

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

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*Believe and Achieve*

**ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING**  
Thursday 18 May 2023 at 7pm held at the school  
**MINUTES**

FGB ATTENDANCE TRACKER					
Name	Governor Type	4 Oct 22	6 Feb 23	18 May 23	10 Jul 23
Kate Birss	Staff Governor	P	P	Resigned 21/4/23	
Delia Bonner	Foundation Governor	P	P	P	
Stuart Burnett	Foundation Governor	P	P	P	
Simon Counce	Foundation Governor	A	P	P	
Rizelle Crouch	Headteacher	P	P	P	
Hilary Doherty	Foundation Governor	P	P	P	
Dr Hannah Draeger	Parent Governor	P	P	P	
Caroline Fleming	Foundation Governor	P	P	P	
Dr Catherine Harvey	Co-opted Governor	P	P	P	
Henry Loweth	Foundation Governor	P	P	P	
Lucy Parr	Foundation Governor	P	P	P	
Natalie Pepper	Parent Governor	P	P	P	
Mary Jean Pritchard	Local Authority Governor		P	P	
Rev'd Dennis Stamps	Foundation Ex-Officio	P	P	A	

P	Present
A	Apologies provided
N	Not present
O	Observer

1.	<b>Welcome and Prayer</b> The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and noted that the school’s financial management was one of the key responsibilities of governors; as much time as was needed would be devoted to budget discussions at agenda item 3.  Delia Bonner led the meeting in prayer.	
2.	<b>Procedural matters</b> a. <u>Apologies</u> : Apologies for absence had been received and were approved for Rev’d Stamps, the FGB meeting clashed with the Ascension Day service at the church. The meeting was quorate. b. <u>Declaration of any conflict of interest</u> : None relevant for this meeting. DS’s ongoing conflict (church hall letting) was noted. c. <u>Notification of other business</u> : None raised.	

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	<p>d. <u>Minutes</u>: The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>e. <u>Matters arising</u>: All actions from the previous meeting had been completed or were in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DS/RC to review the wording of the vision and values in line with the discussion above: completed see HT’s report.</li> <li>▪ Request for funding to allow teacher release time for Y6 booster sessions would be considered at the Resources Committee: agreed. Booster sessions had been delivered to Y6 on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.</li> <li>▪ Update on the TLR recruitment process at the next Resources Committee: completed. Two members of staff had been awarded a TLR for leadership responsibilities: M Kennett and A Cherniaeva.</li> <li>▪ School to upload new admissions policy to the website: completed.</li> <li>▪ Admission committee to decide if the form was needed and if yes to ensure it was prominent in the admissions paperwork and complied with GDPR/data protection legislation: see admissions report at agenda item 6.</li> <li>▪ Governors to liaise directly with subject leaders to arrange spring and summer term visits:</li> <li>▪ RC to re-iterate the purpose of governor visits to staff at the next staff meeting (ie none judgemental but finding out how the curriculum is implemented and what impact that is having): Shared with staff in briefing and via email.</li> <li>▪ HL/RC to arrange a GDPR review/DPO visit in Spring 2/Summer term: Data protection audit completed by HL on 15 March 2023.</li> <li>▪ Governors to attend collective worship: Item closed, governors attended the Easter service and there was a standing invitation for governors to join weekly worship.</li> <li>▪ RC and DS would meet to review the school’s business continuity plans: completed, see agenda item 10.</li> <li>▪ RC to arrange staff governor election in Spring 2 (this was open to all members of staff): ongoing. No one had volunteered to be staff governor. RC would continue to encourage staff to apply.</li> <li>▪ CF to agree the in-house training subject and book: Completed, session on risk management delivered on 21 March 2023.</li> <li>▪ Update on need to complete a deep-poll check - <i>In response to your query below, the relevant guidance is in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education">Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> which asks schools to request that candidates bring along their birth certificate ‘if available’, but the DBS should cover name changes too.</i></li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Finance Matters</b></p> <p>The following papers had been circulated in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget proposals 2023/24 including the three-year forecast.</li> <li>▪ List of budget accounts from P12 2022/23.</li> <li>▪ Resources committee meeting minutes 05/05/2023.</li> </ul>	
3.a	<p><b>SFVS</b></p> <p>The submission of the SFVS to HCC was noted. This document had been completed by governors and RC. An acknowledgement had been received.</p>	

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3.b	<p><b>Year-end out-turn 2022/23</b></p> <p>SB shared the following overview of the year-end position which had been reviewed and scrutinised by the Resources Committee meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The projected carry forward when the 2022/23 budget had been set had been £44,000 this had improved during the year to £66,000 despite the in-year deficit of £47,995.</li> <li>▪ Significant variances to note (see resources committee minutes for full breakdown): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase in supply costs to cover absences: E26 Agency supply, £5,500 over budget and E02 Internal supply (overtime payments): £12,800 over budget.</li> <li>○ Overspend in associated staff costs (training, staff absence insurance, vacancy advertising costs).</li> <li>○ Over budget in premises/buildings/rates/water/energy: £2,500.</li> <li>○ Over budget in learning resources/reprographics/ICT: £5,800.</li> <li>○ Over budget in catering costs: £3,000.</li> <li>○ Unbudgeted income: £18,800 supplementary grant.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Staffing levels had been challenging in 2022/23 with a member of staff on long term sick leave. The staff absence insurance did not cover the first 10 days of absence.</li> </ul>	
3.c	<p><b>Proposed budget 2023/23</b></p> <p>SB and RC summarised the budget drivers which had been reviewed in detail at the Resources Committee meeting (see meeting notes):</p> <p><u>Income</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Income was directly related to pupil numbers and was based on the number of pupil on roll as of the October census each year. Currently this was 147 pupils.</li> <li>▪ Total projected income for 2023/24 was £825,958 (higher than in 2022/23 by £68,000) made up of per pupil funding, SEND funding, other government grants (PP, sports premium, covid recovery etc).</li> </ul> <p><u>Expenditure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff pay was calculated based on the staff in post as of April 2023. Any future resignations/leavers etc would be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure the school had the right structure in place as well as one that was financially sustainable.</li> <li>▪ The AHT had been replaced by an ECT teacher who would need one day release time each week plus mentoring.</li> <li>▪ There had been a re-allocation of some elements of agency supply costs; if agency supply was permanent (eg to cover PPA time on a regular basis) then this cost needed to be added to E02 (supply teaching costs).</li> <li>▪ An additional TA had been added to the staffing structure in response to cohort needs.</li> <li>▪ One pupil needed 1:1 support and this had been funded by HCC to cover mornings only. RC was keen to increase this to the whole day.</li> <li>▪ RC had been approached by one of the feeder nursery managers re a pupil joining in Reception in September 2023 who had additional needs and would need 1:1 support. She proposed that the cost of an extra TA be added to the budget from September.</li> <li>▪ SB noted that the governors had two options; to include this additional post in the budget now or record it as a variation to the budget post approval.</li> <li>▪ Consideration was given to the optics that an increased in-year deficit might create at HCC. Governors agreed that it was necessary and difficult to balance the needs of the</li> </ul>	

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	<p>pupils against the school’s financial sustainability/viability. They noted the careful financial management of the school budget by RC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All schools were facing similar financial challenges and many were struggling to avoid an overall deficit in coming years.</li> <li>▪ The FSS contract had been downgraded from gold to bronze.</li> <li>▪ Admin staff: office manager, admin assistant x 2 days a week plus ½ day from a member of the support team.</li> <li>▪ Recruitment had been more challenging this year with candidates pulling out prior to interview. The school had taken out a subscription for the TES and used the DfE website to advertise a teaching vacancy. This post had now been filled.</li> <li>▪ Utilities: HCC had recommended an uplift of 63% for gas and 43% for electricity.</li> <li>▪ Herts Catering Limited: extra administration charge applied to all schools in 2023/24 - see accompanying letter.</li> <li>▪ HfL advisers: the EY adviser had not been renewed in 2023/24. <b>Q Was this because of lack of funds or lack of impact?</b> Ans: The EY adviser had been supporting the school for a number of years (in response to the OFSTED area for improvement) and was no longer needed.</li> <li>▪ Overall, expenditure in 2023/24 was projected to increase by £48,000 compared to 2022/23.</li> <li>▪ Key performance indicators at the bottom of the budget reports showed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Total staff costs as % income: 83%</li> <li>○ Total staff costs as % of expenditure: 80%</li> <li>○ FTE teaching staff: 6.7</li> <li>○ FTE support staff: 9.7</li> <li>○ Pupil to teacher ratio: 21.9</li> <li>○ Average teacher costs: £60,312</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Q Why were average teacher costs higher in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23?</b> Ans: This included TLRs which had been approved for leadership responsibilities as well as pay increases recommendation at 5%.</li> </ul> <p>Medium term financial plan (Y2 and Y3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There were currently 18 pupils in Reception, assumptions for the coming two years were for 16 pupils each year given the falling pupil numbers predicted in Harpenden and surrounding villages in coming years.</li> <li>▪ A large cohort of Y6 pupils would be leaving in July 2024.</li> <li>▪ Overall deficit by the end of Y3 (2025/26) was projected £53,221 (if no changes to income and expenditure).</li> <li>▪ There was a limit to what expenditure lines could be cut further whilst still maintaining a safe and secure learning environment.</li> <li>▪ Strategic priority: increase pupil numbers against the backdrop of falling birthrate across Hertfordshire.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Were pupils accepted out of county?</b> Ans: Yes.</li> <li>▪ It was noted that whilst the rent changed by the Church for the use of the dining hall was high, it was subsidised below a commercial level.</li> </ul> <p>Questions and comments were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If a new 1:1 TA was recruited (to support the incoming Reception pupil) then the school would be in deficit by the end of 2024/25.</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The toll on staff wellbeing and safety was noted if safe staffing levels could not be provided.</li> <li>▪ It was possible to recruit a dedicated 1:1 TA on a fixed term contract, this would prevent the extra spend becoming a recurrent cost.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Would the current Reception pupil who received 1:1 support continue to need this as he/she moved up the school?</b> Ans: It was expected that this support would be ongoing.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What would HCC response be to the school submitting a predicted overall deficit by Y3?</b> Ans: The clerk explained that in her experience when schools reached a financial crisis, they would be supported by HCC to put in place a financial recovery plan. If the school’s cash flow was affected, HCC would make a cash injection (loan) which was then paid back as and when the school’s financial position improved.</li> <li>▪ It was noted that much could change between now and 2025/26 in terms of school funding, pupil numbers, pay and inflation, much of which was outside Governors’ control.</li> </ul> <p>Governors <b>APPROVED</b> the proposed budget and agreed that a new 1:1 post should be added to the budget and the current 1:1 post be extended to full time.</p> <p>Governors thanked the budget working party, RC, SC, SB and the office manager for their work on this.</p>	
3.d	<p><b>Proposed capital works</b></p> <p>Initial quotes had been received on the following projects which would be discussed further at the Resources Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kitchen refurbishment: £13,000.</li> <li>▪ Boiler replacement: £45,000 (this included installation but excluded VAT).</li> </ul>	
4.	<p><b>Headteacher’s Report</b></p> <p>RC referred to her report and the HIP spring visit report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school had been busy with enrichment and extra curriculum activities and events.</li> <li>▪ In-year admissions were high; eight pupils had left the school, six had joined.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Was the school following its admission protocols (ie inform the admissions committee for a response within 48 hours)?</b> Ans: No this had not been followed.</li> <li>▪ <b>Action: RC/office manager to put in place processes to ensure the Admissions Committee was consulted prior to an in-year application being approved.</b></li> <li>▪ Governors were mindful of the need to respond quickly to parents.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Why had so many pupils left the school, had any themes emerged?</b> Ans: This information was tracked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Y1 and Y5 siblings (from Hong Kong) left after three weeks, due to class size in KS2 (too large).</li> <li>○ One family relocated abroad.</li> <li>○ One pupil had been on a waiting list for a school closer to the family home and had received a place.</li> <li>○ Two siblings left due to relationship issues with other pupils; these were being successfully addressed but the parents felt a larger school would be beneficial.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The pupil profile was changing with more EAL and SEN pupils in each year group.</li> </ul>	RC/office

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was significant need in Topaz Class.</li> <li>Careful consideration was given to class allocation each September; to make sure no one teacher was overly-stretched compared to others.</li> <li>The current advice and guidance for pupils with additional needs was for an inclusive approach; pupils should receive in-class adaptation and tailored next steps to support their need/overcome their learning barrier. This added to teacher workload and pressure; the role of support staff was essential.</li> <li>The newly appointed ECT had experience of working with pupils with autism from her previous school. She also had experience of teaching EAL and was keen to get involved in the musical provision at the school.</li> <li><b>Q Was this a local/national trend: rising EAL and SEN?</b> Ans: Yes, but it was also the case that some schools gained reputations locally for their inclusive practice and attracted more than their fair share of SEN pupils.</li> </ul> <p><u>Vision and values:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RC and DS had made some proposed amendments to the vision and values document based on guidance from the Diocese re the need to stress the Christian Ethos of the school. The following points were raised in discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This matter had been discussed extensively only a few years ago when the decision had been made to remove some of the more explicit references to God.</li> <li>The school needed to attract and welcome families of any faith as well as families of no faith.</li> <li>“<i>Believe and achieve</i>” lost its impact the more it was described/explained.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Governors <b>AGREED</b> that only the change recommended to the bottom paragraph “...<i>living in the love of God...</i>” should be made. All other changes were not required.</li> <li><b>Q 20 days of holiday requests in the summer term was high – was the school tracking this?</b> Ans: Yes. RC had put comms in a recent newsletter about parents’ legal duty to send children to school.</li> <li><b>Q Had the school issued any fines to parents?</b> Ans: This was a final step in a list of responses as set out in the school’s attendance policy. The school did not receive the monies raised from fines; it went straight to HCC.</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>The following was noted (see also HT’s report):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently the trained Designated Senior Leaders were RC and Mrs Kieran.</li> <li>Two more members of staff would receive DSL training in the summer term to create a DSL team.</li> <li>The next link visit by Catherine Harvey would be with RC, thereafter these meetings would be led by Anna.</li> <li><b>Q Did new members of staff receive safeguarding training as part of their induction process?</b> Ans: Yes.</li> <li>The Single Central Record had been audited and all actions completed with further scrutiny undertaken by Henry Loweth.</li> <li>An online safety workshop had been delivered to pupils and parents and an online fact sheet created and shared.</li> </ul>	
6..	<p><b>Committee Meetings</b></p> <p>a. <u>Resources:</u> Chair: Stuart Burnett</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meeting had focused on year-end outturn and budget planning.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing and recruitment process/costs.</li> <li>The next meeting would focus on capital projects/affordability etc.</li> </ul> <p>b. <u>School Effectiveness</u>: Chair: Hannah Draeger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next meeting would take place in June and review pupil attainment and progress data.</li> <li>The provision of maths in KS2 would be reviewed in more detail following the change in provision last year.</li> <li>SATS had taken place w/c 8 May for Y6 and w/c 15 May for Y2 pupils.</li> <li>Whole school assessment week was planned for w/c22 May.</li> <li><b>Q Was White Rose maths well embedded, did this support teachers delivering context to mixed age classes?</b> Ans: Teaching to a mixed age class was a challenge for any teacher. Booster sessions had been delivered in Y6 in preparation for SATs. The school did not have the financial capacity to employ an extra teacher to allow maths groups to be split by year group. Question analysis to identify gaps in learning which could be addressed in booster sessions was the most practical way forward. Outcomes would be scrutinised to see if this approach was working.</li> <li><b>Q How/when were boosters delivered?</b> Ans: Three topics were covered during each session. These had been delivered in the build-up to SATs.</li> <li><b>Q Could a PGCE student teacher support capacity in the spring term?</b> Ans: This could be explored but often a PGCE student added to staff workload in terms of planning.</li> <li><b>Q How had pupils coped with SATs papers – there had been a lot of negative press about this?</b> Ans: The pupils coped well.</li> </ul> <p>c. <u>Admissions</u>: Chair: Henry Loweth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No meetings held.</li> </ul> <p><u>Communications working group</u>: Chair: Natalie Pepper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next meeting was planned for July with a focus on the school open day events.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Governor Business</b></p> <p>a. <u>Governor composition</u>: Succession planning was required as a number of governors were planning to stand down/retire in the coming months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delia Bonner: retiring at the end of term</li> <li>Caroline Flemming &amp; Stuart Burnett: stepping down in October 2023</li> <li>Hilary Doherty: stepping down in January 2024</li> <li>Simon Counce: stepping down in January 2024</li> <li>DB offered to move to an associate role and this was <b>approved</b>.</li> <li><b>Action: All governors to think about their wider network for potential governors.</b></li> <li><b>Action: CF to approach local secondary schools and liaise with DS re pew sheet notice.</b></li> <li><b>Action: Parent governor elections to be held in September as Hannah Draeger moved from parent slot to co-opted slot.</b></li> </ul> <p>b. <u>Training</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house training: Risk management. This had been a helpful session and emphasised the governing body’s need to apply a risk lens to planning.</li> </ul>	<p>All CF  School</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A risk register would be created.</li> </ul> <p>c. <u>Governor Visits</u>: CH would prepare a summary report of all governor visits undertaken during the year at the July FGB meeting. All governors were invited to attend Collective Worship on Monday at 10.15am.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Policy Review</b> The following policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Data protection suite of policies: the biggest risk of data breach was from the office; governors asked that office staff paid particular attention to these policies. Governors thanked HL for his work on these policies.</li> <li>b. Whistleblowing policy</li> <li>c. Grievance policy</li> <li>d. Staff code of conduct: it was noted that the requirement to declare relationships with pupils/families outside of school was in the code but not yet complied with. <b>Action: RC to ensure the office had procedures in place to maintain a register of relationships.</b> Staff to be reminded of this requirement and that it was for their own protection in the long term.</li> <li>e. Disciplinary policy (previously circulated on Governor Hub for remote approval).</li> </ul> <p>The school’s business continuity plan had been updated and was noted. <b>Action: CF to send amendments to the office.</b></p>	<p>Office</p> <p>RC/office</p> <p>CF</p>
	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School Ball: HDr reported that the school ball would take place on Saturday 20 May and had already raised over £1000 profit from ticket sales.</li> <li>b. Governors' afternoon tea for staff: To be arranged in the summer term.</li> <li>c. Governors’ prizes: MJP would take over the organisation of the governors’ prizes from DB.</li> </ul>	CF
11.	<b>Closing prayer</b>	
12.	<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b> Monday 10 July 2023 at 6.45pm - school council to join meeting</p>	

Meeting closed at 9pm

Summary of actions arising from the meeting			
No	Item	Who	Status
1	RC to include additional 1:1 TAs in budget projections	RC	Completed
2	RC/office manager to put in place processes to ensure the Admissions Committee was consulted prior to an in-year application being approved.	RC/Office	
3	<p><u>Succession planning</u> Move DB to associate role at end of July Move HDr to coopted role at end of July All governors to think about their wider network for potential governors.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>All</p>	

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	CF to approach local secondary schools and liaise with DS re pew sheet notice. Parent governor elections to be held in September	CF School	
4	RC to ensure the office had procedures in place to maintain a register of staff relationships with pupils outside of school as per the staff code of conduct	RC	
5	School office to read all GDPR/data protection policies	Office	
6	CF to send corrections to business continuity plan to the office	CF	
7	CF to arrange date for governors’ afternoon tea/cakes for staff	CF	
8	DB to organise annual governors' prizes for pupils and share process with MJP	DB	