

*'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

Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 7.00pm held via Google Meets  
**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Parent Governors:* Catherine Harvey, Hannah Draeger  
*Foundation Governors:* Delia Bonner, Stuart Burnett, Simon Counce, Jane Croot, Hilary Doherty, Caroline Fleming (chair), Henry Loweth  
*Local authority governor:* Lucy Parr  
*Headteacher:* Rizelle Crouch  
*Staff Governor:* Kate Birss

**Apologies:** Dennis Stamps (ex-officio)

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

1.	<b>Prayer and Chair's Welcome</b> Delia Bonner 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>a. <b>Apologies:</b> Apologies had been received from Dennis Stamps. Catherine Harvey, Henry Loweth and Hannah Draeger were running late and would join the meeting at agenda item 4.</li> <li>b. <b>To declare any conflict of interests:</b> none relevant for this meeting.</li> <li>c. <b>Any other business:</b> there were two items of other business. Admission numbers: see HT Report. Communication update/PTA update.</li> <li>d. <b>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting:</b> the minutes of 17 October 2020 and 17 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings.</li> <li>e. <b>To consider matters arising from the previous meeting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CF to send flowers and a thank you card to the leaving member of the school office: completed.</li> <li>▪ Pupil voice session: held</li> <li>▪ Subject leader meetings: held.</li> <li>▪ CF/LP to attend Diocese SIAMS training: completed.</li> <li>▪ RC to update Ofsted key questions as an aide for governors: c/f</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
3..	<b>Subject Focus: English</b> Governors welcomed Marietjie Kennett to the meeting who referred to her English Subject Leader's report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are gaps in phonics in years 4,5&amp;6. The teaching of phonics will continue across all year groups and all staff need to become more proficient in phonics teaching.</li> <li>▪ Handwriting in Y5/6 had been identified as an area for focus.</li> <li>▪ Reading assessment planned in January has been postponed.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q For how much longer would gaps be evident in Y5/6?</b> This depended on whether or not there were any more lockdowns. The support put in place for phonics in Emerald Class will have impact.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q How consistently were pupils engaging with remote learning English lessons?</b> This varied depending on the individual pupil's circumstances (number of siblings at</li> </ul>	

Approved:   
Full Governing Body Meeting: 2 February 2021

*'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*

	<p>home, working parents etc). It is acknowledged the standard was not consistently the same as being in school, even if pupils were working really hard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Q What feedback was provided to pupils?</b> Teacher feedback was based on the one star and two wishes marking policy. Success criteria continued to be shared when setting a piece of writing.</li> <li>▪ Staff were also providing WAGOLs for pupils (what a good one looks like).</li> <li>▪ There was a strong focus on reading – staff were making sure reading books were available from school.</li> <li>▪ World Book Day was approaching and an activity would be planned for every class.</li> <li>▪ English CPD for teachers had included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Whole class teaching of reading</li> <li>○ Writing (Every Time We Write; No More Draft-dodging: the Advantages of a Flexible Approach – Tobias Hayden; Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning – Education Endowment Foundation).</li> <li>○ Lexia training for some TAs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Governors thanked MK for her report.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>The following reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HIP report 8 December 2020</li> <li>▪ Headteacher's report January 2021</li> <li>▪ Reception place applications September 2021</li> <li>▪ Google Classroom: parental feedback, January 2021</li> <li>▪ Remote learning feedback July 2020 and January 2021</li> </ul> <p>Questions and comments were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Q How had covid-catch up funding been used?</b> A cover teacher had been employed to release the class teacher to work with smaller groups of pupils for quality first interventions. During the autumn term this resource had been dedicated to Y6 to ensure the cohort was "secondary ready" before moving onto Y7.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What impact was the school's approach to persistent absenteeism having?</b> RC reported that two pupils had particularly low attendance (70% and 65%). RC had held meetings with the families which had had little impact and had resorted to issuing the HCC template letter threatening to fine the family. Since the letters had been issued, attendance had improved.</li> <li>▪ One pupil was regularly off with only mild illnesses, RC has encouraged the family to bring the child to school to let school staff take this pupil's temperature.</li> <li>▪ For those pupils with poor attendance and low engagement in remote learning, spaces in-school had been offered.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q How were staff coping with remote learning?</b> RC acknowledged that the government's announcement to close schools so late on Monday 4 January had taken everyone by surprise and the impact has been tough. Many staff were also having to juggle having their own children at home. Staff wellbeing continues to be a focus.</li> <li>▪ Staff were following the school's risk assessment procedures diligently. Two members of staff have needed time off work for personal reasons which has added to the workload of the rest of the team.</li> <li>▪ Staff have now settled in to the new way of working but it had been a steep learning curve.</li> <li>▪ DB was pleased to report that during subject leader meetings held recently with governors, staff remained enthusiastic and energised and were clearly working incredibly hard. DB had sent messages of thanks to all members of staff who had given up their time to speak with governors.</li> </ul>	



*'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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remote learning provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Google classrooms was in place by week two.</li> <li>○ Staff were able to provide feedback on pupil's work.</li> <li>○ Parent survey had been conducted to gauge feedback, which compared favourably to the previous lockdown.</li> <li>○ Some of the positive quotes from parents were shared with governors (see HT's report)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>(Hannah Draeger, Henry Loweth, Catherine Harvey joined the meeting)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Many of the issues raised by parents during the first lockdown have now been addressed.</li> <li>○ Teachers were setting regular lessons of Maths and English with a good mix of other curriculum subjects (Science, French, RE, Humanities)</li> <li>○ Staff were mindful that many parents were having to work from home as well as supervise younger children and appreciated the flexibility of Google Classrooms.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Q Was 30 mins per day on maths (as reported by some KS1 parents) adequate/too little?</b> RC noted that some KS1 pupils would struggle to concentrate for longer than 30mins so this was appropriate. She felt that the school was providing a balanced mix of activities/lessons.</li> <li>▪ Parents had been asked to prioritise Maths and English lessons over foundation subjects if they were not able to support a full day's learning.</li> <li>▪ There had been positive feedback from parents regarding Google Meets.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Was the school planning to introduce live teaching lessons?</b> RC was reluctant to do this. There is no requirement in the DfE guidance to provide live lessons for primary aged pupils. RC was mindful of various factors which needed to be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access issues for families where parents are also using devices working from home;</li> <li>○ The rigidity of the school timetable for working parents/pupils with other siblings;</li> <li>○ Additional pressure on teachers' workload; preparing and running lessons when parents are also present.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ KB explained how she was supporting Y6; daily registration on Google Meets, planning lessons, creating resources for Google Classroom providing appropriate scaffolding and support, marking every piece of work. This already took more time to plan, prepare and deliver than when teachers were class based.</li> <li>▪ In the recent survey, parents are largely content with the blended provision currently being provided.</li> <li>▪ Parent governor acknowledged how important the registration live session was, both from a pupil's social interaction with their class and teacher and from a safeguarding point of view.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Writing was an area where parents needed additional help, what had been done in response to this?</b> Writing was being scaffolded through various methods including; WAGOLL "what a good one looks like", providing more detailed feedback on a story – asking for expansion/extension for example, identifying more interesting topics for pupils to write about – things that pupils could access at home.</li> <li>▪ Teachers were marking on average 90 pieces of work a day, comments were personalised and meaningful.</li> <li>▪ <b>Action: It was agreed that the remote learning parent survey would be re-issued if lockdown went beyond 8 March.</b></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">SLT</p>
--	---------------------------------------

*'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*

	<p>▪ <b>Action: the positive parent feedback included at the end of the HT's report should be added to the next e-bulletin.</b></p> <p><b>Admissions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RC referred to the 2021 admissions paper circulated in advance of the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Disappointingly there have been a lower number of first place applications than the 22 spaces available.</li> <li>▪ 7 of the applications for a Sept'21 start were siblings.</li> <li>▪ There was a surplus of 72 spaces in Harpenden and some other local schools had also reported drops in applications.</li> <li>▪ Some schools had aggressively marketed their outdoor space/size etc which might have attracted parents to other local schools. It was unfortunate that the usual open day format had not been possible as the very strong sense of family and community at St Nicholas was hard to replicate on a virtual tour.</li> <li>▪ The falling pupil numbers continues to be a local trend over the coming years with the surplus predicted to reach 108 by 2024.</li> <li>▪ Small schools seemed to have fared less well than larger double entry schools, possibly as we have fewer families to advocate the school through word of mouth and on social media.</li> <li>▪ Lower pupil numbers would have a significant impact on the school's future financial sustainability.</li> <li>▪ The following next steps were agreed:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The communications working party would reconsider all social media activities</li> <li>○ Links with local nursery/pre-schools should be re-examined and developed where possible.</li> <li>○ Seek feedback from Garnet Class parents – why did they choose St Nicholas?</li> <li>○ Hold open day during the summer term (as well as autumn) to better promote the school's outside space.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	RC
		Comms
5.	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>The following reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safeguarding Audit report</li> <li>▪ Governor actions from audit</li> <li>▪ OFSTED safeguarding questions for governors</li> <li>▪ Safeguarding report January 2021</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the safeguarding governor, Catherine Harvey, shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All the actions raised in the safeguarding audit had been addressed.</li> <li>▪ Safeguarding training had been delivered to all staff in January.</li> <li>▪ Single Central Record training had been undertaken by the new school secretary.</li> <li>▪ There were some open child protection cases which were being managed by the school, staff were supporting parents where needed.</li> <li>▪ During lockdown the following safeguarding steps were in place:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Daily online registration</li> <li>○ Some vulnerable pupils were in school</li> <li>○ If a pupil missed two registrations, the school would phone the family for welfare check.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Q Were the pupils that the school was concerned about attending school? Yes</b></p>	
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: 18 January 2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fire inspection report had highlighted a number of required R&amp;M issues which would need to be addressed:</li> </ul>	



*'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*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Further checks of school hall capacity (it might not be allowed to be used for whole school assembly)</li> <li>○ Fire alarm system</li> <li>○ Storage under the stage might be a fire risk</li> <li>○ Ventilation in church hall kitchen</li> <li>○ These were all items that had been highlighted on the school's risk register, it was unlucky that they all needed addressing at the same time.</li> <li>▪ Leaking roof (asbestos risk) (this had been patched up temporarily but needed a more lasting repair)</li> <li>▪ Increased IT spends for teacher and pupil laptops</li> <li>▪ Quotes were being obtained for the kitchen equipment remediation, roof repairs and fire system upgrades.</li> <li>▪ Conflicting views from the various stakeholders in the Church hall kitchen had delayed staff from getting quotes (these were now in progress).</li> <li>▪ An application to the current financial year Diocese Emergency fund may be made.</li> <li>▪ All matters would be picked up by the next F&amp;P committee.</li> <li>▪ The Governors Fund had received less income during the last 12 months (lettings income was low).</li> <li>▪ SFVS submission preparation was underway (deadline 31 March) <i>[deadline since extended to 28 May 2021]</i></li> </ul> <p><b>b. School Effectiveness: 1 December 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The items discussed were included in the HT's report and SEC minutes.</li> <li>▪ The focus of the committee would be to monitor pupil progress as soon as the school re-opened.</li> </ul> <p><b>c. Personnel, pay and performance management: 10 November 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The committee had not met since the last FGB meeting at which the meeting of 10 November was noted.</li> </ul> <p><b>d. Admissions: 7 &amp; 15 December 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Various in-year admissions had been fast tracked (as agreed via email).</li> </ul> <p><b>e. Communication working party: 5 October 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This committee would arrange a meeting after half term.</li> <li>▪ The external profile/image of the school was critical in strategy to improve admission numbers.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Governor Business</b></p> <p><b>a. Governor visits:</b> the following visits had been made, please refer to governor visit folder in governor hub for reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maths pupil voice 1 December 2020: Lucy Parr</li> <li>▪ Maths pupil voice 1 December 2020: Jane Croot</li> <li>▪ Christmas celebration 14 December 2020: Delia Bonner</li> <li>▪ English (broken down into reading and writing) pupil voice 1 December 2020: Delia Bonner and Hilary Doherty</li> <li>▪ The standardised questions used for these pupil voice interviews had been included in the folder and would provide all governors with a useful guide when next making a visit.</li> <li>▪ It was agreed that governors could join in a collective worship session (these were held weekly each Thursdays at 2.15pm via Google Meets). <b>Action: RC to send email link.</b></li> <li>▪ The safeguarding governor urged all governors to ask at least one safeguarding question every time they did a visit (in person or remote).</li> </ul>	RC

*'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*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It was agreed that if schools did not return on 8 March, a programme of virtual pupil voice sessions would be arranged.</li> <li>▪ Fortnightly SLT/chair &amp; vice-chair meetings would resume after half term.</li> <li>▪ Other link roles were considered:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ GDPR: ongoing</li> <li>○ Collective worship: see above plans for governors to join in weekly sessions.</li> <li>○ Business continuity planning: see F&amp;P minutes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>b. <b>Governor training:</b> HL had circulated a summary of governor training in advance of the meeting. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safeguarding training: up to date.</li> <li>▪ Prevent: some gaps, governors were able to complete this online.</li> <li>▪ OFSTED training session: date to be agreed either 8/9/10 June 2021 at 7pm.</li> <li>▪ Diocese training: Lucy Parr, Caroline Fleming had attended.</li> <li>▪ Exclusion training: only one governor had up to date exclusion training and it was advised that any non-parent governors should book this.</li> <li>▪ Committee chairs would liaise with HL and identify specific training for committee members</li> </ul> <p>c. <b>SFVS:</b> See F&amp;P minutes</p> <p>d. <b>Business continuity:</b> See F&amp;P minutes</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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Admissions policy (unchanged).</li> <li>b. Attendance policy (model policy, updated for school context): The name of the chair needed to be updated.</li> <li>c. Lettings policy</li> <li>d. Restrictive physical intervention policy</li> <li>e. Communication policy</li> </ol> <p>The chair would update the policy tracker and change the approval date to February 2021.</p>	<p>RC/CF</p>     <p>CF</p>
9.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>HT performance management:</b> Part of the HT performance management criteria included a section on communication with the FGB. The chair invited governors to provide feedback (three questions would be circulated).</li> <li>b. <b>Promotional video:</b> the governors recorded their thanks to Mr P Harvey for his support in producing the school's promotional video. It was much appreciated.</li> <li>c. <b>PTA:</b> Hannah Draeger had attended the recent PTA meeting. The new chairs continue to enthusiastically fundraise and promote community activities. Donations from the PTA had funded 20 laptops. <b>Action: CF to send note of thanks to PTA</b></li> </ol>	<p>All</p>     <p>Chair</p>
10.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Wednesday 19 May at 7pm: budget approval</p> <p>Monday 12 July at 6.24pm</p>	
11.	<p><b>Closing Prayer</b></p> <p>Delia Bonner led the closing prayer.</p>	

*'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*

Item	Action	By Whom
4	It was agreed that the remote learning parent survey would be re-issued if lockdown went beyond 8 March.	SLT
4	The positive parent feedback included at the end of the HT's report should be added to the next e-bulletin - <b>DONE</b>	RC
4	Communications working party to arrange meeting to consider response to low pupil admission applications	Comms
7	RC to send email link for collective worship sessions - <b>DONE</b>	RC
8	Update attendance policy (chair's name) Update policy tracker	RC/Chair
9	Governors to complete mini questionnaire re HT communication and return to JC	All
9	Send letter of thanks to PTA - <b>DONE</b>	Chair

