



GOVERNING BODY TO VERNHAM DEAN GILLUMS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on 15th May 2025 at 4:30pm

Present

Mr Paul Nicoll (Chair) Mrs Anna Hall (AH)
Mrs Holly Bulpitt (HB) Mr Matt Leavesley (ML)
Mr Steve Bocock (SB)

In Attendance

Mr Ian Hickman (IH) - Executive Headteacher
Miss Nikki Pauk (NP) - Clerk

Apologies

Mrs Kate Taylor (KT)
Mrs Rachel Miller(RM)
Miss Siobhan McCullagh (SM)

Absent with no apologies

None

Red font denotes - Ensuring the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Green font denotes - Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils

Blue font denotes - overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Ref	Agenda Item
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Prayer PN welcomed all to the meeting. Carol Dunk starting as new Vicar at the beginning of June.
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interest Bulpitt Printing
3.	Review and sign off the minutes from the meeting 20th March 2025 Approved and signed off.
4.	Staffing and Class Organisation Five YRs will be starting in September. The number on roll will be as follows:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 17 children in lower school• 14 in upper school

We will be keeping the same structure for the next academic year as splitting the children into smaller groups would not be financially viable. The KS2 class has been positive for the children and it is a nice number to be working with despite the challenges. Direction of travel indicated on the LLP report last term was around closer working across the infant year groups. We have the scope to make sure we are working more in that way. If we started to split too much we would have groups that are too small and the children will miss out on the important things like association, working alongside one another, development of personal and social skills. We have flexibility to take children in all year groups.

Governor question: Did we bottom out why lady applied for us as her first choice but did not get allocated to us? NP said that she had spoken to the Admissions Team and they had advised that this parent had only chosen two schools on her application and we were not one of them. The parent has now re-applied and been allocated a YR space for September.

Our original numbers for YR for September were 7 but two parents have deferred their children.

Governor question: What is our YR intake like in comparison with Appleshaw? HT said that they have the full quota of 15 for the first time in 4 years, Kimpton have been allocated 24/25. HT confirmed that he did not know what other local schools figures were looking like. CofG confirmed the numbers are definitely down. Julia Roberts put him in touch with another CofG who is looking at taking on the same role as we have as they were worried it seems to be a pattern at the moment. CofG suggested posters to be put up in nurseries to pick up a few extra children. HT suggested booking in an open afternoon before the end of term.

The school need to reach out to playgroups and nurseries and get their heads to come and have a look at our school. We are very much isolated and there will be people that will not even know we exist.

YR structure is the right format. Interaction is significant to their development in that year group.

Number on roll for September is 31.

Governor asked if there was any way we could put on a taxi / bus service? This could be a way of bringing in more children. How complex would this be? AH said that she would be happy to contact taxi services to get an idea of costs.

5.	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>CofG and HT met last week. The school has had a few safeguarding issues since January that are being managed. Lots of conversations are being had with external agencies. HB and IH do the bulk of this. HS and FN are DSL's as well. All safeguarding issues are different in terms of what they look like. Another whole school Safeguarding training session will be held on 3rd September which will build on some of the themes we looked at last year.</p> <p>We have a child in school who has lashed out at and hurt staff members. Important to factor in to any decision/discussion you are having about safeguarding. HT had a meeting with parent today. Transparent conversation took place. At some point there may be a consequence to the child's actions which we, as a school, have to take e.g. suspension. There is a balance of wanting to keep the child in school to get their education and keeping staff safe. We are doing everything we can to de-escalate the situations that arise. An Outreach Worker came in to observe the said child today and said that staff were doing everything correctly and everything that she would do we were doing. There was nothing much she could add. It is important staff know how to protect themselves. Feel things have escalated in the past few months. There has been two situations today. CofG said that he had witnessed two episodes of said child lashing out and hitting staff. School has struggled to find out where the outbursts are coming from and feel it is a little more about control. Governors passed on thanks to staff that are dealing with this.</p> <p>Staff meeting was held regarding this. We all want it to work but it seems like it is getting to a point where it isn't and it isn't any fault of ours.</p> <p>Mainstream schools have a broad selection of children whereas specialist schools have a small selection which is geared to the children's needs.</p>
6.	<p>Finance – Review Benchmarking and approve budget for 2025/26</p> <p>We have brought forward £97,212. Budget looking healthy for this year and next but in year 3 we head into deficit. We are currently still using a contract cleaning company as Caretaker is off for personal reasons so effectively the same job is getting paid for twice. There is a large sum of expenditure in 4540 as this is where the PE Grant has been allocated to. The school has just over £20,000 to spend by the end of July this year. If it is not spend, it will be claimed back. There are restrictions around what the money can be spent on. Schools get creative within the rules. The money is to be used to promote physically active and healthy lifestyles. We cannot use this money to fund capital projects. We have ideas for what we would like to spend this money on as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forest School. ● Sports Coach one afternoon per week and to run an after school club. ● Experience days to expose the children to different activities. We have already booked in a Skipping Day and Scooter & Skateboard Day. ● Day trip to Oxenwood for YR – Y5 and an overnight stay for Y6. ● Fixed gym equipment that might help children keep fit at break times e.g. outdoor gym. <p>This may be the last PE Grant we will receive.</p>

	<p>Fencing is being put up in the Forest area and a separate fence around the pond. Would like this to become a Forest School area. Will need a staff member to train as a Forest School Lead which will take around 1 year. IH said that he could see if one of his trained staff members would like an afternoon of work here so we can get it up and running until we have our own trained staff member.</p> <p>Biggest cost in the budget is staff.</p> <p>If Governors wish to look at benchmarking they can do so via the link bellows:-</p> <p>https://financial-benchmarking-and-insights-tool.education.gov.uk/</p> <p>This is a useful tool but if you have to have something running it is impossible to save money.</p>
7.	<p>SFVS</p>
8.	<p>Health & Safety</p> <p>Continue to tap into Site Manager support at the other schools for legionella checks. Site walk arounds etc.</p> <p>Need to get a view on the bandstand and if it is repairable get it repaired if not need to remove it.</p> <p>Concerned with the YR area and when you start to look at it, it is ropey, the decking has gone and needs replacing, the whole area needs repairing. Quote to be obtained.</p> <p>Cleaning still working ok</p>
9.	<p>Catering Procurement Process</p> <p>Knights Enham have led the tender process regarding this as we receive our meals from them. Presentations were attended a couple of weeks ago over a two day period and the companies going for the contract were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dolce ● ABM ● SBC ● Edward and Ward <p>IH attended the presentation for Dolce and ABM on the first day and Edward and Ward on the second. Both ABM and Edward and Ward were impressive. ABM were the favoured contractor. Aim is for a September start. Upturn in standards and quality. Meals will be charged at £3.25 and it should work out that we will be subsidising £1000 less. Governor Question: Will you be given menus – yes. ABM will be going out to schools to do work with parents beforehand. The company are geared to a more personable service. Quality and appearance of food is better. IH looking to go with ABM for his other schools too. This will help to provide local protection.</p>
10.	<p>AOB</p> <p>New vicar might be some input with Church.</p>

SB said that he was asked by the Church to be a Foundation Governor. He said that he has no idea what the role is and has been given no support or guidance. He doesn't know anything about schools. IH said that there are advantages to not knowing much about schools. The Governing Boards will have a better balance of backgrounds and different perspectives. Helpful for school and governing body. Positive thing. In terms of specific role IH said that he could assist with this. When attending meeting role not critical. Things relevant to work of church. Having working knowledge of what SIAMS framework is like. Lot of experience with Health and Safety.

The meeting closed at 17:28

Date of next meeting: 3rd July 2025

Signed (confirmed):

Chair of Governors

Date:

	Action	Who by	Deadline
1.	School Development plan to be drafted	IH/PN	25/10/24
2.	School Article to be published in village magazine	AH	
3.	Information to be sent to AH in order for her to prepare something for Focus Magazine	HB	
4.	New Governor monitoring form to be devised	PN	On hold
5.	KCSIE 2024 updates to be read	ALL	
6.	Email to be sent to IH with details of what Governor believes is not being done.	AH	Completed
7.	KCSIE update document to be sent to Governors	IH/NP	Completed
8.	Slides from Affordable Schools Network meeting to be shared with Governors	IH	
9.	LLPR report to be shared with Governors once received	IH	
10.	IT comparison costs to be sent to Governors	IH/NP	
11.	Governor Skills Audit to be completed and returned to KT	ALL	
12.	Cloud backup cost to be raised with Harrap	NP	
13.	Benchmarking link to be sent to Governors	NP	
14.	SFVS Checklist to be sent to PN for completion	NP	

	Action	Who by	Date
1.	Budget Revision Agreed	ALL	21/11/24