



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

Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting Wednesday 26 November 2025, 7.30pm, online

Present Hazel Shaw (HS, Foundation Governor) (Chair)
Paul Atkins (PA, Headteacher)
Louise Fox (LF, Local Authority Governor) (Vice Chair)
Kim Mortensen (KM) (Parent Governor)
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)
Susie Bagnall (SB, Foundation Governor)
Frank Newhofer (FN, Foundation Governor)

Apologies Robert Aitken (RA, 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 gave a warm welcome to ES and EH to the Governing Body. 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 15-10-25

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 15-10-25 – not covered by later agenda items.

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

6 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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

- Headteacher report November 2025
- School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP)– as at 15-10-25
- Self-Evaluation (SEF) 2025-26 – updated October 2025

6.1 **Headteacher Report** – The Headteacher gave information on the impact on the whole school community of the sad news of the death of a Year 5 pupil before Half term and how the school has tried to mitigate the situation for the best of the children. Staff have been fantastic. The Headteacher read out a poem written by a Year 6 pupil which gave a sense of how pupils are feeling.

Q: Are the Headteacher and Deputy being supported?

A: Staff have had support from SeeSaw. The school has had support from 10 separate agencies, including the Local Authority Designated Officer; the Diocese has also offered support. Staff have endeavoured to maintain normality for children.

i) Safeguarding – All systems and processes are compliant. There are currently 6 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). Records of Concern show increased complexity of cases. There were 26 entered as 'Cause for Concern' (19 last time) and 0 MASH referrals. The school continues to work with families. IM (Safeguarding Governor) looked at the 175/157 Safeguarding audit with the Headteacher. Staff are engaged with the safeguarding processes and the school is confident that the processes are compliant.

ii) Admissions – 6 pupils have been accepted since the report was issued bringing the total number of pupils to 398.

iii) Behaviour – There have been no suspensions this year. The majority of Step 3 and 4 incidents in Year 6 relate to one child; multi agency support is in place. Support is also in place for a Year 2 pupil.

iv) Attendance – Overall attendance is strong and persistent absence (less than 90%) is very low. The Inclusion lead works with the office with systems to intervene with families when needed.

v) Current Challenges – These are

- Trying to keep things as normal as possible in the last few weeks.
- The impact of staff absence on operational capacity.
- Admissions numbers, an open morning in October was well attended.
- Creating a positive culture. Staff can't be praised highly enough for their work in the last few weeks.
- Protecting time for leaders to develop and implement strategic plans.

The Headteacher and RM answered governors' questions.

Q: Is attendance data for similar schools available?

A: The Department for Education have released some data which was shared with SB (attendance lead governor). From September 2026 they will give attendance baseline data comparing 20 similar schools plus ideas on how to improve it. The Headteacher is working with the school office and SB on suggestions to improve. These include closing the register within 30 minutes of opening rather than 15 minutes. The register now closes at 9.10am so pupils will be marked as late rather than unauthorised absence. SB summarised information from a visit focussing on attendance for the first half of the autumn term; this was detailed in document 9.5 on GovernorHub.

Comment: 84% of Year 1 pupils for phonics exceeds National so this is good. For Year 2 it's in line with National at 89%.

Q: Is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) admissions data from 2025 or 2026?

A: It's for last year as the cycle starts in January.

Q: What was the time involvement for the Subject Access Request (SAR)?

A: They all involve a lot of time. The Headteacher gave information regarding collecting the information and redacting other pupils mentioned. Software has been looked at but isn't suitable.

Comment: The refurbishment of the STEM room and corridors looks great.

Q: How can we make comparisons about what 'on-track' should be?

A: Comparisons are made against National for Reading, Writing and Maths, and combined. Our data is above national. We want to set aspirational targets for the

journey from entry to the school to leaving, and for them to exceed National in all areas and Year groups. RM gave information on how data packages are used to benchmark and compare data. There are no Key Stage (KS) 1 comparisons as assessment is optional.

Comment: Governors thanked the Headteacher for steering the school during a difficult time and gave their support for all that is being done.

Q: Is there an update on Early Years admissions data?

A: The closing date for applications is 15-1-26. More focussed outreach work is planned. This includes weekly tours and, building links with the Nursery via events such as the choir visiting the Nursery and Nursery pupils visiting this school. Governors suggested inviting families to events such as PTA events or stay and Play sessions. Governors noted that there is a new website. RM reported that social media platforms may be used to publicise the school on local groups; this had been advised by a River Learning Trust consultant. Governors suggested using electronic pamphlets via the newsletter, and coffee mornings to support families with school applications.

6.2&3SDIP 2025-26 and SEF

The Headteacher explained that these had not changed significantly since the last meeting. KS1 is a focus. An external EY advisor visited, the report was very positive; this will be shared with the curriculum committee. RM shared information on the implementation stages of OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning), and the training of staff. SB had visited the school on 17-11-25 to look at OPAL; the report was available on GovernorHub (Document 9.5). A session with parents is being planned for the Spring.

Q: When is the next pupil voice survey as the last one was in 2023?

A: We're due to do one that will likely be after Christmas. Pupil Voice surveys have been carried out informally since 2023.

Comment: Some of the 2025 data is wrong in the SDIP such as Year 1 Phonics showing as 87%.

A: This will be corrected.

Q: 2025 combined for KS2 was 77%, the target to exceed is 75%, is this aspirational?

A: RM explained that not all cohorts are the same and that this target would add 8% to combined. Pupils change within cohorts. This is not a decrease from last year.

Q: Could the impact of OPAL on attendance be included in Priority 2, and use a measure towards attitudes and behaviour for learning?

A: The wider impact of OPAL has been included. Research has shown its impact on attendance. This is being included in the Pupil Premium report and can be included in the SDIP.

Q: Should embedding Rosenshine principles include teaching assistants (TA) as well as teachers?

A: RM advised that he has prepared training for TAs on the best use of time. Getting them to model the Rosenshine principles is key.

Comment: Phonics on its own does not create a love of reading.

A: The school is passionate about reading. In the library there are books with interesting texts. Pupils are read to at the end of every day. Events are held throughout the year to raise the profile of literacy. Phonics results were unpicked last year; this showed that pupils could read and understood text well.

7 STATUTORY INSPECTION OF ANGLICAN AND METHODIST SCHOOLS (SIAMS)

7.1 The Headteacher is due to meet with the Diocesan Advisor on 27-11-25. They have deferred the inspection following the death of a pupil and have offered pastoral support.

8 SAFEGUARDING

- 8.1 **Section 175/157 Safeguarding audit** – This was available on GovernorHub (Document 11.10). The Headteacher had been through the report with IM. There are some small actions to complete.

Q: Has everyone completed Safeguarding training?

A: Two governors need to book the training as a priority.

ACTION ALL GOVERNORS

Approval: Governors approved the report to be submitted to county.

ACTION HEADTEACHER

9 GOVERNING BOARD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1) **Governing Body Strategic Priorities/Objectives 2025/27**, available on GovernorHub. There were no updates since the last meeting. Committees were reminded to look at their areas and monitor them as detailed in the plan.
- 2) **9.2 and 9.3 Monitoring Plan 2025-26** – The Chair explained that this document on GovernorHub was in draft and outlines the process for monitoring looking at specific priorities in the SDIP. Dates will be added by the Chair in consultation with the Headteacher. Governors approved the draft plan.
- 4) **Updates and minutes from the committees**

Curriculum – The committee had not met since the last meeting.

Resources – Minutes of the meeting held on 24-11-25 were available on GovernorHub. KM (committee chair) gave an overview as detailed in the minutes. Governors' views were sought on whether some funding should be set aside for communication for the funding group. Points raised included, the communication must be right when we approach potential sources of funding, a consistent message is needed to help strategic priorities and increase pupil numbers, promoting the opening of the STEM room, positive feedback from parents on communication and the current need to focus on the SDIP and driving it forward.

Agreement: Governors agreed to defer work on the strategic spend document and communication; and that the current focus be operational matters and the SDIP.

Personnel and Safeguarding – Governors noted the minutes of the meeting held on 23-10-25 which were available on GovernorHub.

Admissions – The committee had not met since the last meeting. LF (committee chair) reported that the 27/28 admissions policy will go out for consultation after Christmas. The plan is to bring it online with the ODBE model policy for rankings. LF will share the information.

Q: What is the relationship between the ODBE and OCC's policies?

A: The Headteacher advised that as a Voluntary Aided school it is recommended that we use the ODBE model policy. The Clerk gave information on the difference between Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools and the implications for admissions.

Q: Is there an impact on teachers wanting places for their children?

A: There have been no strong reactions to the changes. Teachers are also part of the community. ODBE do not include them on the list, but we will continue to do so. Governors supported simplifying the policy by bringing it in line with ODBE as this aligns with the school's core values regarding community. Governors agreed that LF takes this forward with the Headteacher and submits the policy to ODBE for their approval prior to a wider consultation.

ACTION LF

- 5) Updates from lead governors and monitoring visit reports
Governors noted the 3 reports available on GovernorHub from SB following visits to look at Attendance, OPAL and SEND.
- 6) **All governors to confirm the following on GovernorHub:** These had been completed by all apart from the recently appointed staff governor.
ACTION EH
 - Declarations of Interest,

- Reading Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025,
 - Not disqualified from being a Governor.
- 7) **Fundraising Strategy** – This had been covered earlier in the meeting
- 8) **Climate Action Plan** – Governors noted the information on the website on the agenda and agreed to consider this item 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. Governors were asked to contact the Clerk with any queries about logins, general issues or queries and using the forums. Training dates for the new system will be available in the new year; governors were asked to ensure they book to attend.

11 COMPLIANCE

- 11.1 The OCC Governor Services Annual Schedule for 2025-26 was available on GovernorHub. Governors gave an update on the autumn 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 a website audit, it was noted that the new website is a work in progress. HSm will carry out another audit prior to the next meeting. **ACTION HSM AND HS**
 - 2) Conduct Headteacher's appraisal (Appraisal Sub-Group) (A2.15) – This had been completed. **COMPLETED**
 - 3) Ensure Staff Pay Policy is adopted (A2.16) – This had been completed by the personnel and safeguarding committee. **COMPLETED**
 - 4) Receive report on teacher appraisal process (A2.18) - This had been completed by the personnel and safeguarding committee. **COMPLETED**
 - 5) Ensure the pay committee (or governor panel) has received recommendations from the Headteacher for teacher pay and the appraisal sub-group for headteacher pay (A2.19) This had been completed by the personnel and safeguarding committee. **COMPLETED**
 - 6) Confirm pay decisions for all teachers by 31 October 2025 and for the headteacher by 31 December 2025 (A2.20) - This had been completed by the personnel and safeguarding committee. **COMPLETED**
 - 7) Confirm Whistle-blowing procedures and in place. This had been completed by the personnel and safeguarding committee. **COMPLETED**
 - 8) Approve strategy statement on use of Pupil Premium and publish on website (A3.4) – The headteacher advised that the 3-year strategy is due for review in December and will work with the Curriculum committee. **ACTION HT AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**
 - 9) Complete evaluation of spend on Pupil Premium and Service Pupil Premium pupils in previous academic year and publish on website (A3.5) - The headteacher advised that the 3-year strategy is due for review in December and will work with the Curriculum committee. **ACTION HT AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**
 - 10) Review and agree the annual safeguarding (Section 175) report and submit online to the LA before the deadline of 28th November 2025 (A3.8) **COMPLETED**
 - 11) Ensure all governors have completed Level 2 Safeguarding training and record training record on GovernorHub (A3.10) . **COMPLETED**
 - 12) Ensure all governors have completed Prevent Duty Course 1 (Awareness) and record on GovernorHub training records (A3.11) **COMPLETED**
 - 13) Ensure all staff safeguarding training is in place (A3.13) **COMPLETED**
 - 14) Check that the school is compliant with attendance statutory guidance (A3.15) **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 when there is capacity in the admin team. **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 **Q:** Governors asked if there were any changes to the policies to be approved.

A: The Headteacher advised that most of them were unchanged or were model policies from OCC which had been updated with the school's details. The close of register times had been updated in the attendance policy.

Governors approved the following policies which were available on GovernorHub.

- Health and Safety 2025-26
- Pay Policy for Teachers 2025-26
- Attendance 2025-26
- First Aid 2025-26
- Appraisal Policy for Teachers 2025-26
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures 2025-26
- Early Careers Teachers 2025-26
- Equality and Diversity in the Workplace 2025-26
- Suspension and permanent Exclusion 2025-26

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 **Q:** The National Governance Association presented an AI policy at an Oxfordshire Governance Association meeting. Do we need one?

A: The Headteacher has discussed this with the SLT. Information on AI will be added to the E-Safety and Data Protection policies rather than have a separate policy.

The Headteacher gave information on links with St Edwards School in response to a question. Governors expressed a desire to continue to build on links with the community.

Meeting dates for the current academic year

Governors approved the proposed meeting dates

1st October 2025 in person

26th November 2025 online

14th January 2026 in person

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 9.15pm.