year 3 if income and expenditure remained unchanged. A working party would be created to work on contingency planning. 	<p>CF</p> <p>RC</p>
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"> HIP spring visit report Admissions information RE statement of entitlement for church schools St Nicholas curriculum intent Vision and values <p>RC shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils on roll as at September 2022: 149 (PAN was 152) There had been four in-year admissions and one family had moved away (Y1). 2 x midday supervisors had been recruited. ECT appointed to join Garnet class from July 2022. The office would be fully staffed from June (School business manager (SBM) and admin assistant). The SBM would take over the posting element of the school’s accounts (previously done by FSS adviser). Reception spaces have been advertised on the PTA’s Facebook page. SIAMS Inspection: the school was not yet in the SIAMs window but this would be due in the next term or so. Current SIAMS judgement: OUTSTANDING. RC explained how the Christian ethos needed to inform all aspects of the school curriculum. This had been reviewed in the School Effectiveness Committee. Action: Governors to read SIAMs framework as and when the school was notified of the term of inspection. Q Who would take on RE subject leadership after Mrs Mortimer leaves? This would be agreed in the coming weeks and allow for a handover in summer 2. Q Was the SIAMS judgement well-publicised? This was an excellent validation of the school’s Christian ethos and should be used to advertise the school. The school’s vision and values remained relevant: “Believe and achieve”. Q Who was supporting the ECT? KB and RC. 	<p>All Governors</p>
5.	Safeguarding update	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The OFSTED inspector had reviewed the school’s safeguarding procedures in detail and commented in the report <i>“There is a strong culture of safeguarding. This is supported by a caring and diligent pastoral care focus. Leaders know the risks that children face. While there have not been many significant safeguarding cases, leaders remain vigilant. They keep thorough and clear records of cases.”</i> ▪ The spring termly safeguarding report had been shared in advance of the meeting on Governor Hub. ▪ There was one CIN plan in place at the moment. ▪ Staff training was up to date. 	
6.	<p>Committee updates</p> <p>The committee chairs summarised the main points of discussion at the recent committee meeting (the minutes of which were available on Governor Hub):</p> <p>a. <u>Finance and Premises Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Year-end outturn ▪ Budget planning 2022/23 ▪ Technology fund for parents to contribute to: it had been agreed that this would not be pursued at this time being mindful of the rising cost of living. ▪ Plans to redevelop the kitchen equipment were being drawn up for summer 2023. It was hoped the PTA could support this in some way. <p>b. <u>School Effectiveness Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Catherine Harvey would be standing down as chair of the committee at the end of this term. Hannah Draeger had agreed to take this role on. <p>c. <u>Personnel, Pay and Performance Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staffing changes discussed (see HT update). ▪ Governors supported the school with short listing and interviews. ▪ Staff wellbeing. ▪ Action: CF to arrange a wellbeing visit in the summer term. <p>d. <u>Admissions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See HT’s update. ▪ It had been reported that St Georges School was considered dropping its admission criteria regarding church attendance. Item to watch. <p>e. <u>Communications Working Party</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The next meeting was planned for June. ▪ Leaflet had been created to give to estate agents to hand out to incoming families to Harpenden. ▪ Comms was active on Facebook, school website and Twitter. ▪ KB was sharing best practice/top tips re use of Twitter with other staff. ▪ Ambition: office staff will now have the capacity to embrace social media. 	CF
7.	<p>Governing Body Matters</p> <p>a. <u>Feedback from OFSTED</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The final version of the OFSTED report had been received: the judgement was GOOD. ▪ The description of the school was felt to be spot on: <i>“St Nicholas is a very happy school. Pupils are polite, friendly, and enthusiastic about learning. In the playground they like talking about what they know. Parents praise the balance between the nurturing environment and fostering a love of learning”</i> 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CF thanked all the governors who had been able to attend on the day and the amazing efforts of RC and her team. ▪ The report had now been published on the OFSTED website and would be shared with staff on 20 May and with parents w/c 23 May. ▪ RC invited governors to reflect on what had helped them most in their preparation for the inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ OFSTED folder (of important documents) on Governor Hub ➤ Information and discussions with subject leaders ➤ Governor visits: NB reading deep dive and others ➤ Governor visit reports ➤ Safeguarding link governor's knowledge of safeguarding gave all governors confidence. ➤ The Governors pre-meeting held on the evening before the visit boosted confidence by practicing potential answers to questions. ▪ It was noted that the parent view had only been open for a short window and some families had not had time to complete this questionnaire. Q Did the school get feedback from OFSTED on this? Only a high-level overview had been shared, and detailed comments were not made available to the school. <p>b. <u>Government white paper</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CF referred to the government white paper which outlined the intentions for minimum salary levels and working hours for teachers and that all schools should aim to be part of a MAT by 2030. ▪ CF had responded to a questionnaire from the Diocese. There were pros and cons to joining a MAT and a greater understanding of the timelines involved and choices available to the school were needed. ▪ Next steps: wait for anticipated guidance from HfL/Diocese in the autumn term. ▪ A green paper on SEN had also been published. ▪ Action: CF to update briefing paper on Governor Hub. <p>c. <u>Succession planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jane Croot’s term of office ended in the summer term. ▪ Caroline Fleming would continue to end of her second term: November 2023. ▪ Delia Boner would be stepping down as chair of Personnel: Lucy Parr had agreed to take this on. DB hoped to step away as a governor in the near future. ▪ Some expressions of interest had been made to the church and CF would follow these up. ▪ Action: CF to follow up expressions of interest from parishioners re governor vacancies. <p>d. <u>Committee structure options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CF was keen to explore different models of governance which could be considered by the FGB at its next meeting in July. Options included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Merging F&P with personnel to create a Resources Committee ➤ The HIP had recommended moving to FGB meetings only as governance was good. ➤ The clerk shared some examples of how this worked in practice and highlighted the good engagement and communication between governors which would enable this approach to be successful. 	<p>CF</p> <p>CF</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There were pros and cons for all scenarios. ➤ The impact on HT/SLT workload was considered and reflection was needed on the repetition and duplication of work. ▪ JC offered her support on this piece of work; she had sat on all committees and could provide useful feedback. ▪ Action: CF to prepare committee scenarios for consideration at next FGB meeting. <p>e. <u>Governor visits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CF reminded all governors of the expectation for each governor to make a school visit each half term. ▪ This could be part of a pre-planned meeting (HIP/TLA/SL presentation). ▪ DB and HDo would attend phonics training. ▪ Staff were welcoming to governors; it was clear that governors were not there to “observe” their practice. ▪ RC noted that the ebulletin listed all forthcoming events – governors were invited to attend any forthcoming events that were open to parents. <p>f. <u>Governor training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See training summary on governor hub. ▪ In house training to be agreed in the autumn term. 	CF
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. Whistleblowing: approved b. Safer recruitment: approved c. SEND: approved d. Management of drug related incidents: approved e. Child Looked After: approved <p>The H&S policy would be submitted to the July meeting for approval.</p> <p>Action: CF to update policy schedule: completed.</p>	CF
9.	<p>Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A formal complaint had been received and in accordance with the school’s complaint policy, a governor panel had been convened comprising HL, DB and JC. b. Jubilee Celebrations: various events were planned for w/c 23 May to celebrate the Queen’s jubilee. c. Governor book prize: these would be arranged for the end of the summer term: Action: DB to organise with RC d. PTA: Summer ball, to date only 47 tickets had been sold. The event might have to be cancelled or go ahead as a loss-making event (the deposit was none-refundable). PTA were doing everything possible to increase ticket sales, reaching out to former parents for example. There was less engagement in the lower years in PTA events/organisation and this was thought to be a consequence of the pandemic and more working mothers. The comms working party were looking at this and there would be renewed focus on the incoming reception parents in September. Governors could now be more visible; able to attend school events and meet parents face to face. 	DB/RC

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	e. Staff / Governor afternoon tea: Agreed for governors to host another staff tea party in the playground towards the end of the summer term. Action: RC/KB to identify a suitable date.	RC
10.	Closing prayer	
11.	Date of next meeting: Monday 11 July at 7pm – school council to attend	