

SPRING TERM 2025

MINUTES of the meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School held at the Junior school on 23 January 2025 at 7 pm

PRESENT:	Sri Akunuri Laura Bell Patricia English Alastair Haywood (Headteacher) Elaine Hoare Katherine Mannion	Eleanor O'Connor Hemal Pandya Becky Spencer Penny Thomson Russell Turner Donna Westall (Chair)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ann Baines	Clerk
ABSENT:	Ann Alderson Olivier Eymery Lisa Higgin Nigel Hobbs Clive Jones Gill Brown	(apologies received and accepted) (apologies received and accepted) (apologies received and accepted) (apologies received and accepted) (apologies received and accepted) (apologies received and accepted)

1 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following were raised as other business:

- Safeguarding training
- PTA funding at the Infant School
- School day at the Infants
- Governance matters: reappointment, resignation, and role changes.

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 28 November 2024, 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 Collaboration with Iver Village Juniors (minute 3.2.2)

The Iver Village Junior GB had agreed a collaboration.

3.2.2 Publication of committee terms of reference (minute 3.2.3)

The terms of reference had been published on GovernorHub.

3.2.3 Publication of Privacy Notices (minute 3.2.6)

ACTION

This would be checked.	ACTION Headteacher
3.2.4 Trial tweaks to make the end of year report more explicit about the next year's target with Class Reps (minute 6.1.5) This had not yet been done.	Headteacher
3.2.5 Curriculum and Standards Committee to look at school uniform (Minute 6.2) The Parent Evening survey would cover school uniform and, due to the timing of the Curriculum and Standards meeting, would be reported straight to FGB. Uniform had been discussed at School Council and views would be taken through voting.	
3.2.6 Data meeting to look at tracker systems (minute 6.2) The meeting was set for 14 February.	
3.2.7 Any updated policies to be sent to Helen Clowes (minute 7.1.) Committee Chairs had done this.	
3.2.8 Post link to safeguarding module (minute 7.2) This had been done.	
3.2.9 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (minute 7.5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Equality Impact Assessment would be used when appropriate. • Governors would maintain up to date training • the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy had been approved electronically and was ratified • EDI was planned as the topic for the Monitoring Visit in Spring 	
3.2.10 SEND information report and policy (minute 7.6) The SEND report and policy had been approved electronically and was ratified in the meeting.	
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	
4.1 Verbal update from the Headteacher	
Enrichment – pupils had attended sports festivals and been on trips.	
School roll – there were three new starters in Years 2 and 3 but one child would leave at the end of the year.	
Staff – an SSA had started in Year 1 and one LSA had resigned.	
Safeguarding – <i>see part 2 Confidential Minutes</i>	
Premises – the canopy was being built at the Infants and the new fence meant increased safety for parents when they waited for Nursey children. Redecoration had included acoustic pads which had improved the sound. More volunteers would do further decoration in Summer.	

		ACTION
5	COMMITTEE MINUTES	
5.1	Finance Committee	
5.1.1	<p>Meeting with LA Finance Team</p> <p>A meeting had been held on 6 December 2024 with the LA Finance team. The Licensed Deficit (LD) Agreement and Recovery Plan were agreed as delegated. The application form for the LD had been shared with Governors.</p>	
5.1.2	<p>Provisional budget 2025-26</p> <p>Governors agreed to delegate approval to submit the provisional budget for 2025-26 by 5 March 2025.</p>	Finance Committee
5.1.3	<p>SFVS</p> <p>Governors delegated approval to submit the SFVS for 2024-25 by 28 February 2025 to the Finance Committee. Governors would have access to the SFVS on Governor Hub and could raise questions.</p>	Finance Committee
5.2	COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE	
	<p>The Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 16 January 2025, having been circulated, were noted. The Parents Evening survey would focus on school uniform. Governors had volunteered to cover the sessions.</p>	
7	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<i>This item was taken out of agenda order.</i>	
7.1	School day at the Infants	
	<p>The hours of the school day which were set out on the website were a little short of the required 32.5 hours per week. Given the circumstances of Chalfont St Giles, it was important that timetables enabled parents to pick up children from both school sites. Doors currently opened at 8.45 and the suggestion was that registration should start at 8.45 in future, although registers would be open until 9.</p> <p>Governors agreed the change to school hours.</p>	
7.2	Governance matters: reappointment, resignation, and role changes.	
	<p>Governors agreed to re-appoint Elaine Hoare as Co-opted Governor from the end of her current term of office.</p> <p>Olivier Eymery was doing induction training and was interested in joining the Finance and Infrastructure Committees. He was appointed to those Committees and would join the February meetings.</p> <p>Eleanor O'Connor had announced her intention to resign at the end of the year. Governors thanked her for the support and advice she had given to the school and Governors over 21 years. She had the roles of Chair of Personnel Committee, Vice Chair, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Governors. Volunteers had been invited. Decisions were required soon to allow for handovers.</p> <p>The following had expressed interest and were appointed by Governors from</p>	

September:

- Clive Jones would become Chair of the Personnel Committee and also offered to take on the role of Vice-Chair of Governors.
- Laura Bell would replace Clive Jones as Chair of the Communications Committee.

Donna Westall would be willing to take the Safeguarding Governor role but another Governor would be needed to take on at least one of her roles in SEND or Literacy.

7.3 Safeguarding refresher training

The safeguarding webinar on Safeguarding was recommended as it highlighted the new aspects of KCSiE. Governors were encouraged to keep safeguarding governance training up to date.

7.4 PTA funding at the Infant School

Governors congratulated the PTA on their recent fundraising. Clarity was requested on how the PTA funding was used at the Infants school. It was split into three parts: contributions to the photocopier costs and employment of an LSA (60%), a sum to each class (20%) and a sum for enrichment resources allocated through bids (20%). The Headteacher and Deputy oversaw the bids. Governors thanked the PTA for funding the canopy at a cost of £35,000.

6 GOVERNING BOARD SELF EVALUATION

The self evaluation was done in two parts:

- Committee based groups considered skills, strategy and roles and how they functioned in holding the school to account in their remit.
- Staff, Parent and Community Governor groups considered the perspectives and skills brought by each type of Governor, the value placed on those perspectives, the support and challenge offered and the positive impact the GB has on the school.

Governors' feedback from those discussions is summarised below without repetition. The conclusion and a list of suggested actions follow.

6.1 Committee based groups considered skills, strategy and roles and how they functioned in holding the school to account in their remit

Skills

Induction is good.

People taking on the role of Committee Chair had support but it would be helpful to have a description of what was expected of the role.

Whilst most of the skills areas were covered, succession planning should take account of key areas. Role of Vice Chair of committees would benefit succession planning.

Long term succession planning was more of a problem e.g. infrastructure, health and safety to be covered.

Good to have an opportunity to discuss moving to a different Committee or take role of Chair in the summer so it can be planned in time for a September start.

Strategy

Identify SDP priorities for each Committee and focus on them in their meetings.

Brainstorm meeting of Governors and staff around strategy in Summer term.

Roles

The size of the GB allows a split of responsibilities between a number of committees.

Encourage Governors to visit other Committees.

Governor Hub messages should be used to ensure that members of other Committees are notified of Committee meetings and can read the minutes.

Support and challenge in Committee areas

Finance/Infrastructure/Personnel – was the deficit position partly due to insufficient challenge? Finance Governors understood why it had happened – a combination of unusual and external factors - but also not getting a final update from the outgoing SBM. Monthly finance updates were now provided.

Curriculum and Standards – the presentations from teachers were useful and can be followed up by Subject Governors who should be invited to attend if not part of the committee. The word ‘Standards’ in the Committee name referred to progress and attainment outcomes but the Committee covered other areas, such as behaviour and attendance, as well.

Communications – meet with specific parent groups who are not the usual volunteers to ensure the Committee hears a range of views and so avoids being partial.

6.2 Groups of Governor types to discuss the perspectives and skills brought by each type of Governor, the value placed on those perspectives, the support and challenge offered and the positive impact the GB has on the school.

Is the balance of support and challenge to the Headteacher correct? Do you feel able to challenge? Do Governors offer sufficient support?

Staff in the GB feel well supported by Governors as critical friends. Governors challenged but did not judge. Support was given when requested.

Parents – discussion was open and answers willingly given. They felt they offered support to staff but weren’t sure it was viewed that way.

Community – as above.

What perspectives and skills does your group bring uniquely to the GB?

Staff – all bring their working day reality to the GB, children’s voices, curriculum, educational nitty gritty.

Parents – bring the view from the playground, their professional backgrounds and (hopefully) a balanced parents’ view.

Community – community links with organisations outside the school and experience of other parts of the education system.

What perspectives do the other two groups bring uniquely to the GB?

Staff - Parents bring other perspectives of the children. Community Governors are more objective and give opinions and support in different ways. They have a different reality.

Parents – staff bring their professional insight. Community Governors bring

their experience and have been Governors for longer so others can learn from them.

Community – Parents bring their professional experience and the view from the playground. Staff bring their professional experience of education.

What do you value most highly about the perspectives of the other two groups?

Staff – all are working towards the same thing so are not seen as different Governor types. They trust the GB and feel they can be open, although it must be hard for Governors to hear them sometimes.

Could the support and contribution offered by the other two groups be improved in any way to the benefit of the school?

Parents – not really.

Community – Much has changed since the pandemic, including Governors' contact with the school. Do staff really know the Governors to the extent they might, especially the newer staff? Should Governors do more to get to know staff and be more visible? Could they get more involved so that teachers weren't suspicious as they had been at one time?

Staff thought some teachers could feel Governors were here to judge them. They suggested social events, school trips, Mini Enterprise, Church services, Friday assemblies, Year End events and Open Evenings. A balance of becoming known without being intrusive was needed. A list of events had been incorporated into GHub Calendar. The Chair's introductory talk to new parents should be brought back.

What positive impacts does the GB as a whole have on the school?

Staff - Governors are visible by coming into lessons and events. Their advice was there if requested.

Parents – PR through events such as Strawberry Fair and discos. Support, advice and engaging with the children.

Is there anything we could do better that we haven't covered?

Staff – the role of Governors could be communicated better to the outside world. Something more general than the profiles was needed and a link in the newsletter to the GB section of the school website would be helpful.

6.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the GB was strong. GB and Committees were both supportive and challenging of SLT. Clearer focus on SDP priorities at Committee level would lead to better support and challenge. In a recent problem, Governors were aware how the situation arose and had put in place a process to ensure it did not happen again.

Attending school and social events would enable newer staff to get to know Governors and their role. All types of Governor brought helpful perspectives which were valued. Skills and knowledge were good overall but always could be improved by training and getting to know the work of all the Committees. Role descriptions would encourage Governors to take on new roles. Wider communication of the role of Governors could be improved.

Suggestions to make improvements are listed below.

6.4 Suggestions for action

- Recruit or train Governors for any current or future gaps.
- Induction is thorough and good but perhaps should not always be down to the Chair. A buddy system would be helpful.
- Draw up role descriptions for Committee Chairs and other roles.
- Appoint Vice Chairs for Committees.
- More training, done individually and potentially cascaded in GB time. Past training sessions for the whole GB had been beneficial but would incur an extra cost.
- List the SDP priorities on each Committee agenda and cover them in each meeting with a brief update in FGB.
- Meet staff in Summer term to brainstorm the SDP for following year.
- Committee Chairs to notify all Governors of agenda and minutes via Governor Hub ('all' rather than just the committee on noticeboard)
- Encourage Governors either to visit other Committees as observers to learn more about the other areas or to rotate around Committees.
- In C&S, invite Subject Governors to meetings where the presentation is about their subject.
- Governors to consider:
 - social event with staff.
 - attending more school events (see Calendar)
 - Chair's talk to new parents to start again

8 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates and times of meetings in 2024-25 were confirmed as:

- Thursday 20 March at 7pm
- Thursday 15 May at 7pm
- Thursday 3 July at 7pm

9 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 9.15 pm.

Signed Date

CHAIR

