

*'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 12 July 2021 at 7.00pm held via Google Meets

MINUTES

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

Apologies: Hannah Draeger

In attendance: Tracey Norris, HfL Clerk

1.	Prayer and Chair's Welcome Rev'd Stamps led the meeting in prayer. Caroline Fleming welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for joining the meeting remotely.	
2.	Procedural items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Apologies: Apologies had been received from Hannah Draeger who was unwell. b. To declare any conflict of interests: none relevant for this meeting. Longstanding potential conflict: Dennis Stamps - hire of church hall to the school. c. Any other business: there were no items of other business. d. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting: the minutes of 19 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings. e. To consider matters arising from the previous meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SLT/DS to discuss protocols for returning to collective worship: completed, the end of term service would be held in the Church. It had been hoped that pupils could return to the church earlier but due to continued covid vigilance this had been delayed. ▪ Send SIAMS guidance to Lucy Mortimer (RE subject leader): completed. ▪ KB would follow up with science subject leader and other subject leaders to gauge parental support for learning: Completed. KB reported that the parent survey had been issued recently and to date, only 30 responses had been received so far so a reminder would be sent. KB had spoken to the science subject leader and parent voice had been received on science topic work. This had been positive. ▪ CF would conduct an exit interview with Joel Carr: completed. ▪ CF to write a short summary to staff explaining the purpose of a governor visit: outstanding. ▪ SLT to request staff to submit nominations asap for the governor book prize: completed and the Chair thanked Delia Bonner for her assistance with this. ▪ SLT would discuss creating a covid stories scrapbook: KB reported all pupils completed a writing task on their experiences during lockdown, these could be collated into a booklet. Parent volunteers would be invited to help with this. 	
3.	Headteacher's Report	

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	<p>The following documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Headteacher’s report ▪ SDP June 2021 <p>RC explained that her HT’s report had changed slightly to better align with the OFSTED framework headings and she provided the following overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EY Advisor had visited the school and noted that the provision was calm and that the indoor learning environment much improved. A new EY framework would be in place in September and all areas for improvement/next steps agreed with the advisor related to this. ▪ The need to adopt one of the DfE recommended phonics programmes had been included in the SDP. (Letters and Sounds was not on the approved list). ▪ The DfE would release another list of approved phonics programmes in the autumn term and at this point the team would review the different programmes on offer and decide which one would best fit St Nicholas. ▪ The school’s meta cognition approach to learning was not quite embedded and with two new members of staff starting in September, this would remain on the SDP. ▪ Assessment for learning had been used to identify gaps in knowledge. ▪ Google Classrooms had been an effective on-line tool and would continue to be used for any new requirements for home learning. ▪ A whole school approach would be adopted to address pupil wellbeing and mindfulness with a focus on kindness. This would encompass the skills needed to work collaboratively and show empathy (these were areas where support was needed). ▪ Reading subject leader: a one-page summary would be shared with governors. ▪ Action: RC to circulate a one-page summary of school’s reading provision on Governor Hub plus training slides. ▪ Governors had undertaken pupil voice and it was clear that pupils understood the reading scheme. ▪ Action: two link governors to be appointed for reading. ▪ The school had received guidance from the DfE re September opening plans; these would be worked through. It was hoped that Plan A would be a return to pre-lockdown working practices with Plan B being the school’s response to the risk assessment at the time. ▪ The Chair confirmed that she would be available during the summer at any time if SLT needed to arrange a meeting/discussion about the September opening. <p>Questions were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q Did the school have the necessary resources in place in EYFS for September? Yes, EY team had mapped out the curriculum and a tracking document was in place. Work was needed to develop the outside learning environment to provide more opportunities for child-initiated learning and this was underway. ▪ Governors noted that it was appropriate that some elements of the SDP were carried forward from 2020/21 to ensure practice was fully embedded and minor tweaks/improvements could be made. ▪ Pupil numbers had been reported in the HT report. The F&P committee chair was concerned that admission numbers are falling across Harpenden (17 pupils in Reception in 2021 vs PAN of 22) and the impact on financial sustainability should be reviewed. Q Should school’s admission numbers and financial implications be included in the SDP? ▪ School numbers in September were 138. 	<p>RC</p> <p>CF</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A discussion followed on the best way to address this serious challenge to the school. It was agreed that a separate Strategic Action Plan would be created following input from a working party. Areas to consider included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase profile and publicity of the school. ○ The Twitter Feed had been launched a month ago and was gaining momentum. ○ A new school website was in the process of being finalised and this would be launched before the end of term. ○ Creative ways would be considered to increase the footfall at a school open morning, eg have a face painter, advertise at all the nurseries. ○ Targeted promotion of the school to local estate agents to share with families moving into the area was suggested. ○ Two dates had been arranged for the autumn term; 5 & 11 December. Governors suggested that an earlier date was also offered. ○ The Communications Working Party was addressing many of these issues and was also reaching out to secure proactive support from the PTA. ▪ In addition to raising the profile of the school and attracting more pupils, governors and SLT would also have to consider contingency planning for reducing costs. ▪ It was agreed that scenario planning was required to project the school's financial position with different pupil numbers. ▪ Q How could in-year admissions be promoted further? RC explained how in-year admissions were processed by HCC and the school did not typically advertise that it had spaces in different year groups. It was agreed that the admissions team should be sign-posted from the school website. ▪ Action: signpost the Admission Team at HCC for in-year admission enquiry on the school website. ▪ Falling pupil numbers was a risk to the school and it was prudent for the FGB to make plans to mitigate this risk. ▪ Q Should the working party also consider the after-school provision? Some parent governors felt that the opening hours were not flexible enough and the summer time provision was not as extensive (compared to some other schools). ▪ Parent voice should be canvased on this. ▪ Q How could the Diocese support the school in this? Church congregations in the north side of St Albans could be targets with promotional literature about the school. ▪ Q Could the local MP provide any support/guidance? It was noted that the falling birth-rate was not uniformly spread across Hertfordshire although it was affecting all Harpenden schools. ▪ In recent years High Beeches had been expanded to a two-form entry and the Harpenden Academy had been opened. Parental choice was high. ▪ It was hoped that the Harpenden Heads/Chairs forum could raise this matter in a coordinated way with the planning and admissions teams at HCC. ▪ Action: CF to create remit/scope of Strategic Action Plan 	<div style="text-align: center;">RC</div> <div style="text-align: center;">CF</div>
4.	<p>Safeguarding & Inclusion</p> <p>The termly safeguarding report had been completed on 2 July and had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lizzie Jeanes would be invited to undertake a safeguarding health check of the school in September. This would create a mini action plan to address any issues raised. ▪ Catherine Harvey (safeguarding governor) asked that all committee chairs add a safeguarding agenda item to each of their meetings. Aspects of safeguarding fell under each committee and this was further demonstrated by a diagram (shared at the meeting) of all the areas that fell under the remit of safeguarding. ▪ Q Did school continue to track attendance? Yes – all non-attendance data was carefully scrutinised. Most absences were due to self-isolation or other members of the household testing positive etc. ▪ The Chair reported that she had sent an email to all staff to touch base about wellbeing, safeguarding and personal achievements. No concerns had been raised in these responses regarding the culture and practice of safeguarding at the school. ▪ Action: Committee chairs to add safeguarding agenda item to future meetings. ▪ Action: Chair to collate responses from teachers re safeguarding. 	Com Chairs CF
5.	<p>Annual Reports The following reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were noted:</p> <p>a. Health & Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This covered all aspects of health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to schools. ▪ H&S was always an agenda item at the Finance and Premises Committee meeting. ▪ Two accidents had reached the threshold of reporting, one involving a child and one involving a mid-day supervisor. ▪ This was lower than previous years. The lower number of accidents was a positive impact from covid risk management procedures, eg the split break times (and long periods of school closure). ▪ The report summarised the safety related activities that the school performed on a regular basis. <p>b. Pupil Premium impact report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q Was the report sufficiently anonymised (for a small school)? Governors were concerned that some pupils could be identified in the report (although all names had been redacted). The report was due to be published on the ▪ Action: KB to anonymise the report further before publishing on the school website. 	KB
6.	<p>Committee Reports The minutes of the committee meetings (listed below) had been uploaded to Governor Hub. Committee Chair’s summarised the discussion at the meetings and questions were invited:</p> <p>a. Finance and Premises: 24 June 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ De-carbonisation exploratory talks were held. ▪ This would create some actions for the school going forward, in terms of reducing carbon footprint and achieving net zero by 2030 and educating pupils about their global responsibility to be as environmentally friendly as possible. ▪ Improvements to infrastructure may be required. <p>b. School Effectiveness: 28 June 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The committee reviewed the draft Sex & Relationships Education policy (see further discussion at agenda item 8 below). ▪ SEC Chair asked other governors to consider whether or not they had received an adequate summary of the school’s progress and attainment data during 2020/21 from the committee. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Following the OFSTED training sessions, some governors felt their knowledge in this area was vulnerable, particularly in the light of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Missed assessment data collection points (because of school lockdown). ○ Migration to Easy Tracker assessment system. ○ New phonics requirements. ▪ The clerk reported that advice from HIP’s to other schools was that governors should focus on those pupils who were not achieving Age Related Expectations (ARE) and what steps/adaptions the school had introduced to ensure these pupils were given the opportunity to “catch-up”. A detailed understanding of the minutia of the school’s data was not required. ▪ Governors were content for this approach but noted that focus should also be maintained to ensure pupils were given opportunities to achieve greater depth as well. <p>c. Personnel, pay and performance management: 15 June 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Head Teacher’s performance management review meeting would take place w/c 12 July. ▪ These had already been held for other staff. ▪ Two members of staff had reached the top of the main pay scale. Consideration would be given to whether or not these members of staff would increment. ▪ Staff wellbeing was a regular agenda item. ▪ Appointment had been made for Sapphire Class. ▪ HLTA advertisement had resulted in only one application. This has led to a more creative solution to the staff deployment/PPA cover. ▪ A teaching assistant position would now be advertised instead. ▪ The school could support a TA with CPD to become a HLTA if required. ▪ The TA position would be offered on a fixed term one year contract. ▪ RC would teach science lessons to Y4. ▪ Q Was the reason why there were such few applications for the HLTA post the salary range? ▪ Action: DB to benchmark HLTA salaries. ▪ Governors noted the impact that a TA could have in class and felt this support was critical. <p>d. Admissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of changes had been required to the draft admissions code relating to vulnerable children (NB additional rights for pupils who had been adopted from care). ▪ A final confirmation had been expected from DfE on 1 July which had not yet materialised. ▪ It was agreed that the marked-up code was approved, HL would inform governors of any additional changes required from the DfE as an when received. ▪ Action: HL to keep governors informed of any further changes to the Admissions Code. <p>e. Communication working party:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school’s Twitter account had been activated. Postings by the school were frequent. ▪ New banner and bunting had been purchased for the school open days. ▪ Further meeting of the working party would take place in September. ▪ Outcomes from the parent survey would be used to inform the next meeting. 	<p>DB</p> <p>HL</p>
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7.	<p>Governor Business</p> <p>a. Reflections on OFSTED training: see earlier discussion at agenda item 6.b above and also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link roles: these would be created and the Chair would prepare a draft over the summer. The key link roles would be: maths, reading, English, science, history, geography and RE. Any governors with a particular interest in an area to let CF know. ▪ The chair had prepared a summary of governor impact which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This was a working document and governors were invited to update it at any time. ▪ A list of FAQs would be created and shared with all governors. ▪ Action: RC to collate list of FAQs. ▪ Action: Chair to prepare link role allocation. ▪ A roles and responsibilities overview would also be created. The Chair proposed that the meeting frequency and format (for FGB and committee meetings) would remain unchanged. This was agreed. <p>b. Governor visits: Governor visits were an excellent way to demonstrate governor impact and knowledge of a school. Catherine Harvey had prepared an overview of all visits made during the year which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. CH asked governors to note the recommendations in her summary (shown in italics).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governor visits in the autumn term would focus on EYFS/KS1. ▪ Action: RC to create meeting schedule for governors to sign up to. <p>c. Governor training: Henry Loweth had circulated the updated training summary in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All governors were asked to complete the PREVENT training on Modern Governor. Action: governors to book PREVENT training. ▪ In-house training on Preparing for OFSTED had been held on 8 June. ▪ In-house training for 2021/22 would be agreed in the autumn term. <p>d. Governor newsletter: The Chair confirmed that this had been drafted and had been shared with committee chairs for their input. It would be published on Monday 19 July. It would include reference to the parent governor vacancy which would be formally notified to all parents in September.</p> <p>e. Succession planning: Both the Chair and the Vice-chair indicated that they would be happy to continue in these roles for the next academic year but would welcome a conversation with anyone who is interested in holding either of these committee positions.</p>	<p>RC CF</p> <p>RC</p> <p>All</p>
8.	<p>Policy Update</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"> a. Code of conduct: staff b. Data security policy c. Flexible working policy d. Whistleblowing policy e. Relationship and sex education policy: Governors were invited to consider the RSE policy and approve its adoption. This had been reviewed at committee level in detail. The following comments were raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils would be provided with an appropriate knowledge and understanding. Parents retained the right to withdraw from these lessons. ▪ The Diocese’s “Goodness and Mercy” guidelines has been followed and the ethos of a Christian School was evident in the policy. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors asked to see the materials/resources that would be shared with the pupils (RC was able to share elements of the school’s Jigsaw curriculum overview with governors (over Google Meets). Action: Governors can collect a Jigsaw resources folder from the school office if they want to look at the content in any further detail. Anatomically correct body parts would be taught to pupils in Y2. This would be shared with parents through a power point presentation. The school was a “safe place” for pupils to learn these facts. The RSE policy was approved. Next Steps: SLT to prepare a power point presentation for parents, based on pupil misconceptions. Action: RC to share draft slides with governors for review before presenting to parents in September. 	RC
9.	Any Other Business: Kate Briss took this opportunity to convey the thanks and appreciation of the whole staff body to Rizelle Crouch for her leadership and hard work during the year. They really appreciated the amazing job she had done keeping the school open. This sentiment was echoed by the Chair.	
10.	Meeting Dates 2021/22 It was agreed that FGB meetings would take place in person (subject to guidance) and committee meetings would be held via Google Meets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday 11 October 2021 Tuesday 16 November 2021 – Strategic topic focus Tuesday 1 February 2022 Thursday 19 May 2022 Monday 11 July 2022 	
11.	Closing Prayer Rev’d Stamps led the closing prayer.	

Item	Action	By Whom
3	RC to circulate a one-page summary of school’s reading provision on Governor Hub plus training slides.	RC
3	RC to signpost the Admission Team at HCC for in-year admission enquiry on the school website.	RC
3	CF to create remit/scope of Strategic Action Plan	CF
4	Committee chairs to add safeguarding agenda item to future meetings.	Chairs
4	Chair to collate responses from teachers re safeguarding.	CF
5.b	KB to anonymise the report further before publishing on the school website.	KB
6.c	DB to benchmark HLTA salaries	DB
7	HL to keep governors informed of any further changes to the Admissions Code.	HL
7	RC to collate list of FAQs (OFSTED questions for governors).	RC
7	Chair to prepare link role allocation. NB: include two link governors for reading	CF
7	RC to create autumn meeting schedule with link teachers for governors to sign up to.	RC
7	All governors to book PREVENT training.	All
8	RC to share draft slides with governors for review before presenting to parents in September re RSE policy	RC