



# GOVERNING BODY TO VERNHAM DEAN GILLUMS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 at 4:30pm

### Present

Mr Paul Nicoll (Chair)                      Miss Siobhan McCullagh (SM)  
Mrs Holly Bulpitt (HB)                      Rev Carol Dunk (CD)  
Mrs Kate Taylor (KT)

### In Attendance

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

### Apologies

Mrs Rachel Miller(RM)  
Ms Anna Hall (AH)  
Mr Steve Bocock (SB)

### Absent with no apologies

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.	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Prayer</b> All welcomed and Rev Carol led prayer
2.	<b>Declaration of Pecuniary Interest</b> None
3.	<b>Review and sign off the minutes from the meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025</b> Approved
4.	<b>HT Report/ Safeguarding Report (Verbal)</b>  Looking forward to a positive year at Vernham Dean. The first four weeks have been busy but very positive.  The Reception year began very positively, with the children settling in extremely well. The transition process has gone smoothly, and although starting school can present challenges, our group has experienced a strong and positive start.  One of our key focuses this year is the development of Wraparound Care. With the support of grant funding and a chosen provider, we are working towards launching this provision after half-term.

While there may be challenges due to our small roll numbers, it is important that the service can sustain itself moving forward.

Offering wraparound care is an important factor for prospective parents and will also be a valuable support for many of our existing families. This marks a significant development for our school this year, providing not only care but also stimulating activities for the children. The cost will be £7 for morning sessions and £14 for after-school sessions. We are now beginning to share this more widely. Website to be updated to advertise this.

We are preparing to launch Forest School sessions on site. Last year, we ran this provision in partnership with Appleshaw, which proved very popular and was thoroughly enjoyed by the children. This year, one of our staff members will be undertaking training and will be supported by the Appleshaw Forest School Leader. Before sessions can begin, the area will need some clearance, which will be organised as part of our Grounds Tidy Morning.

### **Library and Bandstand Developments**

HB has been working with a parent who has kindly offered support for developing the library and bandstand this year. Plans include:

- Installing bookcases with tree-end designs and a seating area before Christmas.
- Starting the bandstand project in spring.
- Building 8ft oak planters to enhance the school environment.

These are positive developments that will enrich the school's facilities.

### **Reception Outdoor Area**

Efforts continue to secure potential funding from the Conholt Estate (application submitted 19th July, receipt acknowledged by one trustee). Key points:

- If approved, contractors will provide an updated quote for trenching under wetpour surfaces.
- Property Services will be informed of progress.
- If funding is not approved, alternative funding sources will be explored.

This is a significant project focused on creating an attractive and functional gateway into the school. Any solution must be budget-friendly, long-lasting, and visually appealing.

### **Main School Developments**

#### **Self-Evaluation and Safeguarding**

- HB and IH met last week to update the school's self-evaluation document using the NSPCC framework, reviewing standards across leadership, governance, child protection, and working with families.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors’ safeguarding training will be updated via school-organised sessions, NGA resources, and KCSIE key documents. Awareness of the early help process will also be reinforced.</li> <li>• DSL refresher training is booked for Inset Day on 3rd November. Safeguarding Leads have completed initial training; refresher sessions are required every two years, coordinated with two other schools to allow cross-school insights.</li> </ul> <p><b>Policies and Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IH has reviewed some school policies; further work is required.</li> <li>• Complaints procedure will be checked against DfE guidance to ensure compliance.</li> <li>• Staff Code of Conduct has been updated, covering whistleblowing, confidentiality, and other key information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offsite visit leader training is booked for February Inset Day, focusing on risk assessment and Evolve system usage.</li> <li>• Parent communication regarding safeguarding will be enhanced, including a video to simplify key information.</li> <li>• Safer recruitment training to be undertaken via NSPCC to ensure processes are clear and attract suitable candidates.</li> <li>• Volunteers will be reminded of policies and procedures; no instances of inappropriate conduct have occurred.</li> <li>• PREVENT training will be updated for all relevant staff.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community and Positive Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school received thanks from the Chair of Governors for positive initiatives.</li> <li>• Open Day will involve volunteers, highlighting the strength of the school community.</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>School Development Plan</b></p> <p>IH will send Governors the written plan for this year.</p> <p>HB and IH have reviewed targets, focusing on key areas such as <b>spelling</b> and <b>maths</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiplication Tables Check results highlighted areas for improvement; children’s acquisition of multiplication facts and arithmetic skills will be a focus.</li> <li>• Year 6 pupils who did not pass maths were significantly weaker in arithmetic, so improving maths fluency and core skills is a priority.</li> <li>• The aim is to strengthen <b>foundational skills and knowledge</b>, particularly in early years, in line with the government’s target that 75% of children achieve a good level of development by 2028.</li> <li>• Initial focus will be on the <b>core skills children need by the end of the foundation stage</b>, which are essential for starting Year 1. This is not replacing the existing curriculum but ensuring children have the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Oracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robins Class demonstrates stronger oracy skills compared to KS2.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HB will develop attainment levels to address challenges in KS2.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ongoing Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are working hard to meet the evolving needs of the class and individual children.</li> <li>• The newsletter acknowledges this effort, highlighting the school’s focus on core priorities.</li> <li>• The written School Development Plan will be circulated to governors for review.</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b>Policies</b> All Governors were happy to ratify policies.</p> <p>A review of statutory policies is needed to ensure they are up to date. Policies to be aligned with those in IH’s other schools for consistency.</p>
7.	<p><b>KCSIE 2025 Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates to <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025</i> are limited.</li> <li>• Schools should review their <b>Relationships and Sex Education policy</b>, as several points have been flagged for implementation by next September.</li> <li>• NP will distribute the updates alongside meeting minutes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DSL has a significant responsibility, with an extensive amount of information to manage.</li> <li>• It is vital that all staff contribute to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture, communicate effectively, and act promptly on any concerns.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Media and Emerging Risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are increasingly exposed to social media content, including potentially harmful influences such as figures like Andrew Tate, which can affect attitudes and behaviours.</li> <li>• Schools face ongoing challenges in responding to radicalisation, social media trends, and other emerging risks.</li> <li>• While schools cannot prevent children from using social media outside school, the focus should be on <b>appropriate responses</b> to concerns.</li> </ul> <p><b>School Approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSLs respond appropriately to issues, which may include discussions with parents, referrals to social services, or contact with the police.</li> <li>• The school maintains a <b>strong safeguarding culture</b> across all staff.</li> <li>• Mobile phone policy: <b>No phones in school</b>. Last year, a few Year 6 pupils brought phones for their walk to school; these were kept securely in HB’s drawer during the day.</li> <li>• The school encourages parents to consider “brick phones” for children to reduce risks.</li> <li>• Collective action across schools may help influence change and improve safeguarding outcomes.</li> </ul>
8.	<p><b>Safeguarding Governor online training</b> Discussed above.</p>

9.	<p><b>AOB</b> Governor praised the school for its welcoming environment, strong ethos and supportive staff.</p> <p><b>Staff Updates:</b></p> <p>The HLTA who is currently on maternity leave will be contacted after half-term to find out her intentions once her leave ends.</p> <p>The HLTA role has now transitioned to full-time.</p> <p>The caretaker is taking early retirement, finishing at the end of October. The recruitment process will begin shortly.</p>
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The meeting closed at 17:45

**Date of next meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

Signed (confirmed):

**Chair of Governors**

Date:

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