

SUMMER TERM 2025

MINUTES of the meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School held at the Junior school on 3 July 2025 at 7 pm

PRESENT:

Ann Alderson	Eleanor O'Connor
Olivier Eymery	Barbara O'Farrell
Patricia English	Hemal Pandya
Alastair Haywood (Headteacher)	Penny Thomson
Elaine Hoare	Russell Turner
Clive Jones	Donna Westall (Chair)
Katherine Mannion	

IN ATTENDANCE: Ann Baines Clerk

ABSENT:

Sri Akunuri	(apologies received and accepted)
Laura Bell	(apologies received and accepted)
Gill Brown	(apologies received and accepted)
Lisa Higgin	(apologies received and accepted)
Nigel Hobbs	(apologies received and accepted)
Becky Spencer	(apologies received and accepted)

NB Governors' questions are shown in bold italics.

	ACTION
1 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
No items were raised as other business.	
2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
There were no declarations of interest in items covered at this meeting.	
3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING	
3.1 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2025, having been circulated, were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes were signed by the Chair and handed to the Headteacher to be available in the school.	
3.2 MATTERS ARISING	
3.2.1 EDI target in SDP (minute 6.6)	
The target had been included.	
3.2.2 Complaints Procedure published (Minute 7)	
The Procedure had been published.	
3.2.3 Neonatal leave and pay policy (Minute 8.2)	
See report from Personnel and Pay Review Committee.	

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

4.1 Headteacher's report

The Headteacher had posted his report in advance. Governors had asked questions which he had answered and were discussed in more detail as follows.

4.1.1 SEN

Q1 **Does the EHC column refer to EHC plans that have been approved, and associated funding received?**

Yes, this is only plans that have been approved. Six more have a yes to assess, and their expected funding is in the current budget, but they are not listed here as having an EHC. Governors noted that the Government was reviewing SEND, including EHCPs.

Q3 **Are you able to advise status on EHCP applications for the remainder, are applications all in the process, average time of waiting etc? I think I recall you mentioning this, but do you have sight of the anticipated SEN status for next year's intake, and any associated EHCP that will carry over?**

Currently, the average wait time is around a year, from being given a yes to assess. We have one child who has now had her Educational Psychologist assessment and two children who are close to reaching the top of that list. Waiting times for approval are about a year and there is a backlog of around 1,100 so the others will be a long time yet, unfortunately. Bucks has eight vacancies for Educational Psychologists and a high turnover of staff at all stages of the process.

We do not have any children with an EHCP joining either school this year. On paper, there appears to be no significant SEN either. We will be reducing our numbers of children with an EHC by three at the juniors, as four are leaving, and one is joining from the infants who has 1:1 support funded by exceptional medical needs. However, there are places in Year 3 so other children with additional needs may join and some pupils may require SEN Support as the needs can increase with age.

Q4 **In comparing March's report, there is one less EHC in infants and three more SEN support in juniors - could you advise the circumstances around this?**

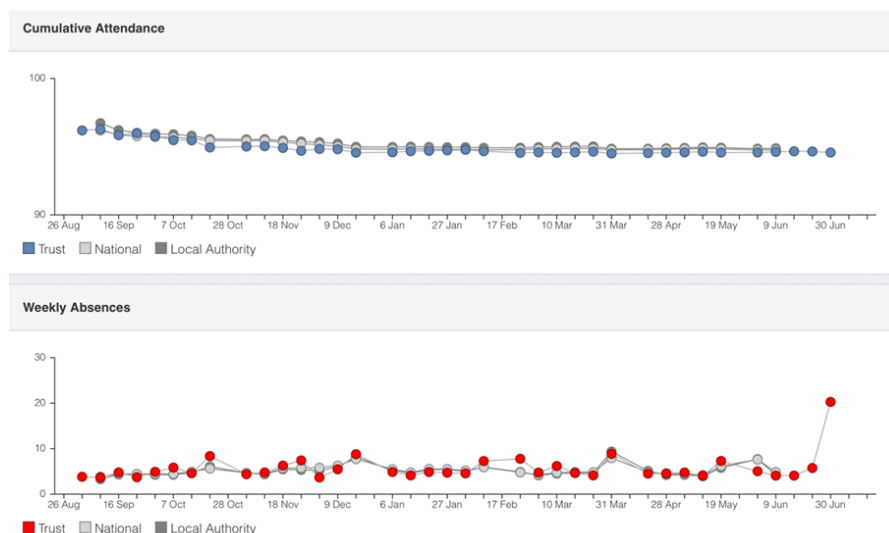
One child who had an EHC at the infants has left the school and is now attending a specialist setting. For the juniors, as children's needs become more pronounced, the gap between them and their peers becomes wider, and diagnoses are given so children can move onto the SEN register, as is the case here.

4.1.2 Attendance

Q5 **Is this year-to-date figures? Is it possible to get an understanding of the trend i.e. is it improving, worsening or the same? I note your comment on the Fixed Penalty Notice threshold. What is the policy on FPNs, is it Bucks Council decision/action, or does the school influence or recommend action?**

Yes, this is year-to-date. As Insight is so much more powerful, I will be able to produce trend data more easily going forward. For reference, here is whole

school attendance over the course of the year:



This is data for both schools combined. You can see, once it reaches close to 95%, it stays fairly consistent. On the bottom graph, you can see clear spikes in absence on at least four weeks – coincidentally, they are the weeks just before a holiday.

For FPNs, we have no authority so make referrals to Bucks, and they start the legal proceedings to bring the FPN. There is a form that I fill in giving the dates for absence and the type (usually a G code – unauthorised family holiday). Bucks take it over from there. At recent training, they said they expected schools to put in referrals every time unauthorised holiday hits the threshold, so that is what we will do. The LA issues the FPN and starts proceedings. The threshold is five days' unauthorised absence in ten weeks. In the last year, 46 referrals would have been triggered through holidays.

Q6 ***What happens if parents give another reason for absence? Does the school always refer?***

If there is a good reason for absence, such as a family wedding, I can use discretion but would authorise absence for the wedding and not for a holiday that was attached. Referrals are also made for irregular attendance if it meets the threshold.

Q7 ***How does the school compare to others?***

It is about level with others on persistent absence. Analysing the persistent absence shows that the balance is towards holidays. I will write to parents about holidays and referrals.

Q8 ***I would be interested to understand if there is any correlation between attendance and achievement. My assumption would be yes, but if we have data to substantiate that, it could be a powerful message to the parent community.***

Yes, there is in general. It is most common when there is a co-existing characteristic eg low attendance and PP, or low attendance and SEN. With the tools we have now, it is hard to show in a meaningful way. With Insight, I will be able to filter by attendance percentage and attainment at the same time,

which I can't with SIMs now. When we have all the data in Insight, we will be able to show these correlations with much more clarity.

4.1.3 Safeguarding

Q9 **Is this YTD figures? or a snapshot of current status?**

This is the current status for families on plans, etc. The other reported incidents are since the last meeting in March. In September, I will complete the safeguarding return for Bucks, which will have year figures and will be brought to the October meeting.

Q10 **Young carer referrals, which I think is a newly reported category, we have two - Without betraying confidentiality, are you able to share the situation of this and what support is being offered?**

One child had an ill grandparent living with them, which took up a considerable amount of their parents' time, and the other child has a mother who is suffering significant mental health issues. Pastoral support is available in school. Support across the county is now more evenly spread.

4.1.4 School Trips

Q11 **I have noticed the more affirmative wording regarding payments for school trips/activities in the school communications. Have you seen any difference in payments received?**

As mentioned, we are still having significant shortfalls. I will write to parents with actual figures, as they are quite stark and many parents are quite shocked when they hear them. It is not just for trips – the Y6 leavers party is struggling to get some families to pay for their ticket as well – I think there is an assumption they won't miss out. In some ways, I would have liked to have had to cancel PACCAR, as unfair on the children as that would have been, as it would have sent a clear message. The shortfall on PACCAR was £500 as 15 of the 60 families did not pay. Governors thanked one parent who had paid the whole shortfall. The Wellbeing Day, for which a donation of £1.50 was asked, was £300 short. One parent had given £50 and the provider had reduced the fee so that it could go ahead.

Q12 **Would a letter to all parents help?**

It might and the situation needs to be communicated more. When Class Reps are told how much the shortfalls are, some understand the situation and pay straightaway.

Q13 **As an alternative to payments for individual trips, could an option be a start-of-year donation by year group, then the trips are arranged depending on how much is received? It's difficult to know what to do for this, as it seems really alien to me.**

We could look into this, but it would still mean that some don't pay and get the trips anyway if we get enough to cover two of the three trips, for example. Once we cancel a few, things will pick up, I am sure. This method was tried before and the uptake was not great. Generally, some parents did not pay but some just forgot. Asking earlier would give more opportunities to chase them.

4.1.5 Website

Q14 *In lieu of not having a communications committee meeting this term, could you please provide an update on the launch plans for the new website, and any support required?*

I've pencilled in two days next week when I have finished reading reports to get it finished.

4.1.6 Monitoring

Q15 *Acknowledging this may be sensitive, but I was thinking about it so wanted to ask. How does the school SLT observe and validate the standard of teaching in class settings? I understand there are layered mechanisms, metrics monitored, externally validated etc but I don't get a sense in the report of physical observations and associated coaching from members of the SLT and senior staff - could you expand on this please? I am also conscious of the staffing changes, especially with the deputy head positions, and any impact on this as a result for next year.*

Lesson observations are a tricky one – they only tell you so much as most teachers can perform in a one-off lesson. We try to get a feel for consistency by popping in and out of lessons briefly, looking at books and talking to pupils and teachers. We can then feedback and put in staff meeting sessions as needed. This gives a much more even picture than a one-off assessment. We did some more developmental ones last year that the teachers directed, and we are bringing back peer observations next year which will all help. Katherine, Patricia and I have booked in to discuss this in September, once we know how their teaching load is impacting everything. From there, we will look at how we can reorganise Development Weeks to make them useful, but manageable for us to complete as well.

Q16 *Do Phase Leaders do observations as well?*

No. They do go into classes briefly when looking at how their subject is taught.

4.1.7 Staffing

Q17 *On staff absence, what constitutes paid authorised absence?*

Anything authorised that is not sickness. It includes days off in lieu of residentials and, as was the case recently, Jury Service. The number of days sickness was in the report but when the number of fte is used to calculate the percentage attendance, the picture is clearer. Attendance at the Infants was 94% and, at the Juniors, 95%. Sickness absence alone was at 2% which was in line with the national average.

4.1.8 Advice from the DfE on AI

The DfE had published guidance and training on the use of AI. The Headteacher would go through it all before deciding how to move forward.

Governors noted that Governor Hub had started to use OpenAI on its site. Although it was the most up to date version, privacy was still in question and Governors were advised to avoid any personal data on the site.

4.2 School Development Plan/Self Evaluation Form

The Parent Survey was now closed. The response rate was similar to last year

with 40 responses from each school, including some lovely comments.

Governors had been added to the SDP for 2025-26 and it was a fairly complete draft. It would be considered for approval at the FGB in early Autumn.

Have the staff seen the proposed SDP and fed back?

They would see it once it had been agreed.

5 Governing Board

5.1 Appreciation

The Headteacher and Governors thanked Eleanor O'Connor for everything that she had done for the school over time in so many different roles. Staff, pupils and Governors had felt supported by her and appreciated her help.

5.2 Roles for 2025-26

Governors had let the Chair know of any changes of role they would like for next year.

- Clive Jones would become Chair of Personnel and Pay Review Committee and drop a curriculum subject, Geography.
- Olivier Eymery would take Geography.
- Hemal Pandya would join Finance Committee which Eleanor O'Connor was leaving.
- There was one space on Curriculum and Standards Committee and a new Governor could take that space.

5.3 Governor vacancies

The LA Governor role would become vacant when Eleanor O'Connor left. Governors appointed Donna Westall as LA Governor subject to confirmation from the LA. The Clerk would take this forward. A vacancy for a Co-opted Governor resulted. Governors had agreed that a third of their number could be parents across the different types of Governor, including the two elected Parent Governors. As there would be only five parents on the GB in September, an advert could go out to parents and anyone showing an interest would be interviewed.

Clerk

6 Legislation/regulations/policies

6.1 School Emergency Plan

There were few changes the Emergency Plan. The Church would be the place of safety for both schools as a threat could cover both schools. Bucks would take on cybersecurity, although Turn It On remained DPO.

Governors agreed the School Emergency Plan.

6.2 School Estate Management standards

The Infrastructure Committee was aware of the new standards.

6.3 PE/Sports Premium Strategy

The DfE had introduced an online template for the Sports Premium Strategy which should be signed by the Chair before the end of July.

6.4 Data Retention policy

The Communications Committee would pick this up.

6.5 New DfE financial benchmarking tool

The Finance Committee would take account of this tool which could be used to compare expenditure with other schools. Although the comparisons might not be accurate, they would enable conversation and questions. The intention was to facilitate accountability.

6.6 DfE changes, including updated Governance Guide

The updated Governance Guide clarified responsibilities around SEND, safeguarding, curriculum, mental health, estates management, data protection, security and family and community engagement.

There was additional investment in Mental Health so that there would be Mental Health Support Teams to assist schools

From September 2026, Free School Meals eligibility would be extended to any child with a parent who was in receipt of Universal Credit but the school would not receive PP funding for those additional children.

The DfE was carrying out a project on complaints and a trial of the Oak Academy AI tool.

A review of IT in the school showed that another off site back up was necessary as Google did not back up every day. SIMS was now on the Cloud for both schools and backed up by Capita so no personal data was stored on the school server.

6.7 Education Select Committee on SEND

The Minister had told the Select Committee that the review of SEND was not yet complete but the direction of travel was around early identification of needs and intervention. Capital funding had been made available to create more suitable spaces for SEND pupils in mainstream schools. Future funding would be within the comprehensive spending review parameters.

6.8 Developments in Governor Hub

Governor Hub now offered a new way of storing Governor visit reports and a Board Effectiveness tool which could give an alternative view. Their usefulness would be considered.

7 COMMITTEE MINUTES

7.1 Communications Committee

The Committee had not met since the last GB meeting.

At the end of the year, the Chair gave a report in the newsletter which explained what the Governing Board had done during the year. She asked Committee Chairs to let her have pieces to include together with findings from the Parent and Pupil surveys.

ACTION

**Comms
Cttee**

**Committee
Chairs**

7.2 Curriculum & Standards Committee

The Minutes of the Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting held on 10th June 2025 and the pupil data report had been circulated and were noted. The Committee Chair gave the following key points.

The EDI impact statement had been added to the policies under review. A visit schedule and appendix on the staff perspective had been added to the Governor Visits Policy.

The agreed Uniform Policy had been sent out to parents. There had been some feedback, including whether remaining old uniform could still be worn. All stakeholders had been asked their views when drawing up the policy and it included no radical changes.

7.3 Finance Committee and Charitable Trust Fund

The Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 4th June 2025 had been circulated and were noted.

Governors agreed that Nitu Chawhan would be asked to replace Eleanor O'Connor as signatory for the Charitable Trust Fund. Eleanor O'Connor was thanked for supporting the Trust Fund and managing the relationship with the bank so effectively.

7.4 Infrastructure Committee

The Minutes of the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 4th June 2025 had been circulated and were noted.

The recycling centre ran well at the Strawberry Fair ran well and the PTAs had agreed to have recycling centres at the Infant Parents event and the Junior School Parents event.

7.5 Personnel and Pay Review Committee

The Minutes of the Personnel and Pay Review Committee meeting held on 12th June 2025 had been circulated and were noted.

The model Pay Policy for 2024-25 had been published and considered by the Committee. The threshold from M6 to the UPS required evidence but the progression between three points in UPS had no clear guidance or criteria. The Headteacher proposed that there should be whole school impact in addition to excellence as a class teacher at UPS3. The Committee were in agreement that a teacher at UPS1 could apply to move to UPS2 after two years and prove that they met the same standards and made the same impact. After two years, they could apply to move to UPS3 but would have to prove impact at whole school level rather than Phase or Key Stage.

Governors agreed the Pay Policy.

The Personnel and Infrastructure Committees had been working on the Lone Working Policy. The principles were the same but the duties covered by site and teaching staff were different. The policy would be honed to reflect this.

7.6 Performance Management Governors

Governors confirmed Donna Westall, Ann Alderson and Sri Akunuri as Performance Management Governors. Roz Burch was suggested as SIA.

7.7 HR Related Panels/Complaints Panel/Pupil Discipline Committee

These Committees had not needed to meet.

8 Delegated reports – Governors**8.1 Chair**

The Chair had taken no actions under delegated authority.

8.2 Development Governor

Governors were reminded of the responsibility to update safeguarding training regularly. They were welcome to attend the school Inset session or a later session for volunteers. BEP would run a webinar in September on Governor responsibilities.

8.3 Safeguarding Governor

The Safeguarding Governor met the Headteacher with Donna Westall in preparation for handover. The main item was the ESAS audit of the school's safeguarding policies and processes which had been shared with Governors. The LA full safeguarding audit was now done by BESST at a cost of £800. ESAS was developing a policy and processes audit which was offered to the school as a trial. The feedback was positive with a few actions, which were not all appropriate for the setting.

8.4 Wellbeing Governor

This was covered in the Safeguarding report.

8.5 SEND Governor

Nigel Hobbs, who would be the next SEND Governor, would meet the SENDCo with the SEND Governor before the end of term.

8.6 Equality Governor

The Equality Governor had no further report but welcomed the inclusion of the EDI impact statement when policies were reviewed.

8.7 Pupil Premium Governor

The Pupil Premium Governor had not made a visit this half term.

8.8 Curriculum Governor reports

Governors noted written reports on:

- Maths
- Writing
- Science Infants, which included the opportunity to see how well KAPOW works.

Governors also reported on the excellent visit by Frank Cottrell-Boyce and the music workshop. The staff had dealt with first aid incidents in the workshop with efficiency and care. Chad Miller, a Team GB athlete, had visited both

schools and encouraged everyone with a talk about his journey in athletics.

Sports Week had been structured differently in a carousel so that everyone did something all the time. Parents who came were positive but some had not welcomed the pressure to take more time off work. The Sports Governor had met the Junior Sports Lead and discussed Sports Festivals which were well received. The school would attend just two next year. Swimming progress was good. Some pupils had been particularly anxious in water. With Patricia English’s support, although those pupils could not swim 25 metres, they would now be safe. Parents had made many positive comments.

8.9 School Travel Plan

The Headteacher reported on an unfortunate incident. When a Governor had taken a photograph of a car blocking School Lane at drop off, the driver had driven towards him and sworn.

The school would make available accessible parking spaces at the Memorial Hall for a couple of parents where the school knew the needs of their children. Plans to extend the parking at the Memorial Hall were being discussed.

9 Any other business

The Headteacher thanked Governors for their work and support over the year.

10 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The remaining date and time of a meeting in 2025-26 was confirmed as:

- Thursday 2 October 2025 at 7 pm
- Thursday 27 November 2025 at 7 pm
- Thursday 22 January 2026 at 7 pm
- Thursday 19 March 2026 at 7 pm
- Thursday 7 May 2026 at 7 pm
- Thursday 2 July 2026 at 7 pm

11 CONDUCT OF MEETING

Governors confirmed that the meeting was conducted in an open manner and that all governors were invited to participate and contribute to discussions. It was confirmed that all members of the Governing Board would have access to these minutes

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Signed Date

CHAIR