



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

Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting Wednesday 29 April 2026, 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)
Frank Newhofer (FN, Foundation Governor)
Susie Bagnall (SB, Foundation Governor)
Robert Aitken (RA, Foundation Governor)
- Apologies** Daniel Walters (DW, Foundation Governor)
- In attendance** Ruth Morrison (Clerk)
Rob Miles (Associate Member – Deputy Headteacher DHT)

The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

1 PRAYER

- 1.1 RM opened the meeting in prayer.

2 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES.

- 2.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies received and 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 11-3-26

- 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 11-3-26– 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 to support this item:-
- Headteacher report April 2026
 - School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP)– as at 27-4-26
 - Strategic Spend – updated April 2026
 - Pupil Questionnaire for agreement

- 6.1 **Headteacher Report** – The Headteacher presented a precis of the report
- i) Safeguarding** – All systems and processes are compliant. Two of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) have recently renewed their training. Records of Concern show increased complexity of cases. There were 21 entered as Cause for Concern and no Multi Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) referrals. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is supporting the school in dealing with some parental acrimony situations.
- ii) Admissions** – Pupil numbers are currently 392. There are 8 pupils in school with Educational and Health Care Plans (EHCP). To date, 41 of the 54 Reception places offered have been accepted. The school is chasing the outstanding applications.
- iii) Behaviour** – There were no suspensions in this reporting period. Numbers of Step 3 and 4 incidents are higher in Years 2 and 6. There have been no incidents in Year 2 since the start of term 5. Lessons have been monitored by the DHT, behaviour in good.
- iv) Attendance** – Overall attendance for the year to date is 95.9%; this is higher than last year. Persistent Absence is 8.1%; letters are being sent to these families.
- v) Current Challenges** – These are
- Admissions numbers
 - Staff absences (5.6% of all days).
 - Recruitment. There is a live advert to replace two teachers.
- vi Successes – These are**
- EYFS – Staff, pupils and parents are positive about the changes
 - Behaviour in Year 2
 - Year 6 is settled during this pressurised time
 - The ODBE premises officer has emailed to agree in principle to an interest free loan which can be used for battery storage and more solar panels. Repayments would be from the special purposes account.
 - The PTA have agreed to give £8K towards further OPAL equipment.

The Headteacher answered governors' questions.

Q: Are there any patterns to the staff absences?

A: One is long term sickness which skews the data. There are a range of reasons. Some are off with mental health issues and stress which the school is mindful of. Processes to support wellbeing are in place. The Headteacher will look into the Well Schools Partnership.

Comment: SB visited Early Years recently. The area looks fantastic and the atmosphere was conducive to learning.

Q: The percentage of pupils on track with SEND has dropped since the autumn. What is being done?

A: This was discussed in the curriculum committee meeting. Pupil progress meetings have taken place and the intervention timetable adjusted. Learning is not linear and the thresholds for tests changes during the year. Pupil progress meetings focus on individual children and what is being done to support them. Data for all pupils will continue to be reviewed.

Q: How many days have been lost due to staff sickness?

A: Records are maintained for each member of staff for sickness and emergency leave. Contracts have a clause for how many emergency leave days can be taken before not being paid.

Q: Is a launch for the STEM room still planned?

A: Yes, this will be in June on the same day as the STEM careers day. STEM professionals are being invited into Years 4, 5 and 6.

Q: How much of the persistent absence is holidays or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)?

A: The Inclusion Lead reviews the data for each child. Most of the persistent absence is holidays. Some is EBSA due to them being late rather than absent. The Senior Leadership

Team (SLT) have discussed the amount of time it takes to support these children and families.

Comments: SB discussed this during a visit with the Inclusion Lead. The report is in the monitoring folder on GovernorHub.

Q: Why has EBSA increased?

A: The number of pupils, and parents with mental health needs has increased. Parenting styles have changed since Covid, this is a national issue.

Q: Will there be more communication about attendance with parents?

A: The school is stepping up communication with them.

Q: Are under 5s included in the attendance data?

A: The school does not have to report on attendance for children below the statutory school age, but does pick up on them as patterns are established early.

- 6.2 **SDIP** – This has been reviewed and updated. Most actions have been completed but it takes time to see the impact. The Headteacher gave an overview.

Key points included:

- OPAL has had a profound impact on behaviour at lunchtime
- The impact of initiatives with key stage 1 are mixed. End of year outcomes will be lower than last year as the cohort has different needs. Support for year 2 is in place.
- Progress in phonics is huge and has had a positive impact on writing.
- Staff deployment for next year is being considered.

Q: With the two resignations will staff be moved around?

A: Plans are being drawn up to use the best strengths of staff for the school. Interviews take place on 13 May.

- 6.3 **Pupil Survey questions** – The Headteacher is looking at how to run the survey which will take place before the end of term. Governors approved the questions and requested that pupil premium children and those with SEND are included in the survey. **ACTION HT**

7 SAFEGUARDING

- 7.1 This had been covered in the Headteacher report. The Headteacher will arrange a monitoring visit with the SEND lead governor. **ACTION HT**

8 GOVERNING BOARD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 Updates and minutes from the committees

i) Curriculum – Minutes of the meeting held on 26-3-26 were available on GovernorHub. There were no questions for the committee to answer.

ii) Resources including health and safety – Minutes of the meeting held on 20-4-26 and the 3-year budget 2026/27 to 2028/29 were available on GovernorHub. KM (committee chair) gave an overview as detailed in the minutes.

Q: How has the reduction in wellbeing days been presented to staff as a positive and how was it received?

A: Staff have been told and understand that the £25K annual cost drawn from reserves can't continue and that to do so would mean staff cannot be replaced if they leave. At the inset on 29-6-26 the School Business Manager (SBM) will share top level budget information with staff. The SBM had benchmarked wellbeing days provision with other schools; the new system will be more in line with other schools. Pupils will benefit from having their own teacher more and the impact on other staff covering the days will be reduced.

Approval – Governors approved the budget as presented for submission to county.

ACTION KM/HT

Strategic Spend updated April 2026 – available on GovernorHub – The Headteacher gave information on solar batteries costing £60K and full decarbonisation costing £400K which would include decommissioning the boiler. Investing money for these projects from reserves would save money for the working budget. Governors discussed the proposals, funding and project management.

Agreement – Governors agreed

- to proceed with caution with the solar batteries project.
- to ask Duncan (Surname and role) about reducing the fees percentage for project management.
- to seek further advice regarding what is possible, including with an Oxford University contact and the original provider of the solar panels.
- the work must go out to tender.
- the resources committee to discuss the boiler decommissioning further.

ACTION HT/RESOURCES COMMITTEE

iii) Personnel and Safeguarding – Minutes of the meeting held on 26-3-26 were available on GovernorHub. There were no questions for the committee to answer. The Chair will amend the minutes where a pupil could potentially be identified. **ACTION CHAIR**

iv) Admissions – The committee had not met since the meeting. A meeting will be held in the second half of the summer term.

2) Updates from lead governors and monitoring visit reports. These had been considered by the committees. Governors were asked to upload monitoring visit reports to full governing body meetings folders for each meeting. **ACTION ALL GOVERNORS**

3) Funding Working Group and Climate Action Group – LF gave an overview of work with the Headteacher and Deputy on a funding pilot which will soon be launched. The aim is to raise £10K to support sustainability and includes funding for trees, plants, re-wilding, natural shade and the Eco-council. Matched funding has been applied for from Aviva. The PTA will assist with the crowd funding. Governors thanked the group for their work.

9 COMPLIANCE

9.1 The OCC Governor Services Annual Schedule for 2025-26 was available on GovernorHub. Governors agreed to move all but the first of the summer term statutory actions to the next meeting.

- 1) Approve budget for new financial year in full governing board meeting (maintained schools) if not already done in Spring **COMPLETED**
- 2) Review child protection (safeguarding) policy and procedures for this year. Have they been effective? Are there any issues or concerns from school or the board? Are there any actions needed?
- 3) Review the behaviour principles written statement. Are the board's principles reflected in the school behaviour policy?
- 4) Review attendance of pupils, including groups
- 5) Agree a programme of governing board meetings for the next academic year, including committee meetings
- 6) Publish details of how you spend your PE and sport premium funding by the end of the summer term or by 31 July at the latest
- 7) Approve the SEND Information Report and publish on the website
- 8) Approve the annual school public sector equality duty statement and publish on the website
- 9) Ensure all required information is published and up to date on the school website

- 10) Ensure details held about people involved in governance provided to the Secretary of State via GIAS (Get Information About Schools) remain up to date
- 11) Ensure all staff safeguarding training is in place; note any gaps and follow up
- 12) Consider and review progress towards the school's agreed equality objectives These must be updated every four years
- 13) Appoint two or three governors to conduct headteacher's appraisal in the autumn; ensure they are, or will be trained; appoint your External Adviser

10 GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

- 10.1 **Membership of the Governing Body** – Governors noted the constitution available on GovernorHub.

Parent governor vacancy – An election is in process.

ACTION HEADTEACHER

LA governor – LF's term of office ended on 30-3-26. OCC had confirmed that the local councillor had agreed to nominate LF for a further term of office. The governing body had previously approved the reappointment and agreed that this be from the end of LF's original term of office.

Forthcoming end of term of office – The Clerk advised that HS's term of office as a PCC appointed foundation governor end on 31-8-26. HS will talk with DW regarding her intention.

ACTION HS/DW

- 10.2 **Training log** – Governors noted the training log which the Clerk had downloaded from GovernorHub. The Chair had circulated details of a training course offered by the Diocese on school roles and mitigating risk.

11 DISCUSSION – SOCIAL MEDIA, SCREEN TIME, ACCESS AND AI.

- 11.1 Document 11.1 was available on GovernorHub. The Headteacher gave an overview of the document which gives information on Social Media, Screen Time, Access and AI, and is broken down for Pupils, and then Staff and School. The Government is developing guidance on screen time. This school is looking to update guidance for staff and to share it at the Inset on 29 June. The aim is for all screen use to be intentional and educational.

Governors discussed the document and asked questions.

Q: Will teachers log how much screen time they use in class?

A: There will be some sort of audit now and at points in the future. Continually logging it would be time consuming.

Comment: There is a concern that teachers might use screen time as a substitute for teaching.

HT response: Children know their teacher best however some videos with other people can be powerful educationally such as phases of the moon.

Q: Do staff use whiteboards?

A: Yes. They are on continually and act like the old blackboards. Restrictions on screen time are not aimed at this but at busy chaotic screens with scrolling.

Q: There is a difference between whiteboards and scrolling. Educational technology and Apps fall between the two. Do they promote learning and can they lead to obsessiveness with beating other pupils?

A: Most of the Reading and Writing work is on books. Time on tablets and Chrome Books is limited. Time limits in the evening could be put on Apps like Times Tables Rock Stars.

The Headteacher shared further information. Filtering and monitoring are in place. Mobiles are not allowed in school. AI is covered in some of the curriculum but not as a standalone subject. The IT lead is attending training on AI.

Q: Does the school have a policy on bringing tablets into school?

A: Mobile phones are prohibited. One child brings a kindle as a reading book. Some children with needs use devices to type and they help children with English as a foreign language to translate. iPads and Chrome Books are used for specific purposes and not every day.

Q: Who collects in the mobile phones?

A: There's a phone box in the classroom and the phone monitor locks it then takes it to the office. Pupils monitor each other.

Q: Will you share information on modelling good behaviour with parents?

A: This is research by the Government which we can distribute as part of the research on what we are doing. The Parent forum can raise it and we can share information in the newsletter.

12 DOCUMENTS FOR APPROVAL

12.1 **Draft SEND policy** – Governors commented that the policy is very long and that the traffic light system of colours could put some children in the red zone and frustrate parents. The Headteacher will reflect on these comments for next year's policy.

12.2 **Policy Tracking Spreadsheet** - Governors asked if the new tracking system is in place. The Headteacher advised that the SLT are looking at a potential new system with a view to it starting in September.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 **Governor visit day** – The Chair advised that the next monitoring day is on 6 May, a timetable for the day will be circulated.

ACTION CHAIR

13.2 **Strategic review** – LF advised that it will soon be the third year of the plan. Governors agreed that this be an agenda item at the next meeting.

ACTION LF

Meeting dates for the current academic year

15th July 2026 in person – include SIAMS update

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 9.30pm.