



SS Philip and James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting Wednesday 14 January 2026, 6.30pm, in school

Present Hazel Shaw (HS, Foundation Governor) (Chair)
Paul Atkins (PA, Headteacher)
Louise Fox (LF, Local Authority Governor) (Vice Chair)
Kim Mortensen (KM) (Parent Governor)(online)
Michael Carter (MC, Co-opted Governor)
Hayley Smith (HSm, Foundation Governor)
Ella Handley (EH, Staff Governor)
Izzy McRae (IM, Foundation Governor)
Emily Smith (ES, Foundation Governor)
Daniel Walters (DW, Foundation Governor) (online)
Robert Aitken (RA, Foundation Governor)
Frank Newhofer (FN, Foundation Governor)

Apologies Susie Bagnall (SB, Foundation Governor)

In attendance Ruth Morrison (Clerk)
Rob Miles (Associate Member)

The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

1 Prayer

1.1 DW opened the meeting in prayer.

2 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES.

2.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received and were accepted as recorded above.

3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

4 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26-11-25

4.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair for filing in school.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26-11-25 – not covered by later agenda items.

5.1 **Pupil voice survey** – The Headteacher advised that a whole school Pupil Voice survey will take place as soon as possible. **ACTION HT**

5.2 All other matters arising and actions were to be covered by later agenda items.

6 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

6.0 The following reports were available on GovernorHub to support this item:-

- Headteacher report January 2026
- School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP)– as at 26-11-25
- Self-Evaluation (SEF) 2025-26 – updated October 2025

- Strategic Spend - updated Jan 2026 (considered under agenda item 9)

6.1 **Headteacher Report** – The Headteacher presented a precis of the report

i) Safeguarding – All systems and processes are compliant. There are currently 6 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). The training for two of them expires in February, training has been booked. Records of Concern show increased complexity of cases. There were 11 entered as Cause for Concern and 1 Multi Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) referral. The Headteacher has booked to attend parental acrimony training provided by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Panel. The 175/157 Safeguarding audit was submitted on time.

ii) Admissions – Pupil numbers are currently 392. There is a long-standing trend for pupil numbers to be low at the start of the year and then increase; this year there has been an increase. The admissions committee and office have worked hard to promote the school. It is hoped there will be 400 pupils by the end of the year. As of 5-1-26 there are 37 first choice applications for Reception in September 2026, the budget is based on 40. There are 8 pupils in school with Educational and Health Care Plans (EHCP).

iii) Behaviour – 23 of the behaviour incidents (38) are for one child. There has been 1 fixed-term suspension since the report; the school is working with the family and external agencies to support the child.

iv) Attendance – Overall attendance for the year to date is 96.3%. This is significantly above the Department for Education baseline target (95.7%) and better than last year.

Q: Can the data be broken down for groups of pupils?

A: The headteacher will work on this with the Inclusion lead.

ACTION HT

Comment: Attendance for Reception is low; though noted that they are not at the statutory school age.

A: The Headteacher advised that a pupil in Year 6 is severely absent at the moment. This child is being supported by external agencies and visited weekly by the Headteacher.

v) Current Challenges – These are

- Admissions numbers
- Spreading a positive culture more widely and consistently
- Staff absence impacting the Senior Leadership Team's (SLT) ability to drive things forward

Admissions – Governors discussed the impact of admissions numbers and considered ways forward. The Headteacher and RM answered questions.

Points raised included:

- Data scrutiny from 2017 shows no reliable pattern but there is a downward trend. Other schools struggle for numbers in different year groups.
- EYFS and links with the community will be a focus to maximise numbers. It's a disadvantage that the school does not have a nursery.

Q: Does the school do any outreach?

A: We would like to invite children from nurseries to events. It's best if parents come too.

Q: Are there any grants available for nursery provision?

A: The Headteacher has enquired about grants for 2 and 3 year olds. OCC has advised that there isn't the demand here and that the school would be competing with other providers offering longer hours.

- This school does have links with other local schools online on FaceBook.

Q: Where are the open mornings advertised?

A: On FaceBook with the community. The school has a good international reputation. Links could be built with the universities. Estate Agencies are given information about places.

- Leaflets could be distributed in the catchment area as there is a perception that the school is oversubscribed.

Q: Is there a banner on the new website?

A: RM will look at this with the office staff.

ACTION RM

- Parents could be asked to encourage their friends to apply for places.
- Information could be included on the website about which schools our pupils go on to after Year 6.
- Governors discussed class sizes and the benefits and disadvantages of classes merging. Classes larger than 30 impact the quality of education. It's a financial decision. There is a maximum class size of 30 in KS1, merging classes would have practical implications. Governors agreed that the school should maintain the current class structure for as long as possible.
- Offering events and talking with parents in advance of census day could be beneficial.
- The Headteacher offered to look at benchmarking data from partnership schools and other schools using last year's data for the next Admissions Committee meeting.
- The Chair offered to give a contact link for the university to the Headteacher.
- Open mornings could be held more frequently and earlier, targeting all year groups. Preferably these would be with the Headteacher or Deputy, or Year 6 pupils.

Action – Governors agreed that the Admissions Committee considers the above suggestions with the Headteacher.

ACTION ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Headteacher answered governors' questions.

Q: What were the reasons for the percentage of pupils in EYFS achieving GLD being low?

A: There was a misconception about assessment being at this point of the year rather than at the end. By the summer it should be in line with last year at around 80%.

6.2&3SDIP 2025-26 and SEF

Q: What are the highlights in the SDIP?

A: KS1 Phonics – A new lead has been appointed who started last week. A parent event they held was well attended. The data for Phonics looks good. 40% of Year 2 pupil passed; this is the group that did not pass last year.

EYFS – OCC is giving support. The adviser has changed and will visit more frequently. Visits include modelling.

OPAL – The OPAL mentor visited this week and gave training including risk analysis; higher risk activities can now take place

Comment: Governors suggested engaging the local community in activities such as tree planting.

Q: When do the 2026 targets come out?

A: The Headteacher has discussed intervention plans with the Deputy and Inclusion Manager. Targets will be available for the next Curriculum Committee meeting.

Q: Is embedding the work a big job?

A: The Inclusion Manager has done a lot of work to ensure the plans are right and consistent; external support has been given. The Headteacher will give a presentation on this to the next Curriculum meeting.

ACTION HEADTEACHER

Self Evaluation – There was no update on this evaluation.

7 STATUTORY INSPECTION OF ANGLICAN AND METHODIST SCHOOLS (SIAMS)

7.1 The Headteacher will meet with the Diocesan Advisor on after half term. Today the Diocese has advised that when a parent requests that their child is removed from assembly and collective worship, this must be done immediately rather than after a meeting with the parent. This will impact SIAMS. This will be considered at the next curriculum committee meeting

ACTION CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

8 SAFEGUARDING

8.1 **Section 175/157 Safeguarding audit** – This had been submitted on time.

8.2 **Governor safeguarding training** – The Headteacher confirmed that all governors had completed this training.

9 GOVERNING BOARD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

9 **0) Strategic Spend** – updated Jan 2026 – This was available on GovernorHub (Document 6.1a) LF summarised the history of why we have this document, the Headteacher gave information on the Priorities in progress. An urgent item is to provide shade in the playground.

Sustainability - The Headteacher shared information on potential energy savings with battery storage which would give immediate savings after a high initial cost. Other sustainability projects could include looking at air source heat pumps, decommissioning the boiler and heating options. The Diocese would like all voluntary aided schools to be carbon zero by 2030; there has been no information about additional funding for this.

Q: Is there a sustainability lead in school?

A: An Early Careers Teacher (ECT) is the sustainability lead.

Fund raising pilot – Governors discussed if and which project could be used as a pilot to see how to bring money in. Ideally preparations for the project would take place this term with a view to launching it in the summer. Governors agreed to proceed with a project for the STEM room to make it the best it can be for the science environment. Volunteers from the parent body and the PTA could be used for support. The funding group will take this forward with the headteacher.

ACTION FUNDING GROUP

The Resources committee will look at the budget implication of reduced pupil numbers and costs of items in the strategic priorities when working on the 3-year budget.

ACTION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Q: Are free spaces offered to pupil premium pupils at the after-school club?

A: No, but we talk with the families and support them with other costs such as trips.

1) Updates and minutes from the committees

Curriculum – The committee had met on 12-12-25; minutes will be available for the next full governing body meeting.

Resources – The committee is due to meet next week.

Personnel and Safeguarding – The committee will meet after half term and consider the results of the staff survey.

Admissions – LF (committee chair) reported that the 27/28 admissions policy consultation finishes at the end of January; no comments have been received to date. Governing body approval of the policy will be via email. The Headteacher reported that the Diocese has said that the admissions committee should consider every case where a place is refused. This is being done via email. The Headteacher will seek further advice from the Diocese.

2) **Updates from lead governors and monitoring visit reports.** There were no reports to consider.

3) **All governors to confirm the following on GovernorHub:** These had been completed by all apart from the recently appointed staff governor.

ACTION EH/Chair

- Declarations of Interest,
- Reading Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025,
- Not disqualified from being a Governor.

- 4) **Climate Action Plan** – The Chair, Headteacher and HSm have attended sustainability training. There is some guidance from the Diocese. The Climate Action Plan will be discussed at the next meeting. **ACTION CLERK – AGENDA ITEM**

10 GOVERNORHUB REPLACEMENT

- 10.1 The Clerk gave a summary of the work of the pilot group for Education Services and thanked governors for engaging in it. The Headteacher gave information on the subscription to GovernorHub which is linked to the subscription for The Key; the Clerk and Headteacher will look into this. **ACTION CLERK / HEADTEACHER**

Post meeting note: OCC Governor Services have advised that work towards using the new system will be paused and that subscriptions to GovernorHub will continue for at least another year.

11 COMPLIANCE

- 11.1 The OCC Governor Services Annual Schedule for 2025-26 was available on GovernorHub. Governors gave an update on the spring term statutory actions.
- 1) Ensure the school website is up to date, including publishing details of governing structures and people on the school's website: (item A1) – HSm had carried out an audit of the website; the report was available on GovernorHub. The Headteacher confirmed that some of the items in red are on the website but might need better signposting. This will be looked at before the next meeting. **ONGOING ACTION HT**
 - 2) Approve strategy statement on use of Pupil Premium and publish on website (A3.4) – This had been discussed at the last Curriculum committee meeting. SB had requested further information to be included in the report in the future which the Inclusion Lead will work on. **COMPLETED**
 - 3) Complete evaluation of spend on Pupil Premium and Service Pupil Premium pupils in previous academic year and publish on website (A3.5) – See point 2 above. **COMPLETED**
 - 4) Complete and agree the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) This was available on GovernorHub. Governors gave their approval for the Resources Committee to discuss it further at their meeting next week and that the Chair signs it prior to submission. **ACTION RESOURCES COMMITTEE**
 - 5) Publish proposed admissions arrangements for subsequent academic years (for schools that are admissions authorities) in good time to ensure a transparent process – See minute 9 above. **ONGOING**
 - 6) Ensure details held about people involved in governance are provided to the Secretary of State via GIAS (Get Information About Schools) – The Headteacher confirmed that this is completed by the SBM and that it is up to date. **COMPLETED**

12 GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

- 12.1 **Membership of the Governing Body** – Governors noted the constitution available on GovernorHub.
Parent governor vacancy – An election will be arranged. **ACTION HEADTEACHER**
LA governor – The Clerk advised that LF's term of office ends on 30-3-26. The Chair will contact LF regarding intentions. **ACTION CHAIR**

- 12.2 **Training log** – Governors noted the training log which the Clerk had downloaded from GovernorHub.

13 DOCUMENTS FOR APPROVAL

- 13.1 There were no further documents or policies for approval.

- 13.2 **Managing situations that arise from close personal relationships** – The Headteacher advised that a policy on this has been shared with staff and will go to the next Personnel Committee meeting.
ACTION HT/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 14.1 **New Bishop** – The Headteacher will share a link to a consultation from the Diocese.
14.2 **Social media, screen time, access and AI** – Governor agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.
ACTION CLERK – AGENDA ITEM

Meeting dates for the current academic year

11th March 2026 online

29th April 2026 online

15th July 2026 in person

Online meetings will start at 7.30pm and in person meetings at 6.30pm.

The Chair thanked all for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.